Practice with Figurative Language: Similes and Metaphors

Similes
Writers use similes to compare two unlike things. Similes usually use the words "like," "as" or "resembles" within the comparison.

For example: His eyes are as blue as sapphires.
His eyes resemble sapphires.
His eyes are like sapphires.

You can remember the word "simile" by remembering that it contains the root word simil-just like the word "similar" does. Similes point to similarities between two unlike things.

Warning: Don't be fooled! Just because a comparison includes the words "like" or "as," it isn't necessarily a simile. Remember, a simile compares two unlike things.
Therefore, the sentence, "His eyes are blue like mine" is not a simile. It is simply a literal comparison because the things (the eye color) really is alike.

Practice:
Fill in the blanks below to complete the similes. The first object is highlighted. Fill in the blank with the Remember, the comparisons must show similarities between two unlike things.
1. The bird sailed through the sky like a ____________________.
2. My mom's smile is like a ____________________.
3. The pillow was like a ____________________.
4. My puppy is like a ____________________.

Practice: Use the word below and write a simile. Compare it to something that relates and conveys a picture in the reader's mind.
1. hair ____________________
2. clouds ____________________
3. car ____________________
4. grass ____________________
5. rain ____________________

Stop here and check your work with a tutor or instructor before moving on.

Metaphors
A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things without using a word of comparison such as "like," "as," or "resembles."

For example: His eyes are sapphires.

Steps to help you write a metaphor.
1. Choose a Noun.
2. Ask yourself, "What different noun can I compare it to?"
3. Write your metaphor.
For example:
1. Noun: umbrella
2. I will compare it to a roof.
3. Metaphor: The umbrella was a roof over my head.

Now, you try it. Follow the steps:
1. Pick a noun
2. Compare it to
3. Write your metaphor.

STOP

If you have any questions or are unsure about your answer, stop here and check your work with a tutor or instructor before moving on.

Now try to write a few more.
1. Pick a noun
2. Compare it to
3. Write your metaphor.

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5. Before reviewing your answers with an instructor or tutor, use the space below to write any questions you still have about similes and metaphors:

6. Review your answers with an instructor or tutor in the WRC. Have that person sign and date this sheet.

Instructor/Tutor signature

Date

7. Return this completed, signed sheet to your instructor.