



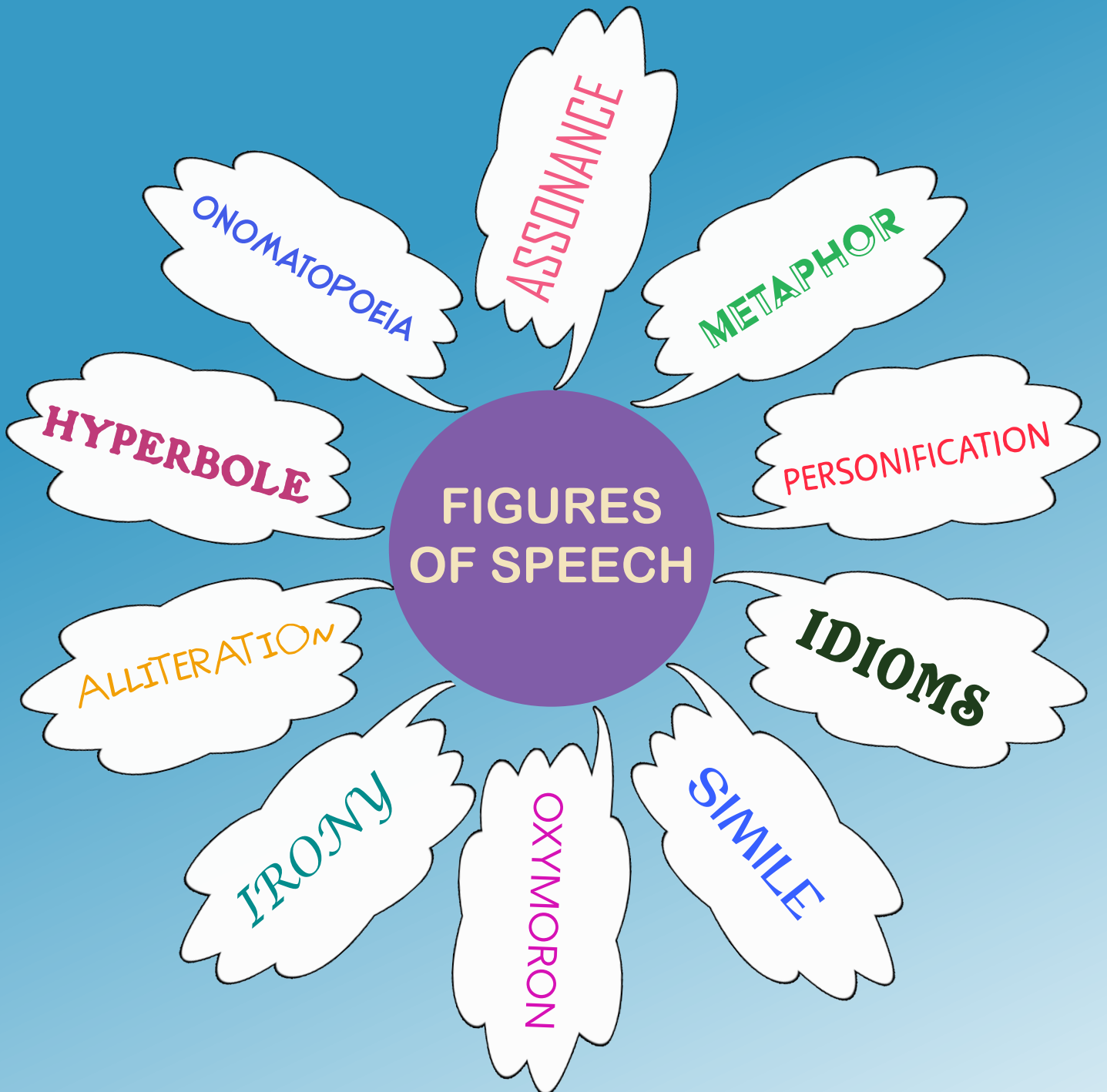
RMH ENGLISH TUTION



PRESENTS...



