

**Lesson 2: Interpretation of Similes and Metaphors****Learning Outcome**

Interpret the meaning of poems using similes and metaphors

**Duration**

Approximately 50 minutes

**Necessary Materials**

*Provided:* Independent Practice Worksheet

*Not Provided:* *Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes* edited by David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad

**Lesson Plan**

- DIRECT TEACHING**

**I** will explain that metaphors and similes are used to create an image of the person or thing being described in the reader's head. I will explain the difference between metaphors and similes. Similes use "like" or "as" to compare two things while metaphors do not. Metaphors use "is," "am," or "are" to compare a noun with another noun. I will read "I, Too" by Langston Hughes aloud. I will identify the metaphors in the poem and explain how the author uses metaphors to describe life. For example, Langston Hughes says "I, too, am America" at the end of his poem. Langston is not actually a country, so I know that this is a metaphor. Then I will use the metaphor to interpret the meaning of the poem. By saying that he is America, Hughes is trying to say that as an African American, he is as American as any other American. I will read aloud an excerpt from "Youth" by Langston Hughes. I will identify and explain the meaning of the simile in the poem. The author uses the simile "bright before us like a flame" to describe tomorrow. He uses this simile to show that the even if the past was a dark, sad time for African American people, the future for youth is brilliant and full of hope.

- THINK CHECK**

Ask: How did I interpret the meaning of the poems? Students should respond that you read the poems looking for similes and metaphors and used them to think about what message the author is trying to convey to the reader.

**TIP:** Struggling students may need scaffolding in identifying the meaning of metaphors and similes separately from the poem and/or identifying the meaning of a poem.

- GUIDED PRACTICE**

**WE** will read "Harlem" and "When Sue Wears Red" by Langston Hughes. We will identify similes and metaphors from the poems and use them to explain their meanings. For example, In "Harlem," the author uses a simile to compare a dream deferred to rotten meat. He is trying to show the reader that a dream that is not accomplished stinks. In "When Sue Wears Red," the author uses a metaphor to compare Susanna Jones to an Egyptian Queen. He does this to show that she is confident and beautiful.

- INDEPENDENT PRACTICE**

**YOU** will read a poem and identify two similes and two metaphors. You will explain the meaning of the poem and how the similes and metaphors support that meaning. Student Independent Practice is provided below in Teacher and Student Materials.

**Build Student Vocabulary deferred**

Tier 2 Word: **deferred**

Contextualize the word as it is used in the story

The poet asks "What happens to a dream **deferred**?"

**Lesson 2: Interpretation of Similes and Metaphors**

Explain the meaning student-friendly definition)	Deferred means delayed or put off until another time. When Langston Hughes asks “what happens to a dream <b>deferred</b> ?” he is asking about what happens when a dream is delayed or put off until later.
Students repeat the word	Say the word <b>deferred</b> with me: <b>deferred</b> .
Teacher gives examples of the word in other contexts	I <b>deferred</b> doing my homework because I did not want to do it right away. Why defer what you can do today? My mother <b>deferred</b> signing my permission slip for the field trip until the very last minute.
Students provide examples	Think of something that you <b>deferred</b> (put off until later). Start by saying, “Once I <b>deferred</b> _____.”
Students repeat the word again.	What word are we talking about? <b>deferred</b>
Additional Vocabulary Words	fester, sags

**Build Student Background Knowledge**

In “When Sue Wears Red,” stop after reading the third verse, when Hughes compares Susanna to an Egyptian queen. Explain that thousands of years ago in Ancient Egypt, queens were very important to Egyptian society. The most famous Egyptian queen is Cleopatra VII, who is often referred to as the last Pharaoh of Egypt. A pharaoh is a ruler in Ancient Egypt, much like a king or emperor. She was only 15 when she came to power. She became famous for teaming up with enemies in Rome to keep her power over Egypt, when it was threatened. Cleopatra is known for her beauty, her leadership, and her intelligence.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Spring Picnic

Sun as bright as the color yellow.  
Sky as blue as the ocean.

Towering trees are an umbrella.  
Cool shade is a tall glass of lemonade.

Spring grass as green as a grasshopper.  
Flowers sway like dancers.

We lay on our backs watching clouds.  
We are happiness.

- 1.) Identify two similes from the poem above and explain their meaning:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.) Identify two metaphors from the poem above and explain their meaning:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.) What is the meaning of the poem? How do the similes and metaphors support this meaning?