Comprehension skill A

Simile

As you know, a **simile** expresses an idea by comparing two things. The words like or as are always used in a simile. Authors often use similes to help readers to get a better understanding of what they are saying.

Note Not every sentence that has the words like or as contains a simile.

When she told the story her voice was as low as a whisper. This sentence contains a simile because the sound of the voice is being compared to a whisper.

My cousin's laughter was like a hyena's. This sentence contains a simile because the cousin's laughter is being compared to the laughter of a hyena.

We scrambled for a seat as Mama Ellen began to tell her story.

She knew that we would like to hear her latest story. These sentences use the words like and as, but they are **not** comparing anything.

Read the following paragraph and identify the similes.

After the storytelling, it would usually be time for bed. On a cool night, my blanket was as cosy as a warm fire. Laying my head on my pillow was like resting on a bed of feathers. I would sleep soundly all night as I was very tired after hearing so many stories.

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Metaphors

You learned about figures of speech called similes that compare one thing to something else. A **simile** is signalled by the use of the words **like** or **as.**

A **metaphor** is also a figure of speech that compares two things. However, a metaphor **does not** use the words like or as. A metaphor suggests or implies that one thing is something else.

Example

The Police Force is the watchdog for the country. This sentence is an example of a metaphor. It suggests or implies that the Police Force is a watchdog.

A simile would have used the words like or as.

Example The Police Force is like the watchdog for the country.

Read the following passage and identify three metaphors.

The night air was still as a statue. One lonely star in the sky was our flashlight. We hurried like racing cars to get home. The police sirens were trumpets leading us to our house. As we approached our driveway, the yard was a carnival scene. The would-be robber stood handcuffed like a prisoner. He looked like a villain.

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Interpreting metaphors

Metaphors and similes are figures of speech. They both compare one thing to another. The metaphor, however, **does not** use the words **like** or **as**. A metaphor suggests that one thing is something else.

Example

The police are the watchdogs for the community. The metaphor in this sentence is 'police are the watchdogs'. The sentence implies that the police protect our community like a watchdog would a home or business.

Read the following passage and identify **three** metaphors. Explain what they mean.
Officer Brown is the father of our community. He has been a police officer here for over 25 years. All of the children in the neighbourhood know him. Our neighbourhood is a safety net because of his presence. Each day he can be seen doing his walkabout and visiting the older people. Officer Brown is a jewel. He is an outstanding policeman.

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