PART • SIX

6

Flex Your Literary Muscles

CHAPTERS IN PART SIX

WELCOME TO

Flex Your Literary Muscles

You're on your way now! Once again you're headed to a higher training level. Think of it as similar to developing special skills for a particular sport. In this case, the "sport" is understanding literary material. In this part of the book, you'll learn how to apply certain "literary reading" skills. We'll focus on two major topics:

- Interpreting figures of speech (Chapter 12).
- Basic comprehension of four types of literary material: nonfiction, short stories, novels, and poems (Chapter 13).

A complete study of how to interpret literature is beyond the scope of this book, so think of Chapter 13 as a bonus chapter. It is designed especially for students who may be enrolled in

- literature-based reading improvement courses.
- reading improvement courses that focus on understanding both content area textbook material *and* literary material.
- English courses in which *Exercise Your College Reading Skills* is used as a supplemental text.

What if none of the situations above describes your situation? Well, the chances are that, depending on your major, you will be required to take one or more literature courses in college. Therefore, I encourage you to save this book—or certainly Chapter 13—to have as a handy reference. There are many literary reference books that define important terms, but unlike *Exercise Your College Reading Skills,* they typically do not show you how to *apply* the concepts you need in order to analyze literary works.

Even if you don't need the information in Chapter 13 right now (because your reading course does not include a literature component or you are not enrolled in an English course), you may want to get an advance peek at the skills involved in understanding literary works. By all means, do so!

Let's take a minute, though, to talk about the more likely reality. Frankly, most students feel intimidated about trying to "interpret" literary material. Relax—I'm going to walk you through it. You'll discover that you already know more about it than you think you do. Also, our focus is on *basic,* comprehension of literary material. In other words, I want to introduce you to the skills you need in order to get the essential information. I'll leave the fine points to your English and literature professors. It may be a semester or two before you even enroll in those courses. My goal is to give you a stronger foundation so that you'll be more successful and confident when you take those courses.

The exercise sets in this section are different from those in previous chapters because the skills and the materials themselves are different. In Chapter 12, Interpreting Figures of Speech, the exercise sets consist, respectively, of 10, 8, and 6 *passages.* There is more than one item per passage, although the passages are brief. In Chapter 13, Achieving Basic Comprehension of Literary Works, there is only one item in each practice exercise set. In Set 1, there is a nonfiction excerpt from an autobiography of a remarkable man. In Set 2, there is an excerpt from a novel for you to analyze. Set 3 consists of a poem written by a famous poet who is also a college English teacher. The exercises are intentionally brief because, as noted earlier, this chapter is intended as an introduction to a special type of reading. Should you want or need more practice, Chapter 16 in Part 8, The Grand Slam, contains some additional, interesting literary selections on which you can practice. Also, Appendix 3 contains a list of some books you might enjoy reading. Excerpts from several of them appear in this book.

Like every other teacher, I know that some students are turned off at the thought of reading literary material. They say they're "not any good at it" or they find it "boring." Attitudes such as those can hurt you. Pat Summitt, women's basketball coach at the University of Tennessee, told her players, "To improve, you must make your weaknesses your strengths." She's right, and what she said holds true in any area of endeavor. If you are among those who glaze over at the thought of reading "literature," make the decision to open your mind to the possibility that you might come to enjoy it. And even if it never becomes your favorite subject, that doesn't mean that you can't become good at it. Michael Jordan says, "You have to expect things of yourself before you can accomplish them."

Some Thoughts as You Begin the "Fourth Quarter" of This Book

You may be feeling a little tired at this point in the semester and at this point in *Exercise Your College Reading Skills.* That's normal. But the fact is, you still have to keep moving. South Carolina football coach Lou Holtz believes, "How you respond to the challenge

in the second half will determine what you become after the game, whether you are a winner or a loser." So keep your head in the game, even if the game seems hard.

Let me tell you about something I saw on TV during the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City. I was a college student then, but I've never forgotten the scene. The event was the marathon. It was so late at night that they had already turned on the stadium lights. Hardly any spectators were still in the stadium because every competitor had completed the race at least an hour earlier—that is, all except one. Out of the darkness emerged one lone runner, a runner from Tanzania (Africa) named John Stephen Akhwari. "Runner" really isn't an accurate description: he was hobbling badly; one leg was bloody and bandaged; each step caused him obvious pain. Still he struggled toward the stadium. As he neared the stadium, word of the lone straggler began to spread quickly. He was *so* far behind the other competitors that it was a shock to everyone that there was still a runner on the course. A small group of spectators, other Olympians, and members of the press headed back into the stadium to see how this strange spectacle was going to end. Akhwari paused at the stadium entrance and after a moment began the final, lone lap toward the finish line. Everyone there wondered why a man who was obviously going to come in dead last would still struggle so fiercely for the finish line.

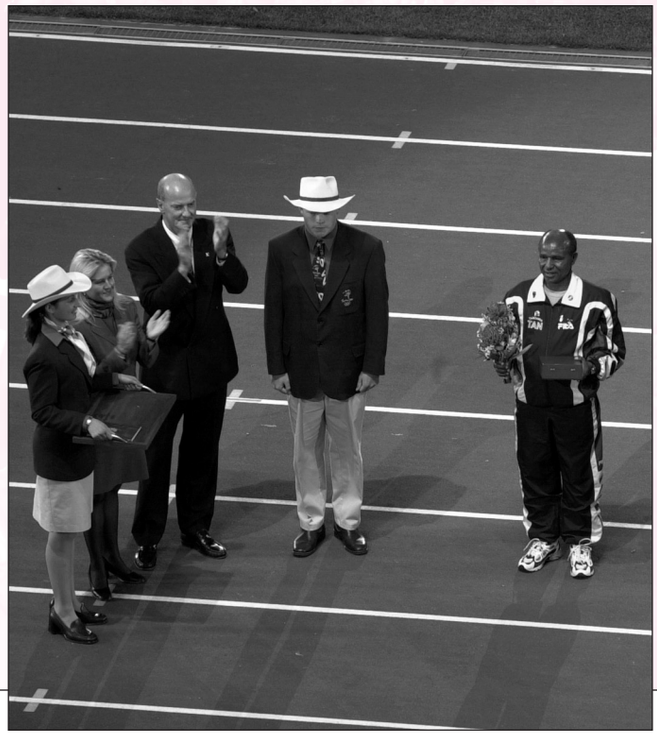
As Akhwari took his final, slow, painful step across the finish line, the spectators went wild with appreciation for his effort. Afterward, a reporter asked him why he hadn't quit a race that he had absolutely no chance of winning. Although I've forgotten all the rest of the winners of the 1968 Olympics, I've never forgotten John Stephen Akhwari or his reply to the reporter: "My country did not send me 7,000 miles to start the race," he said. "They sent me to finish." His answer, which reflects so much courage, determination, and dignity, indelibly etched Akhwari in my mind as the real winner of those Olympics.