THE RMH GUIDE TO FIGURES OF SPEECH



SIMILE

A simile compares two things using the words “like” or “as”. We can find simile examples in our daily speech, e.g.

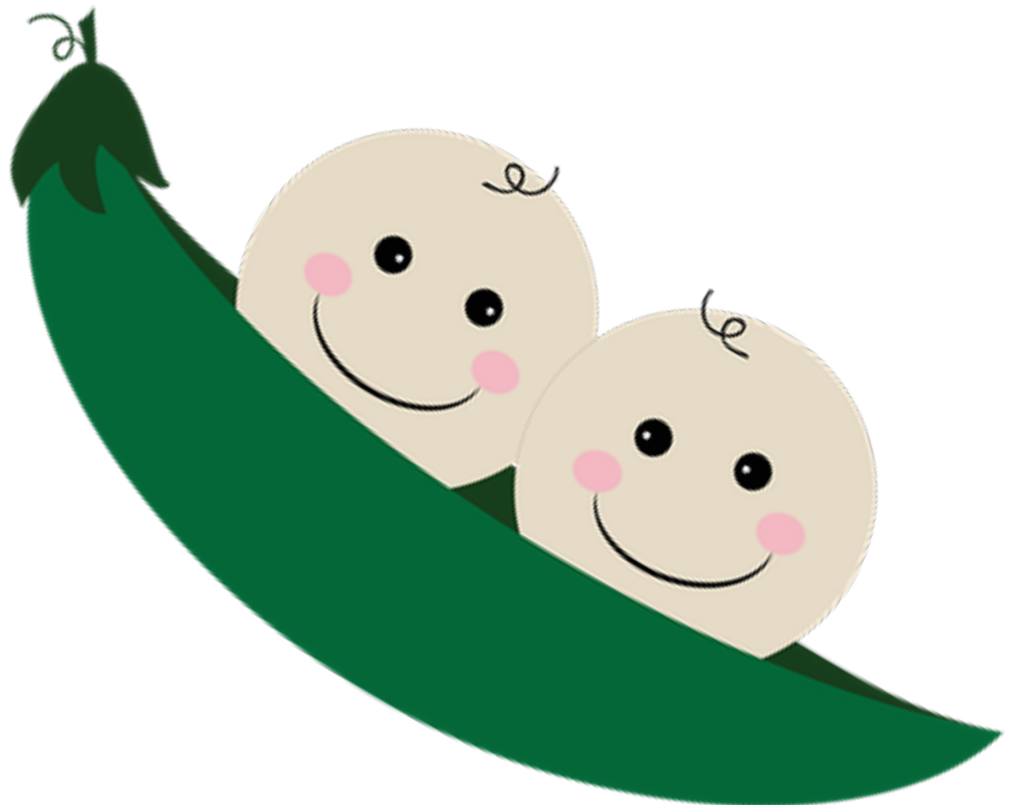
“Alex is as slow as a snail”

snails are very slow and here the slowness of Alex is compared to that of a snail. The use of “as” in the example helps to draw the resemblance.

