# Interpreting figurative language

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

## Practice

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Authors use **figurative language** to make descriptions *more interesting*. **Figurative language** *does not mean exactly what the words say*.

- A **simile** compares two things in a creative way, <u>*using the words "like" or "as."*</u> Similes are thought of as artistic ways to describe things.

- A **metaphor** compares two things in a creative way <u>*without using the words "like" or "as."*</u> Metaphors are thought of as artistic ways to describe things.

- An **idiom** is a simile or a metaphor that <u>*many people often use*</u> *to describe something.*

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Here are some short descriptions. Think about what kind of **figurative language** the author is using to make the descriptions *more interesting*.

> Each wolf cub was named for what it would do for the pack. They had names like Leader, and Thinker. But the littlest cub was just named Runt. As he grew older, Runt feared that <u>his name was a prophecy</u>—that he would never do anything useful for the pack.

1. What kind of figurative language is the underlined phrase?

   A. a simile
   B. a metaphor
   C. an idiom

> One day when Runt was exploring the forest, he noticed that a storm was coming. He decided to stay out in the storm to prove that he was brave. But the storm came, and Runt was terrified. He ran <u>like the wind</u>, not knowing or caring where he was going.

2. What kind of figurative language is the underlined phrase?

   A. a simile
   B. a metaphor
   C. an idiom

> The storm passed, and Runt saw a strange place in front of him. From the stories he had heard, he knew it was a place where humans lived. It <u>smelled like danger</u>.

3. What kind of figurative language is the underlined phrase?

    A. a simile
    B. a metaphor
    C. idiom

> Runt looked at the human place. He saw a dog chained inside a fence. Suddenly Runt felt brave. He had stayed out in the storm. He was <u>name-worthy</u>. He lifted his head to let out his cub-wolf cry of "Yip-yip-yip." He heard something strange, and he stopped. It was a howl that he had heard—a wolf's howl—his own howl.

4. What kind of figurative language is the underlined phrase?
    A. a simile
    B. a metaphor
    C. idiom

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5. How does Runt's fearing that "his name was a prophecy" make this description more interesting?

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6. How does Runt's thinking that the human place "smelled like danger" make this description more interesting?

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7. How does Runt's fearing that he may not be "name worthy" make the description of the way he feels more interesting?

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**Answer Key**

**NOTE:** There are <u>two decisions</u> to be made in deciding what kind of figurative language is being used. First, is it a simile, or a metaphor? (If the words "like" or "as" or used, it is a simile, if not, it is a metaphor.) <u>Then</u>, if it is an expression that *many people often use* to describe something, it is an idiom; otherwise, it is either a simile or a metaphor.

1.  B – Since the phrase "a prophecy" is *not often used* to describe someone's name (and the words "like" or "as" are not used), this expression is a metaphor.

2.  C – Since the phrase "like the wind" is *often used* to describe running very fast, this expression is an idiom.

3.  A – Since the phrase "smelling like danger" is *not often used* to describe something that looks dangerous (and the word "like" is used), this expression is a simile

4.  B – Since the term "name-worthy" is *not often used"* to describe someone who is brave" (and the words "like" or "as" are not used), this expression is a metaphor.

5.  Accept any reasonable responses, such as, thinking about Runt worrying about his future makes it interesting to read more about him.

6.  Accept any reasonable responses, such as, reading that, to Runt, the human place "smelled like danger" is a reminder that Runt is a wolf, and it is interesting to remember that he would have a very strong sense of smell.

7.  Accept any reasonable responses, such as, reading that Runt now feels "name-worthy" is a reminder that he has been worried that he would never do anything useful for the pack.