Apparently I wasn't the only one who has never forgotten Akhwari. He was honored at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. Although more than three decades had elapsed since his "loss" in Mexico City, so many people still remembered and admired this courageous man that the 2000 Olympics Committee invited him to Sydney to honor him in a special ceremony (pictured on page 291).

Akhwari was also the inspiration for my dedication of this book: "To students and teachers everywhere who came not only to start the race, but to finish it." I hope that you, like John Stephen Akhwari, came to finish the race.

CHAPTER 12

Interpreting Figures of Speech



THE SKILL

INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH

Once again, you've reached a new, higher level in your reading skills! Do you realize that you'll be more than three-fourths of the way through this book when you complete the two Flex Your Literary Muscles chapters? In this chapter you'll learn about figures of speech. There are more than 250 different figures of speech, so you'll be happy to know that we're going to focus on only five of the most common (and, therefore, most important) ones. These figures of speech show up not only in literature, but also in nonliterary material, such as your textbooks. The five figures of speech we'll concentrate on are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, and metonymy.

Whether you know it or not, you use figures of speech in your speaking and writing every day of your life. When you say something that appears on the surface to mean one thing, but has to be interpreted correctly in order to be understood, you are using figurative language. Whenever you say, "Working a double shift was a killer!" or "If the phone rings one more time tonight, I'll scream!" you're using figurative language. Doing two back-to-back shifts at work wasn't literally a "killer" in the sense that a person can be a killer; you simply mean that it was exhausting. And you don't mean you'll actually scream if the phone rings again; you mean that you're annoyed and frustrated at having it ring so often. You're also using figurative language when you use words to paint pictures in people's minds. For example, when you say, "My backpack feels like a bag of rocks!" you've painted a vivid picture of how heavy your backpack feels.

So what exactly are figures of speech? Figures of speech are nonliteral ways of saying things; that is, the words have to be interpreted in order to understand the intended meaning. Authors use figures of speech to paint vivid pictures in the reader's mind or to achieve some other specific effect (such as emphasis or humor).

When words are literal, they mean exactly what they say. For example, the literal meaning of the expression "His heart is a stone" is exactly what it says: the person's heart is made of stone (which could not actually be the case). However, the figurative meaning is that he's hard-hearted, that he has no more feeling than a stone would. (You can see why figures of speech often present problems to those who are learning a second language!) In the last chapter, you may have read the Set 3 Exercise selection entitled "Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain." This is figurative language because there isn't a "curtain" in the literal sense of the word. Instead, "curtain" is used figuratively to mean "a barrier." And certainly no real curtain could be made of a liquid (including the component of embalming fluid known as formaldehyde). To understand the title, you must interpret it: It means seeing behind the barrier (the tactics and the secrecy) that the funeral industry uses to keep the public in the dark about embalming. (There was even figurative language in that last sentence: to keep the public in the dark is figurative language for not letting them know something, keeping them ignorant. Figurative language is everywhere!)

Now let's look at the first two figures of speech we'll focus on, simile and metaphor. Simile and metaphor are both types of comparisons. They are comparisons between things that on the surface do not seem to be alike, yet are alike in some significant way. You must determine what two things are being compared and the important way in which they are alike.

A simile is a comparison between two things which, in most respects, are totally unlike, but which actually are alike in some significant way. Similes generally use the term like or as in the comparison. (Incidentally, the word is pronounced sĭ' mə lē.) Examples of similes are, "The old man's skin was as thin as tissue paper" and "Molly's cooking tastes like prison camp food." In the first example, the old man's skin is being compared with tissue paper, meaning that his skin was extremely thin, even to the point that, like tissue paper, it was translucent (you could see the color and contours of the veins through it). In the second example, Molly's cooking and prison camp food are being compared. Prison camp food is terrible, so the intended meaning is that Molly's cooking is awful.

A metaphor implies a comparison between two seemingly dissimilar things by saying that one of them is the other. As the word seemingly suggests, the two things are, in fact, similar in some significant way. An example of a metaphor is, "The attorney's eyes were laser beams." The attorney's eyes and laser beams are being compared. In what way could eyes and laser beams be alike? They could both be very intense and penetrating. The meaning is that the attorney had very intense, penetrating eyes, eyes that narrowed and focused hard on anyone the attorney was looking or staring at. In one of the Chapter 8, Set 2 practice exercises, a college professor is affectionately described as being "a religious mutt." The metaphor suggests that the professor held a variety of beliefs from many different religions, just as a mutt is a dog that is a mixture of several breeds.