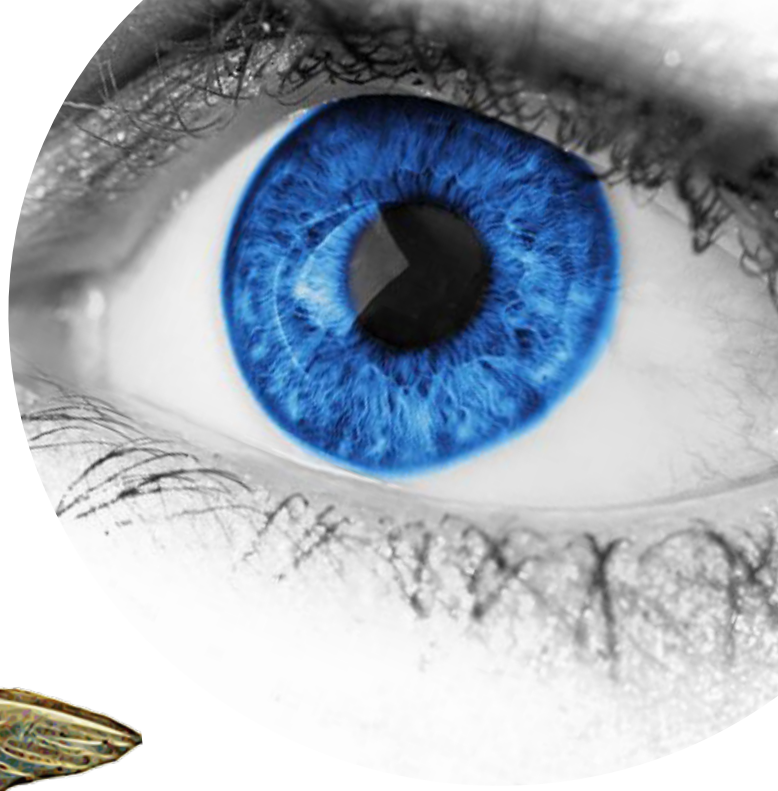
“They’re not even sisters but they’re like two peas in a pod”

peas in pods are very similar and bear a close resemblance and here the close resemblance is compared to two people. The use of “like” in the example helps to draw the resemblance.

Similes introduce vividness into what we say. Using similes attracts attention and appeals directly to the senses of listeners or readers, encouraging their imaginations to understand what is being communicated. It brings life-like quality into our daily speech and the characters of fiction. Similes allow readers to relate the feelings of a writer to their personal experiences.



My eyes are as blue as the ocean.



She sings like an angel.



He swims like a fish.



It's as easy as ABC.

METAPHOR

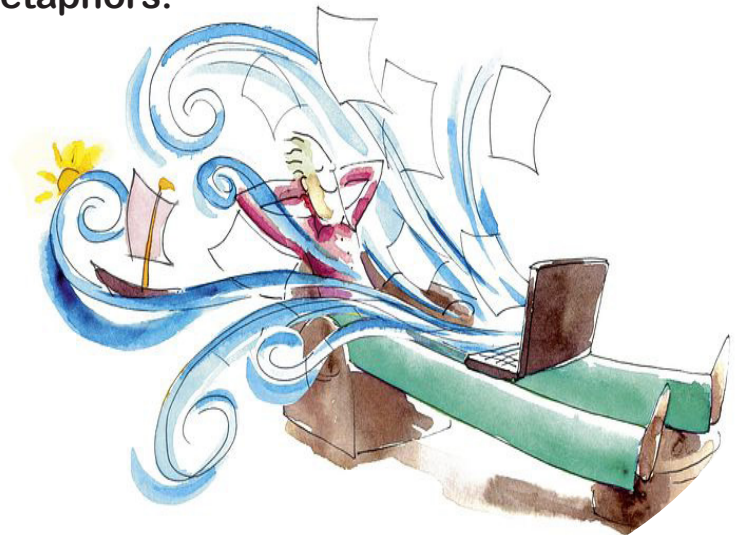
A metaphor compares two different things without using “like” or “as”. Metaphors are used to express a variety of emotions, images and expressions by combining and comparing to different objects or situations. Metaphors make an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated, but which share some common characteristics. When you portray a person, place, thing or action as being something else, even though it is not actually something else, you are speaking metaphorically, e.g.

“Her tears were a river flowing down her cheeks”

a river and tears aren’t very alike. One is a body of water and the other is produced by our eyes. They do have one thing in common though: both are a type of water that flows. A metaphor uses this similarity to help the writer make a point. A river is so much larger than a few tears. The metaphor is a creative way to describe how great the girl’s sadness was and help the reader see a similarity between tears and a river.

