

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things or objects that are poles apart from each other but have some characteristics common between them. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

In simple English, when you portray a person, place, thing, or an action as *being* something else, even though it is not *actually* that “something else,” you are speaking metaphorically.

“**He is the black sheep of the family**” is a metaphor because he is not a sheep and is not even black. However, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A **black sheep** is an unusual animal and typically stays away from the herd, and the person you are describing shares similar characteristics.

Furthermore, a metaphor develops a comparison which is different from a simile i.e. we do not use “like” or “as” to develop a comparison in a metaphor. It actually makes an implicit or hidden comparison and not an explicit one.

Metaphors are sometimes constructed through our common language. They are called conventional metaphors. Calling a person a “night owl” or an “early bird” or saying “life is a journey” are common conventional metaphor examples commonly heard and understood by most of us.

Below are some more conventional metaphors we often hear in our daily life:

- My brother was boiling mad. (This implies he was too angry.)

- The assignment was a breeze. (This implies that the assignment was not difficult.)
- It is going to be clear skies from now on. (This implies that clear skies are not a threat and life is going to be without hardships)
- The skies of his future began to darken. (Darkness is a threat; therefore, this implies that the coming times are going to be hard for him.)
- Her voice is music to his ears. (This implies that her voice makes him feel happy)

Note

“Shall I Compare Thee to a summer’s Day”,

William Shakespeare was the best exponent of the use of metaphors. His poetical works and dramas all make wide-ranging use of metaphors.

“Sonnet 18,” also known as “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day,” is an extended metaphor between the love of the speaker and the fairness of the summer season. He writes that “thy eternal summer,” here taken to mean the love of the subject, “shall not fade.”

Extended Metaphor

The term extended metaphor refers to a comparison between two unlike things that continues throughout a series of sentences in a paragraph or lines in a poem. It is often comprised of more than one sentence and sometimes consists of a full paragraph.

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