A third type of figure of speech is hyperbole (hī pər' bə lē). A hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the author makes an obvious exaggeration for emphasis or in order to create some other specific effect. Again, the reader must realize that the words do not literally mean what they say; the reader must interpret the author's intended meaning. Ask yourself if there is an exaggeration, and if so, what it is. Examples of hyperbole are, "My high school English teacher had eyes in the back of her head" and "I'm so exhausted that I could sleep for a week!" In the first example, the exaggeration is "had eyes in the back of her head." The meaning is that the teacher seemed to see everything that went on in the classroom. The exaggeration in the second example is "sleep for a week." The point the person wants to get across is how extremely tired he or she is.

The fourth figure of speech is personification (pər sä nə fə kā' shən). Personification is speaking about nonhuman or nonliving things as if they were human. The word person in personification makes it easy to remember the definition of this figure of speech. Ask yourself if something inanimate (nonliving) is being described as if it had human traits or behavior. An example of personification is, "Before I knew it, my credit card leaped out of my wallet and bought a CD player." The credit card is talked about as if it were a person: a credit card cannot on its own leap out of a wallet and make a purchase. The point the person is making is that he or she was unable to resist buying the CD player, that he or she didn't have any control over making the purchase. Another of the items in the Chapter 8 exercises stated, "Cancer cells disregard the 'rules' of normal cell division." In that sentence, cancer cells are personified. They cannot "disregard the rules" in the same sense that a person could consciously choose to disregard them.

The last figure of speech we'll focus on is metonymy (mə tä' nə mē). In metonymy, a closely related term or symbol is substituted for what it represents, or some concrete term is used for a more abstract idea. Some examples are: "We have always been loyal to the crown," in which crown refers to the monarch (king or queen) and "Wall Street did not like the president's new economic plan," in which Wall Street represents the financial and business community (and meaning that stock prices dropped because brokerage firms and investors did not have confidence in the president's plan).

THE TECHNIQUE

RECOGNIZE AND INTERPRET SIMILES, METAPHORS, PERSONIFICATION, HYPERBOLES, AND METONYMY

As you read, watch for figurative language. Here are the questions and strategies you can use for each of the five figures of speech presented in this chapter.

Simile and metaphor: Is the author making a comparison between two seemingly dissimilar things? If so, in what significant way are they actually alike?

- Watch for the clue words like and as in similes.
- For both similes and metaphors, determine the two things that are being compared, and then decide in what important way they might be alike.

Hyperbole: Is the author using an obvious exaggeration?

- Determine what the exaggeration is.
- Decide what point the author is trying to make or what effect the author is trying to achieve with the exaggeration.

Personification: Is the author attributing human characteristics to nonliving things?

- Determine the nonliving thing that is being given human characteristics.
- Determine which human characteristics are being attributed to it.
- Decide the point the author is making.

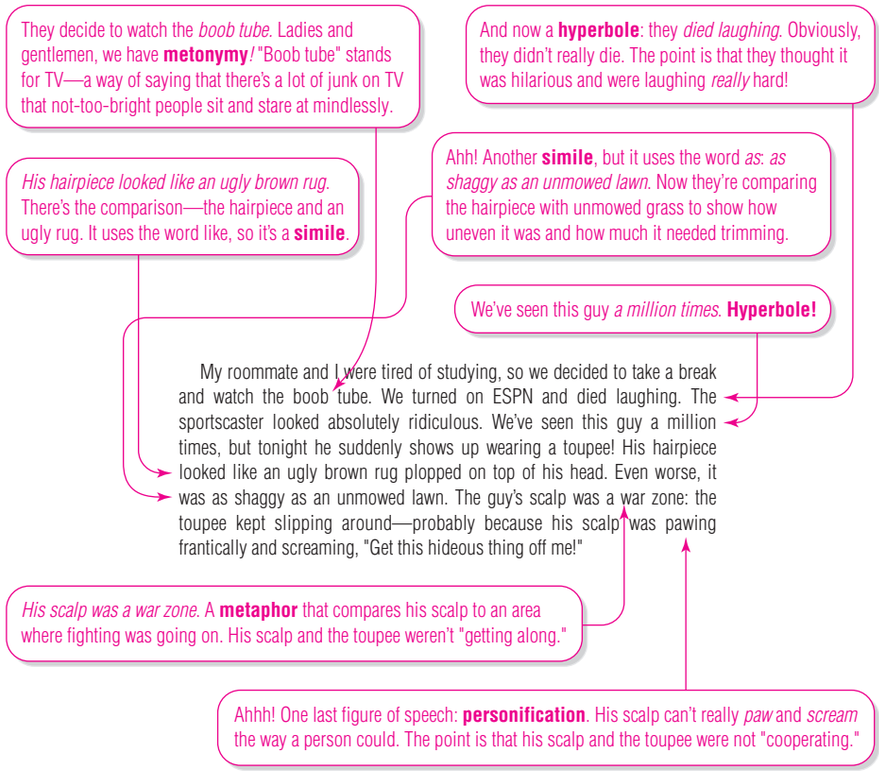
Metonymy: Is the author using one thing to represent something else?

- Determine what idea or object the closely related term or symbol represents.
- Determine what abstract concept a concrete term is used to represent.

THE TRAINER

APPLYING THE SKILL OF INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH

In the illustration is a short passage I made up. It contains all five figures of speech described in this chapter. Read it, then read the effective reader's thoughts that appear in color to see how our reader interprets each figure of speech in the passage.



THE EDGE

POINTERS FROM THE COACH ABOUT INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH

- "Figures of speech" and "figurative language" are different names for the same thing.
  Enough said. No problem.

- The important thing to remember about figurative language is that the words do not mean what they appear to be saying: you must interpret them.
  I know I'm repeating myself, but this is the key to understanding figurative language. If you take figurative language literally, you will completely misunderstand the point the author is trying to make. (Whenever you read something that sounds odd or doesn't make sense, ask yourself if the author is using figurative language.)

- Understanding the meaning of a figure of speech is more important that identifying the type of figure of speech.
  It's nice to be able to tell a simile from a metaphor: it can come in really handy if you want to impress your English teacher or someone at a fancy cocktail party. It's more important, however, that you be able to correctly interpret the meaning of the figure of speech. Don't get hung up on the type of figure of speech to the point that you stop focusing on its meaning.