Metaphors aren’t just used in songs and poems, in fact all of us in our daily life speak, write and think in metaphors:

The homework was a breeze
(implies the homework was easy).



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

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is when you give human qualities and characteristics to an object, animal or idea. These objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings, e.g.

The sun played hide and seek with the clouds. Obviously the sun can't play hide and seek but when it goes behind the clouds and then comes out again it looks like it's playing hide and seek.

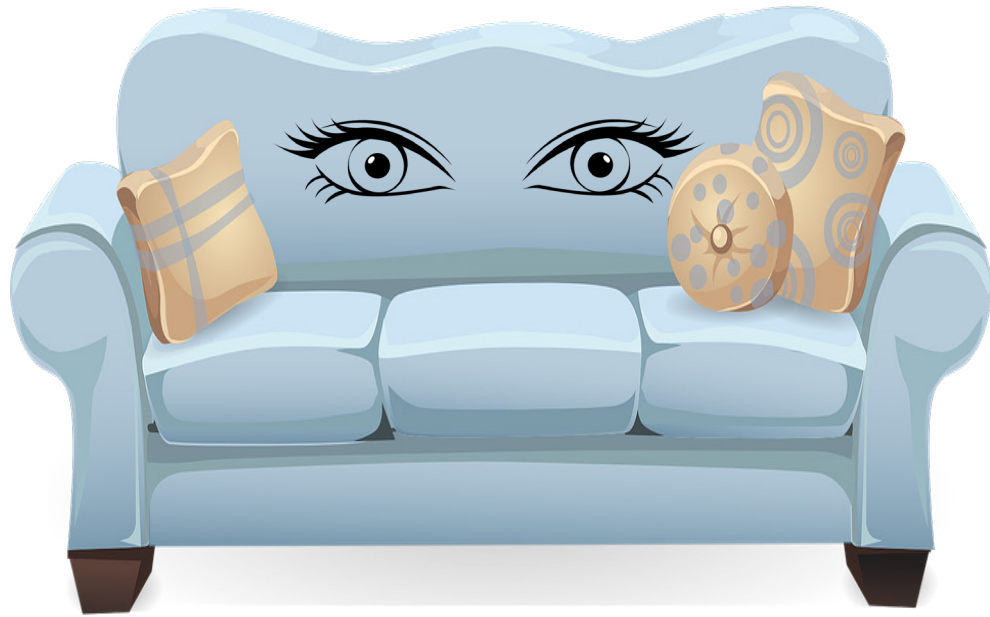
Personification helps us relate the actions of inanimate objects to our own emotions and abilities.

Opportunity knocked at his door.



The sky was full of dancing stars.

*The sofa is looking
at me invitingly.*



*The chocolate cake is
calling my name.*

Personification gives deeper meaning to literary texts. It is easier for us to relate to something that is human or which possesses human traits, and its use encourages us to develop a perspective that is new as well as creative.

ALLITERATION

Alliteration is typically used to create flow when someone is reading aloud. It is a commonly used style of figurative language that most people don't even realise they are using. Alliteration is the repetition of consonants or sounds at the beginning of two or more words within the same sentence or phrase, e.g.

The trees swayed shyly in the summer breeze.

She sells seashells on the seashore.

Companies use the alliterative effect all the time to ensure their brand name is memorable:

American Airlines



Coca-Cola

Pay-Pal

PayPaltm

An alliterative name can help you stand out from the crowd:

Donald Duck



Fred Flintstone



Mickey Mouse



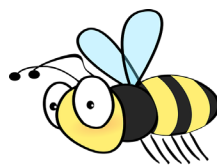
Spongebob Squarepants



(Cartoon character images from Wikipedia)

Well known phrases and quotes use alliteration:

busy as a bee



good as gold



out of order



Alliteration is a commonly used stylistic tool that adds emphasis and interest to a sentence and can help you remember names and phrases.

ASSONANCE

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds throughout a sentence, phrase, paragraph or entire piece of writing (A, E, I, O, U, sometimes Y), e.g.

The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain

It is used to reinforce the meanings of words or to set the mood. Assonance examples are sometimes hard to find, because they work subconsciously sometimes, and are subtle. The long vowel sounds will slow down the energy and make the mood more sombre, while high sounds can increase the energy level of the piece, e.g.

“And stepping softly with her air of blooded ruin about the glade in a frail agony of grace she trailed her rags through dust and ashes, circling the dead fire, the charred billets and chalk bones, the little calcined ribcage.”

Notice how the mood is set using the long “A”. The words “glade”, “frail” and “trailed” help set the chilling mood and is repeated and emphasised at the end with “ribcage.”

Assonance is primarily used in poetry, in order to add rhythm and music, e.g.

*He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

Assonance has a very important role to play in both poetry and prose. It can enhance a musical effect in the text which enhances the pleasure of reading the piece and it can develop mood.

ONOMATOPOEIA

Onomatopoeia is a type of word that sounds like what it describes making the description more expressive and interesting, e.g.

“The gushing stream flows in the forest”

is a more meaningful description than:

“The stream flows in the forest.”

In addition to the sounds they represent, many onomatopoeic words have developed meanings of their own, e.g.

- **Whisper:** this word not only represents the wispy or breathy sound of people talking quietly, but also describes the action of people talking quietly.

A group of words reflecting different sounds of water are:

plop, splash, gush, sprinkle, drizzle, drip

A group of words reflecting different human voice sounds are:

growl, giggle, murmur, chatter

Common ones are:

oops, crash, pow, zap - often used in comics



Onomatopoeia helps readers hear the sounds of the words they reflect and enter the world created. They have an effect on the readers' senses and they help create emphasis.

HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration to make a point. Hyperbole may sometimes compare two things but the exaggeration makes it hyperbole. It is used to create emphasis or effect. We use this in our everyday speech, e.g.

When you meet a friend after a long time, you say:

"It's been ages since I last saw you."

You may have seen him a few hours earlier or a few days ago, but the use of the word "*ages*" exaggerates the sentence to add emphasis.

Hyperbole has a humorous effect created by an overstatement. Common examples are:

"I'm so hungry I could eat a horse"
obviously you won't be eating a horse.

"My shoes are killing me"
your shoes can't literally kill you.

"I'm so tired I could sleep for a year"
lack of sleep makes you feel like you could.

"I've told you a million times to clean your room"
obviously parents haven't said this a million times
but it seems like this.

The above are clearly humorous exaggerations - hyperbole.

In daily conversation, hyperbole is used to create an amusing effect or to emphasise meaning. In literature, hyperbole develops contrasts and this technique is used to catch the reader's attention.

IDIOMS

An idiom is an expression that doesn't exactly mean what the words say. The phrase is understood to mean something quite different from what individual words of the phrase would imply, e.g.

"She spilled the beans"
she didn't literally spill a can of beans but instead
she talked too much and told the secret.

Writers and public speakers use idioms generously. The purpose of using idioms is to elaborate their language, to make it richer and spicier and to help them in conveying subtle meanings to their intended audience, e.g.

"My sister is as cool as a cucumber"
she never gets stressed.

"Mum's just got a plum job in an office"
a very good job.

Idioms make language beautiful and also make things better or worse through making the expression good or bad, e.g.

"He really showed his true colours today"
revealed the kind of person he really is.

"The exam was a piece of cake"
very easy.

Idioms enable the reader to piece together a text that he has gone through and extract meanings the writer has conveyed.



OXYMORON

An oxymoron is a word or phrase that contradicts itself, two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect. The common oxymoron phrase is a combination of an adjective proceeded by a noun with contrasted meanings, e.g. “cruel kindness”.

The contrasting words/phrases are not always together, they can be spaced out in a sentence, e.g. “In order to lead, you must walk behind.”