- There are several other common types of figures of speech.
  Here are definitions and examples of several other common figures of speech. You probably learned (or will learn) about them in an English or literature

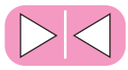
course. They can be especially helpful in understanding and appreciating poems, short stories, novels, and other literary works. Some of these definitions are from Robert DiYanni's Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama (compact ed., New York, McGraw-Hill, 2000) or are based on his definitions. Although you may not know these types of figurative language by name, you use many of them in your own speech and writing.

Alliteration	The repetition of consonant sounds, especially at the beginning of words (as in "the sweet smell of success" or the popular song, "walking in a winter wonderland"). Here's a neat definition of my own that not only defines alliteration, but also uses alliteration (the S's): "a series of syllables that starts with the same or similar sounds." (Okay, it can be words, not just syllables, but you get the idea.)
Apostrophe	Addressing an absent person, an abstract quality (such as honor or grief), or a nonexistent or mythological character (such as a Greek god or goddess) as though present (as in the opening line of John Donne's poem, "Death, be not proud," in which he is speaking to Death as if it were a person).
Assonance	The repetition of similar vowel sounds in a sentence or a line of poetry, as in "I rose and told him of my woe."
Litotes	Understatement; that is, saying something is much less than it actually is (for example, "Having your kneecap broken is somewhat painful" or "Buying a new Ferrari will set you back a few bucks").
Onomatopoeia	Using words that imitate the sound they describe (such as hiss, buzz, smack, hum, murmur, crunch, and crack).
Verbal irony	Using words to mean the opposite of what they appear to be saying, often to create a humorous or cutting effect. (Perhaps the most famous example of verbal irony occurs in Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar. Brutus has assassinated Caesar, the emperor. Marc Antony in his oration over Caesar's body makes this cutting, sarcastic remark about Caesar's murderer: "Brutus is an honorable man." In Jonathan's Swift's satire, A Modest Proposal, Swift suggests that the starving Irish sell their babies to the English landlords, who can cook them and eat them. Of course he is being savagely, humorously ironic about the terrible famine in Ireland, and means nothing of the sort.)
Situational irony	An occurrence that is contrary to what is expected or intended. In other words, there is a discrepancy between what happens and what is expected to happen. (For example, while vacationing in another state, I saw a newspaper headline that said, "Coordinator of Drunk Driving Prevention Program Arrested for DWI." It was ironic because a person responsible for preventing drunken driving was arrested for driving while intoxicated. (Coach's observation: Apparently a person can be ironic and stupid at the same time.) Other examples: You work so that you can make your car payments, but the reason you need a car is so that you can get to work. In literature, O. Henry's short stories are famous for their ironic twists. In "The Ransom of Red Chief," the child

the kidnappers abduct is such a terror that they end up paying the parents to take him back.)

Synecdoche — A figure of speech in which a part is substituted for the whole or the whole stands for a part. An example of a part being used to represent the whole is "The ranch has several hired hands," in which hands represents people who use their hands to do physical labor. An example of the whole representing a part is ranch (the whole) representing the ranch owner. Another example is "Call the law," in which law (the whole) means a police officer (a single "unit" of the police). A newspaper article about the rampant abuse of Pentagon-issued credit cards among defense employees was captioned, "Pentagon Workers Abuse Plastic." It is perfect example of synecdoche, with "plastic" representing "credit cards."

THE REPLAY



REMEMBERING THE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FROM THE CHAPTER

You now know that figures of speech are nonliteral ways of saying things, and that the words have to be interpreted in order for you to understand the author's meaning. Take a minute and try to write out from memory what each of these figures of speech is. Review them first, of course. Writing the definitions in your own words will help you remember them. After you have written the definition, give an example that you have made up.

Simile

_____

_____

_____

Example: _____

Metaphor

_____

_____

Example: _____

Hyperbole

_____

_____

Example: _____

Personification

_____

_____

Example: _____

Metonymy

_____

_____

Example: _____

How are you doing at this point? Do figures of speech seem to be making sense? Take a minute and write your assessment of your understanding of the material in this chapter:

Review the "secrets of success" that you learned at the beginning of this book (pages S1–S26). Choose one "secret" and tell how you could use it to make yourself more successful at this point:

THE PRACTICE

APPLY THE SKILL OF INTERPRETING FIGURES OF SPEECH

SET 1

Exercises: Interpreting Figures of Speech

Read each of the selections below. The figure of speech is in italics. Select the answer choice that correctly answers each question. I've asked you a couple of questions about each figure of speech, but the questions are short. I've also included an introduction to a selection whenever I thought it would be helpful.

Take a minute to loosen up and relax, and then begin this set. If you get stuck on a particular selection, try to reason out the best answer, jot it down, put a question mark beside it, and then go on to the next one. Just remember to go back and make a final decision on those you questioned.

Selection 1

This item is from the Chief Joseph essay excerpt that appeared in the Chapter 11 exercises. Chief Joseph's remarks were published in the North American Review after his tribe surrendered to the U.S. Cavalry in 1877.

> My friends, I have been asked to show you my *heart.* I am glad to have a chance to do so. I want the white people to understand my people. Some of you think an Indian is like a wild animal.

_____ 1. The figure of speech is a
- a. simile.
- b. metonymy.
- c. hyperbole.
- d. personification.

_____ 2. The meaning of heart is
- a. his deepest feelings and beliefs.
- b. the battle scars on his chest.
- c. his kindness.
- d. his generosity.

Selection 2

This is the same excerpt, but a different figure of speech is italicized.