An oxymoron may produce a dramatic effect, but does not make literal sense. Examples are found in casual conversation and in literature.

Common examples:

Open secret
Seriously funny
Act naturally
Original copy

Oxymorons in speech:

All the politicians agreed to disagree.
There was a love-hate relationship between my aunt and uncle.

In everyday conversation, people use oxymorons to show wit. The use adds flavour to their speech.



IRONY

Irony uses words in such a way that their intended meaning is different from the actual meaning of the words. It may also be a situation that ends up in quite a different way than what is generally anticipated. It is a difference between appearance and reality. A contrast between what is expected and what actually happens.

There are three types of irony: verbal, situational and dramatic.

- *Verbal* - what is said is different than what is meant, e.g. “break a leg” - meaning good luck.
- *Situational* - something happens that we wouldn't expect to happen, e.g. a fire station burns down.
- *Dramatic* - the reader knows something the characters do not, e.g. *Home Alone* - we know that Kevin has planted traps everywhere but the thieves don't!

Examples:

A thief's house was broken into at the same time he was robbing someone else.

My friend's kids get along like cats and dogs.

In a horror movie, the audience knows that the monster is hiding under the stairs, but the main character begins to walk toward the stairs and is taken by the monster.

Irony adds meaning to a situation and develop readers' interest. It makes a work of literature more intriguing and forces the readers to use their imagination to understand the underlying meaning. Real life is full of ironical expressions and situations. The use of irony brings a work of literature to life.

TIPS FOR REMEMBERING FIGURES OF SPEECH

Figures of speech are means of expressing ones thoughts and emotions by adding intensity to the words used. They give extra *interest* and **colour** to awaken the readers or listeners.

1. Hyperbole - An exaggerated statement - A *hyper* person always over exaggerates their stories when they tell them.
2. Personification - When you give *human* qualities to an object, animal or idea - to personify.
3. Idiom - The meaning of the sentence is *different* from the meaning of its *individual* words - doesn't make sense. Idiot - stupid person - doesn't make sense.
4. Alliteration - The *repetition* of *consonants* or *sounds* at the beginning of two or more words in a sentence. Alliteration - the word uses two *fs*.
5. Assonance - The repetition of *identical* or *similar* vowel sounds in a series of words or phrases - as son ance - uses the '*a*' sound as in 'cat'.
6. Onomatopoeia - A word that imitates the sound it represents. Firstly, to remember how to spell this word - The first part of the word is quite easy if you split it up - *on o mat o*. For the end of the word use the mnemonic "*Pigs Oink Even In April*." This mnemonic will also help you remember what the word means.
7. Simile - Comparing two things using the words "*like*" or "*as*". A simile starts with the word as.
8. Metaphor - Comparing two things without using the words "*like*" or "*as*". *Metaphors Explain Two Alike Points Having Only Reorganised*.
9. Oxymoron - Opposite words that *contradict* each other. Opposites that Mismatch.
10. Irony - The intended meaning is *different* from the actual meaning of the words. There is no iron in an iron, but it irons some uneven minds.

EXERCISE

1. What is a figure of speech?

- ☐ A familiar expression
- ☐ A non-literal way of saying something
- ☐ What the author literally means
- ☐ Something only writers use

2. Figures of speech mean exactly what the words say

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

3. A figure of speech has to be interpreted by the reader or listener

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

4. Two figures of speech that involve comparisons are

- ☐ Simile and metaphor
- ☐ Hyperbole and simile
- ☐ Personification and idiom
- ☐ Alliteration and metaphor

5. Figure of speech in which the author makes an obvious exaggeration

- ☐ Idiom
- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Hyperbole
- ☐ Alliteration

6. The words “like” and “as” typically appear in a

- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Metaphor
- ☐ Hyperbole
- ☐ Idiom

7. What is the figure of speech in which non-human or non-living things are spoken about as if they were human?

- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Metaphor
- ☐ Personification
- ☐ Hyperbole

8. What does the quote below mean?

“Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward.”

- ☐ It's a helpful experience to have a hard teacher.
- ☐ Experienced teachers give the lesson first and then the test.
- ☐ Everyone has the experience of making mistakes.
- ☐ Experience can be a difficult way to learn because you learn from making mistakes.

9. What does the quote below mean?

“The best university of all is a collection of books.”

- ☐ All universities should have a large book collection.
- ☐ Reading books can provide a person with an excellent education.
- ☐ A university can be judged by the size of its book collection.
- ☐ People who want to attend a university should first read a large collection of books.

10. What is the following an example of?

“Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers”

- ☐ Idiom
- ☐ Alliteration
- ☐ Irony
- ☐ Assonance

11. My English teacher said,

“You passed this test by the skin of your teeth. Why don’t you stay after school for some tutoring?”

What did the teacher mean?

- ☐ I did really well
- ☐ I barely passed the test
- ☐ I failed the test miserably
- ☐ I failed the test, but I was close

12. The wind wrapped its icy fingers around my body is

- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Metaphor
- ☐ Personification
- ☐ Oxymoron

13. Our ‘luxury’ hotel turned out to be a farm building is

- ☐ Hyperbole
- ☐ Assonance
- ☐ Irony
- ☐ Idiom

14. I've been on cloud nine all day means

- ☐ To be happy
- ☐ Feel like you are floating in the sky
- ☐ To make someone else happy
- ☐ To be extremely happy

15. Ring, OMG, lol and pitter patter are examples of

- ☐ Oxymoron
- ☐ Idiom
- ☐ Assonance
- ☐ Onomatopoeia

16. Confirmed rumour is

- ☐ Alliteration
- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Oxymoron
- ☐ Personification

17. The repetition of similar vowel sounds is

- ☐ Alliteration
- ☐ Idiom
- ☐ Irony
- ☐ Assonance

18. My mum will explode when she sees my exam results is

- ☐ Metaphor
- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Hyperbole
- ☐ Oxymoron

19. Wet behind the ears means

- ☐ Use water to wash your ears
- ☐ After washing, dry your ears.
- ☐ Inexperienced at something
- ☐ Experienced at something