> My friends, I have been asked to show you my heart. I am glad to have a chance to do so. I want the white people to understand my people. Some of you think *an Indian is like a wild animal.*

_____ 3. The figure of speech is a
- a. simile.
- b. metaphor.
- c. hyperbole.
- d. personification.

_____ 4. The meaning is
- a. Indians like to live outdoors and in the wild.
- b. Indians are savage and uncivilized.
- c. Indians are free-spirited.
- d. Indians like being around wild animals.

Selection 3

In the selection these two excerpts are taken from, the author's topic is marriage, divorce, and family. She discusses other people's perceptions of divorce and how her own perceptions changed when she divorced. She says that people assume that divorce is entered into lightly, that blame must always be placed, and that the divorce could have been prevented if those involved had just tried harder or done things differently.

> *A non-functioning marriage is slow asphyxiation. . . .* It is sharing your airless house with the threat of suicide or other kinds of violence, while the ghost that whispers, "Leave here and destroy your children," has passed over every door and nailed it shut. Disassembling a marriage under these circumstances is as much fun as amputating your own gangrenous leg. You do it, if you can, to save a life—or two, or more.
>
> *Source:* Barbara Kingsolver, "Stone Soup" from *High Tide in Tucson* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995). Also in Jack O'Keefe, *Invitation to Reading and Writing* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), pp. 255–56.

_____ 5. The meaning of the metaphor "a non-functioning marriage is slow asphyxiation" is:

a. Each person in the marriage needs to be given "room to breathe."
b. A bad marriage could be "resuscitated" if both people worked hard at it.
c. The deterioration of a marriage occurs over a long period of time.
d. A bad marriage gradually "destroys" those who are involved.

> Once you've weathered the straits, you get to cross the tricky juncture from casualty to survivor. If you're *on your feet* at the end of a year or two, and have begun putting together a happy new existence, those friends who were kind enough to feel sorry for you when you needed it must now accept you back to the ranks of the living. If you're truly blessed, they will *dance at your second wedding.* Everybody else, for heaven's sake, should stop *throwing stones.*
>
> *Source:* Barbara Kingsolver, "Stone Soup" from *High Tide in Tucson* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995). Also in Jack O'Keefe, *Invitation to Reading and Writing* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), p. 256.

_____ 6. In the metonymy "If you're on your feet," on your feet means

a. you haven't been destroyed by the experience.
b. you are standing upright.
c. you stay busy and keep moving constantly.
d. you are again alert and sharp-witted.

_____ 7. The meaning of the metonymy in [friends will] "dance at your second wedding" is that your friends

a. like to celebrate special occasions with you.
b. like to dance.
c. never doubted that you would remarry.
d. support your decision to create a new life with someone else.

_____ 8. In the last sentence, the author says that everyone else should "stop throwing stones." In this metonymy, throwing stones represents
a. hurling rocks.
b. giving unwanted advice.
c. expressing criticism and disapproval.
d. worrying over things that cannot be changed.

Selection 4

Poverty is *an acid that drips on pride* until pride is worn away. Poverty is a *chisel that chips on honor* until honor is worn away. Some of you say that you would do something in my situation, and maybe you would, for the first week or the first month, but for year after year after year?

Source: Jo Goodwin Parker, "What Is Poverty?" in Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith, eds., *75 Readings: An Anthology,* 8th ed., p. 109. Copyright © 2001 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

_____ 9. The two figures of speech are both
a. similes.
b. metaphors.
c. hyperboles.
d. personifications.

_____10. In what ways are acid and chisels similar in their effects to the effect of poverty?
a. They are dangerous.
b. People use them.
c. They erode or wear away things over time.
d. They can be obtained at building supply stores.

Selection 5

This item is excerpted from a piece in which the author takes a humorous approach to explaining how to paint a fresco. Fresco is a complicated technique that involves painting on fresh, moist plaster (on ceilings or walls) with pigments dissolved in water.

You should already have extensive drawings of your fresco—*these will be much sought by scholars and collectors in centuries to come.* Make a full-size sketch, on sturdy paper, of a section of the fresco that you can paint in a day.

Source: Adam Goodheart, "How to Paint a Fresco," in Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith, eds., *75 Readings: An Anthology,* 8th ed., pp. 100–01. Copyright © 2001 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

_____11. The figure of speech is
a. simile.
b. metaphor.
c. hyperbole.
d. personification.

Selection 6

This is from a selection in which the writer tells about his experience with a man who snorkels rivers in an effort to help save them from the threat of pollution.

We passed through a few modest sets of rapids, where the current abruptly accelerated and the boulders came blitzing at me *like linebackers who must be straight-armed away.* After two hours of cruising we were nearly hypothermic, but the experience had been delightful.

Source: David Quammen, "Alias Benowitz Shoe Repair," in Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith, eds., *75 Readings: An Anthology,* 8th ed., p. 61. Copyright © 2001 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

_____12. In the simile, what is being compared?
a. sets of rapids and boulders
b. sets of rapids and the currents
c. boulders and linebackers
d. the currents and linebackers

_____13. In what way are they alike?
a. Both are choppy and rough.
b. Both come at you with great speed and must be avoided to prevent harm.
c. Both are cold and wet.
d. Both are delightful and refreshing.

Selection 7

This excerpt describes how NASA engineers solved the problem of a tiny flaw in the mirrors of the $1.5 billion Hubble space telescope after it had been launched into orbit.

NASA engineers rethought the problem for months, devising, and discarding, one potential fix after another. Finally, after bringing *a fresh eye* to the situation, they formulated a daring solution that involved sending a team of astronauts into space. Once there, a *space-walking Mr. Goodwrench* would install several new mirrors in the telescope, which could refocus the light and compensate for the original flawed mirror.

Source: Robert S. Feldman, *P.O.W.E.R. Learning,* p. 17. Copyright © 2000 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

_____14. The phrase a fresh eye is a metonymy that is used to mean
a. a new engineer.
b. a modified time table.
c. different, innovative equipment.
d. a new perspective or point of view.