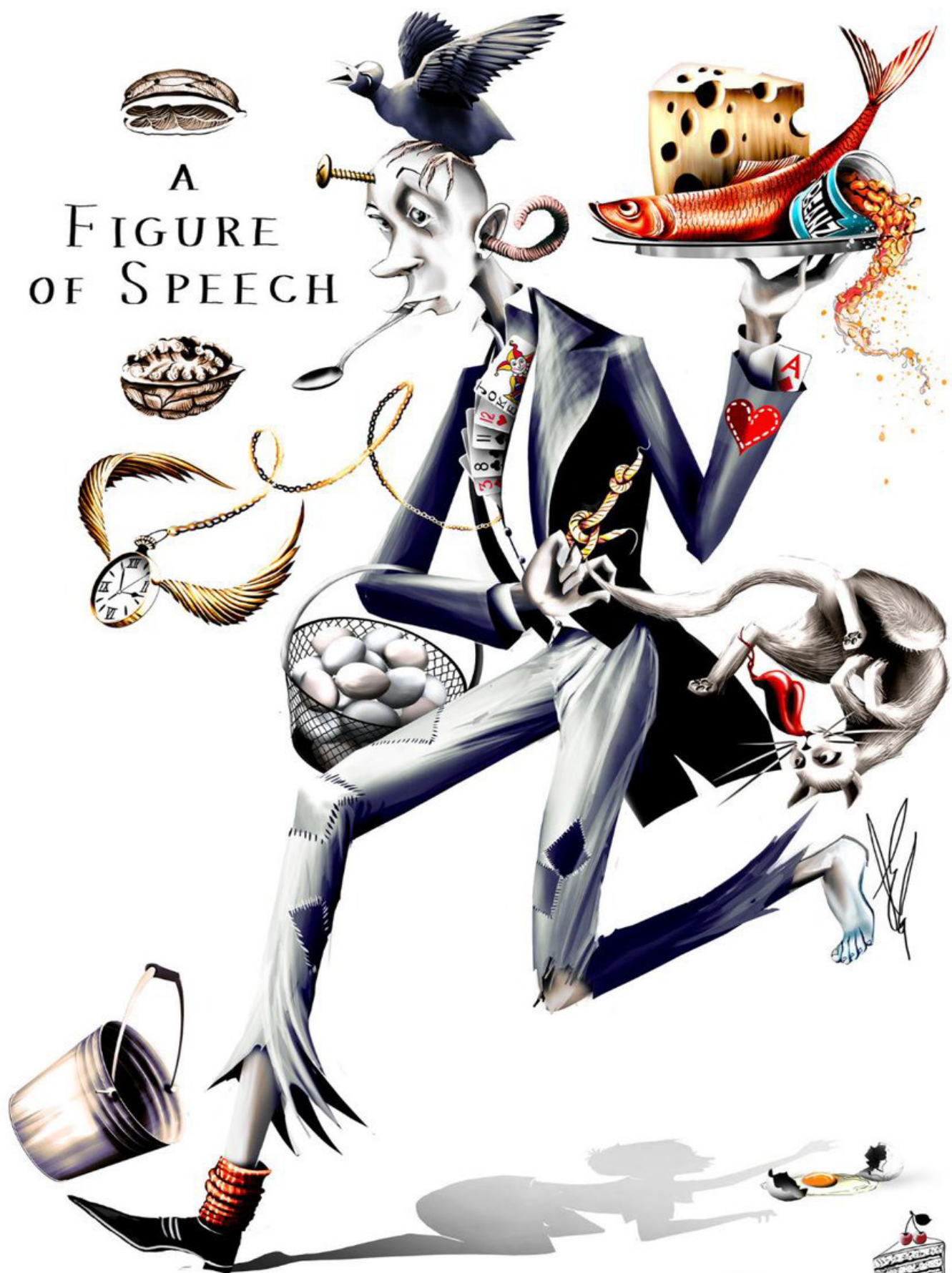
20. Let the cat out of the bag means

- ☐ Don't put cats in bags
- ☐ Accidentally reveal a secret
- ☐ Reveal a secret on purpose
- ☐ Cats must travel in cages

A BIT OF FUN...

Can you find all the figures of speech in this picture? It says there are 27 but there might be more!

Write your answers in the table on the next page.



27 TO FIND...



<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>27</i>	

EXERCISE ANSWERS

1. A non-literal way of saying something
2. False
3. True
4. Simile and metaphor
5. Hyperbole
6. Simile
7. Personification
8. Experience can be a difficult way to learn because you learn from making mistakes.
9. Reading books can provide a person with an excellent education.
10. Alliteration
11. I barely passed the test
12. Personification
13. Irony
14. To be extremely happy
15. Onomatopoeia
16. Oxymoron
17. Assonance
18. Hyperbole
19. Inexperienced at something
20. Accidentally reveal a secret

A BIT OF FUN ANSWERS...

Kick the bucket.

Spill the beans.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Born with a silver spoon in your mouth.

Piece of cake.

Wear your heart on your sleeve.

Ace up your sleeve.

Cat got your tongue.

Play your cards close to your chest.

Time flies.

Tie the knot.

Have a screw loose.

Red herring.

Pull your socks up.

Cherry on the cake.

From rags to riches.

The shoe's on the other foot.

Served on a silver platter.

Crow about nothing.

Best foot forward.

In a nutshell.

A knot in your stomach.

Worm your way out.

Step out of the shadow.

No room to swing a cat.

Bird brain.

A joker in the pack.

Big cheese.

Raise an eyebrow.

Eyes wide open.

Cold feet.

Bald as a coot.

Step on someone's toes.

Tongue tied.

Only a scratch.