_____15. In the final sentence, the term space-walking Mr. Goodwrench means
a. an astronaut who had the skills to repair the space telescope.
b. a person who is trained to repair mechanical things.
c. a person trained specifically to repair mirrors.
d. a person who has the expertise to repair telescopes.

Selection 8

In this excerpt, the author's mother is describing her young son's obsessive–compulsive behavior to his teacher. (He has a psychological disorder that, among other things, causes him to feel terrible anxiety unless he touches certain objects in a certain way a specific number of times.) The author recounts his experience as he eavesdrops on his mother's conversation.

"Oh, you mean the touching," my mother said. She studied the ashtray that sat before her on the table, narrowing her eyes much *like a cat catching sight of a squirrel.* Her look of fixed concentration suggested that nothing else mattered. *Time had stopped,* and *she was deaf to the sounds of the rattling fan and my sisters' squabbling out in the driveway.* She opened her mouth just slightly, running her tongue over her upper lip, and then she inched forward, her index finger prodding the ashtray as though it were a sleeping thing she was trying to wake. I had never seen myself in action, but a sharp, stinging sense of recognition told me that my mother's impersonation had been accurate.

Source: David Sedaris, *Naked* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997), p. 13.

_____16. In "narrowing her eyes much like a cat catching sight of a squirrel," the meaning of the simile is
a. she has narrow eyes like a cat's eyes.
b. she likes to watch cats hunt squirrels.
c. she has spotted something that captures her complete attention.
d. the ashtray was shaped like a squirrel.

_____17. What figures of speech are time had stopped and she was deaf to the sounds of the rattling fan and my sisters' squabbling out in the driveway?
a. similes
b. metaphors
c. hyperboles
d. personifications

Selection 9

These famous lines are from Shakespeare's play, Macbeth.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time . . .

_____18. What is being personified?
a. tomorrow
b. a petty pace
c. the day
d. the last syllable of recorded time

_____19. In what way is it like a person?
a. It moves slowly but steadily.
b. It is petty.
c. It speaks in syllables.
d. It records time.

Selection 10

This selection is from the same humorous autobiography as Selection 8. The author is describing a time when he worked as a dishwasher in a cafeteria.

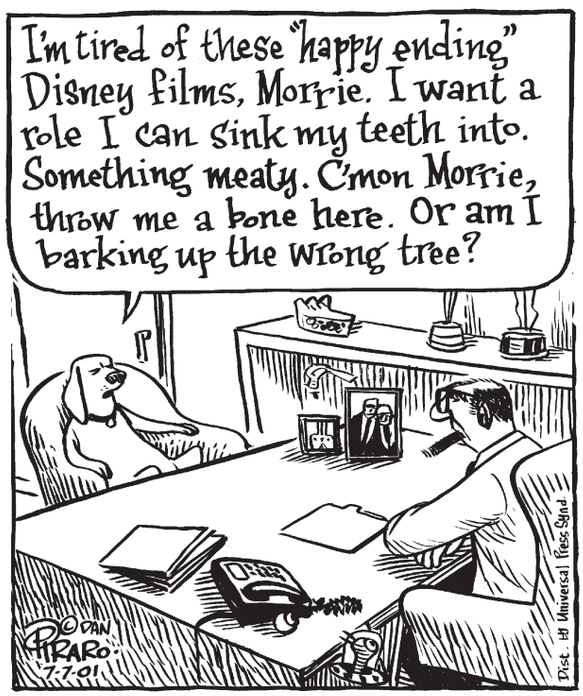
As a dishwasher, I spent my shifts yanking trays off a conveyer belt and feeding their contents into an enormous, foul-mouthed machine that roared and spat until its charges, free from congealed fat and gravy, came steaming out the other end, fogging my glasses and filling the air with the harsh smell of chlorine.

Source: David Sedaris, *Naked* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1997), p. 107.

_____20. What is the figurative language in this excerpt?
a. a simile comparing a person who is a dishwasher with a machine that washes dishes
b. a personification in which a dishwashing machine is described as foul-mouthed and as roaring and spitting
c. a hyperbole in which the cleaning power, noise, and smell of the machine are exaggerated
d. a metonymy in which the dishwashing machine represents unpleasant, undesirable jobs

Bonus Items

This cartoon is loaded with figures of speech. How's that for a great way to wrap up the first set!



Source: BIZARRO © 2001 by Dan Piraro. Reprinted with permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.

_____21. "Sink my teeth into" is an example of which figure of speech?
a. simile
b. personification
c. metonymy
d. metaphor

_____22. The expression means
a. get involved with something because it is challenging.
b. bite someone or something.
c. waste a great deal of time on something.
d. tear apart.

_____ 23. In the figurative expression "throw me a bone," bone should be interpreted to mean
a. something substantial to eat.
b. respect that is deserved.
c. the courtesy of listening to what I have to say.
d. a concession.

_____24. The meaning of the figurative expression "barking up the wrong tree" is
a. saying the lines of a script incorrectly.
b. negotiating with the wrong person.
c. requesting a role that includes singing.
d. wasting one's time on a futile effort.

25. The figures of speech that appear in the cartoon are ones that are frequently heard. In and of themselves, they are not funny. What is it that makes them funny in the cartoon?

"Spot" check (no, not the dog!): Take a minute to assess your experience on the Set 1 Practice Exercises. Were any figures of speech harder for you than the others? Write your analysis here. Be precise about what confuses you.

Exercises: Interpreting Figures of Speech

Read each of the selections below. This time you must (1) identify the figure of speech, and (2) interpret its meaning. To help you understand and enjoy the excerpts more fully, I've included introductions to them. First, though, use a couple of the techniques you've learned to relax and refocus yourself so that you are ready to concentrate on the task at hand: stretch, yawn, shrug your shoulders, rotate your head in a slow circle in one direction and then the other.

Selection 1

This excerpt is from Alexander Solzhenitsyn's acceptance speech for the 1970 Nobel Prize for Literature. Like many other Soviet writers and intellectuals, Solzhenitsyn spent years in the brutal forced labor prison camp in the Gulag Archipelago. In the excerpt he talks about the effect on his country of the deaths of thousands of political dissidents and other intellectuals who were imprisoned for their beliefs and who did not survive imprisonment.

> I was fated to survive, but others, perhaps more talented, stronger than I, perished. I myself met but few of them in the Gulag Archipelago, a multitude of scattered island fragments. Indeed, under the millstone of surveillance and mistrust, I did not talk to just any man; of some I only heard; and of others I only guessed. Those with a name in literature who vanished into that abyss are, at least, known; but how many were unrecognized, never once publicly mentioned? And so very few, almost no one ever managed to return. A whole national literature is there, buried without a coffin, without even underwear, naked, a number tagged on its toe. Not for a moment did Russian literature cease, yet from outside it seemed a wasteland. Where a harmonious forest could have grown, were left, after all the cutting, two or three accidentally overlooked.
>
> *Source:* Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Nobel Lecture,* F. D. Reeve, trans. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1972), p. 9.

1. What figure of speech has the author used when he says, "A whole national literature is there, buried without a coffin, without even underwear, naked, a number tagged on its toe"?

_____

_____

_____

2. In the last two sentences of the excerpt, what things are being compared?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Selection 2

In his poem entitled "I Meant to Do My Work Today," the poet Richard Le Gallienne reminds us that we need play in our lives, not just work. (An observation from your coach: Of course, you'll enjoy your "play time" more if you've already finished your work.)

I meant to do my work today,
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
And a butterfly flitted across the field,
And all the leaves were calling me.

And the wind went sighing over the land,
Tossing the grasses to and fro,
And a rainbow held out its shining hand
So what could I do but laugh and go?

Source: William J. Bennett, *The Book of Virtues* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), p. 385. Copyright © William J. Bennett. Reprinted with permission of Simon & Schuster.

3. What is personified in the first stanza (a stanza is a group of lines that form a unit of a poem) and in what way is it like a person?

_____

_____

4. What two things are personified in the second stanza, and in what ways are they like a person?

_____

_____

Selection 3

This is from stanza 17 of Canto I of the poem Don Juan by the English poet Lord Byron. In it he describes a woman named Donna Inez. A garrison is a military post.

Oh! She was perfect past all parallel—
Of any modern female saint's comparison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison . . .

5. What figure of speech does the poet use?

_____

6. What in the stanza do you base that on?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Selection 4

This excerpt is from a selection by British writer George Orwell, who is perhaps best known as the author of Animal Farm and 1984. In the excerpt below, he describes the hanging of a man in Burma, a country in southeast Asia that was a province of British India until 1948.

> There was a clanking noise, and then dead silence. The prisoner had vanished, and the rope was twisting on itself. I let go of the dog, and it galloped immediately to the back of the gallows; but when it got there it stopped short, barked, and then retreated into a corner of the yard, where it stood among the weeds, looking timorously out at us. We went round the gallows to inspect the prisoner's body. He was dangling with his toes pointed straight downwards, very slowly revolving, as dead as a stone.

Source: George Orwell, "A Hanging," in Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith, eds., *75 Readings: An Anthology,* 8th ed., p. 4. Copyright © 2001 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

7. What figure of speech is used in the final sentence of the paragraph?

_____

8. What comparison is being made and in what way are the two things alike?

_____

_____

Selection 5

This excerpt is from a selection by a Japanese woman. In it she talks about how Japanese girls were raised to be silent and yielding, and that "even possessions were accorded more rights" than females were (a hyperbole!).

> Emitting a hair-raising keening, my mittens would mourn for their mates. The floors I had scuffed, the doors I had slammed, herded me into the street. Broken dishes and dulled scissors joined them to form a large, shrill, and reproachful parade of dutiful ill-treated items. How I envied white children and the simple absolution of a spanking.

Source: Lydia Minatoya, "Discordant Fruit," in Santi Buscemi and Charlotte Smith, eds., *75 Readings: An Anthology,* 8th ed., p. 211. Copyright © 2001 McGraw-Hill. Reprinted by permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

9. What figure of speech is used throughout the paragraph?

_____

10. Give at least two examples of the figure of speech from the excerpt.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Selection 6

This selection is from a novel. Let me explain the first figure of speech, the personification of the building (sentence 1). In the paragraph preceding this one, the author says, "Real artists almost never live in studio apartments." Because of his reference to artists (who often wear berets), he says in the selection below that "this particular apartment donned its false beret." In other words, it wasn't the kind of place in which an artist would live. Lavoris, mentioned in the last sentence, refers to a brand of mouthwash.

> The building in which this particular studio apartment donned its false beret was built during the Great Depression. In Seattle there are many such buildings, anointing their bricks in the rain on densely populated hillsides between Lake Washington and Elliott Bay. Architecturally, its plain façade and straight lines echoed the gown Eleanor Roosevelt wore to the inaugural ball, while its interior walls still reproduced faithfully the hues of the split pea mush dished up in hundreds of soup kitchens. Over the years, the building had been so lived in that it had acquired a life of its own. Every toilet bowl gurgled like an Italian tenor with a mouthful of Lavoris, and the refrigerators made noises at night like buffalo grazing.
>
> *Source:* Tom Robbins, *Jitterbug Perfume* (New York: Bantam Books, 1984), p. 3.

11. What does the author mean when he says, "Architecturally, its plain façade and straight lines echoed the gown Eleanor Roosevelt wore to the inaugural ball"?

12. The last sentence contains two figures of speech of the same type. Which figure of speech is it, and what is the meaning of each?

Selection 7

This excerpt is from a short story by Daniel Chacon.

All the lawyers agreed, Andy's loyalty should be richly rewarded in the form of a Christmas gift. They chose Rachel Garcia, the youngest and newest of the attorneys, a recent Harvard graduate, to take up the collection. Carrying a cigar box around the floors of the firm, she managed to get fifty dollars from each of the partners, twenty-five from each of the attorneys, and ten dollars each from the paralegals and secretaries, so after a week of soliciting, she had collected $780. No one knew how much she had collected, nor did they care what she got him—"Something nice," they told her—so, embittered for being asked to do such a menial job, after having graduated at the top of her class, she walked to the parking garage in the drizzling snow, pulling her coat over her face like a vampire, tempted to suck a commission from the total. Perhaps, she thought, her black eyes glittering with ideas, she should spend a hundred bucks on a nice dinner, a bottle of red wine, and a seafood appetizer. Guilt, however, reminded her of Andy.

Source: Daniel Chacon, "Andy the Office Boy," in *Chicano Chicanery* (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 2000), p. 1.

13. In this excerpt, the author uses this simile when he describes Rachel "pulling her coat over her face like a vampire, tempted to suck a commission from the total." What two things are compared, and in what significant way are they alike?

14. What figure of speech appears in the last sentence, "Guilt, however, reminded her of Andy"? Explain why it is figurative language.

Selection 8

This well-known poem is by Robert Burns, an 18th-century poet who might well be called the national poet of Scotland. A few of the Scottish words may look a little strange, but most are similar to their English counterparts. On the basis of that and the context, you'll be able to figure them out. Bonnie is a Scottish word meaning "beautiful."

A RED, RED ROSE

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve is like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I,
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

Source: A Treasury of the World's Best Loved Poems (New York: Avenel Books, 1961), p. 75.

15. What figure of speech does the poet use in the first stanza, and what two comparisons are made?

_____

_____

16. What figure of speech is used throughout the last three stanzas? Give at least two examples from the poem. Why does the poet use this figure of speech?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you think you did? Answer that question, then jot down any questions you have about figures of speech and the interpretation of them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Exercises: Interpreting Figures of Speech

Read each of the selections below. Then identify the figure of speech and interpret its meaning. There are fewer items than in Set 2, but they may seem more challenging. (That's the whole point, of course.) Take a minute to breathe deeply, relax, and clear your mind so that you can concentrate. Then give your full attention to this final set of exercises on figurative language. I've included introductions to the selections.

Selection 1

This excerpt is from Candide, an 18th-century satire that is the most famous work of the French writer Voltaire. Because Candide is a satire, Voltaire uses devastating wit to attack the follies of war, the stupidity of governments, the injustices of religious persecution, and the greed of men. In this excerpt, Candide, the optimistic "hero" for whom the book is named, is talking with Senator Pococurante, an Italian nobleman who finds fault with everything. When you read the excerpt, it will help you to know that Homer was a Greek epic poet. Two masterpieces of world literature, The Iliad and The Odyssey, are attributed to Homer.

1 They sat down to dinner, and after an excellent meal adjourned to the library. Candide, seeing a copy of Homer in a splendid binding, complimented the noble lord on his good taste.

2 That is an author, said he, who was the special delight of great Pangloss, the best philosopher in all Germany.

3 He's no special delight of mine, said Pococurante coldly. I was once made to believe that I took pleasure in reading him; but that constant recital of fights which are all alike, those gods who are always interfering but never decisively, that Helen who is the cause of the war and then scarcely takes any part in the story, that Troy which is always under siege and never taken—all that bores me to tears. I have sometimes asked scholars if reading it bored them as much as it bores me; everyone who answered frankly told me the book dropped from his hands like lead, but that they had to have it in their libraries as a monument of antiquity, like those old rusty coins which can't be used in real trade.

Source: Voltaire, *Candide,* Norton critical ed., 2d ed., Robert M. Adams, trans. (New York: Norton, 1991), pp. 60–61.

The third paragraph contains several figures of speech. Identify each of these, and then explain why it represents that type of figurative language.

1. bores me to tears:_____

_____

2. the book dropped from his hands like lead:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. they had to have it [the book] in their libraries as a monument of antiquity, like those old rusty coins which can't be used in real trade:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Selection 2

A prolific writer and avid baseball fan, the Canadian writer W. P. Kinsella is perhaps best known as the author of the baseball novel Shoeless Joe (1982). The 1989 movie "Field of Dreams," which starred Kevin Costner, was based on it.

1 The field sits breathless in the orangy glow of the evening sun. I stare at the potato-colored earth of the infield, that wide, dun arc, surrounded by plastic grass. As I contemplate the prickly turf, which scorches the thighs and buttocks of a sliding player as if he were being seared by hot steel, it stares back in its uniform ugliness. The seams that send routinely hit ground balls veering at tortuous angles are vivid, gray as scars.

2 I remember the ballfields of my childhood, the outfields full of soft hummocks and brown-eyed gopher holes.

3 I stride down from the stands and walk out to the middle of the field. I touch the stubble that is called grass, take off my shoes, but find it is like walking on a row of toothbrushes. It was an evil day when they stripped the sod from this ballpark, cut it into yard-wide swathes, rolled it, memories and all, into great green-and-black cinnamon roll shapes, trucked it away. Nature temporarily defeated. But Nature is patient.

Source: W. P. Kinsella, "The Thrill of the Grass," in *The Norton Book of Sports,* George Plimpton, ed. (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 123.

Identify each of these figures of speech, and then explain why it represents that type of figurative language.

4. The field sits breathless (paragraph 1) _____

_____

5. As I contemplate the prickly turf, which scorches the thighs and buttocks of a sliding player as if be were being seared by hot steel, it stares back in its uniform ugliness. (There are two figures of speech in this sentence from paragraph 1. Identify both of them.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. I touch the stubble that is called grass, take off my shoes, but find it is like walking on a row of toothbrushes. (paragraph 3) _____

_____

_____

7. But Nature is patient. (paragraph 3) _____

_____

Selection 3

This excerpt is from a speech given by Englishman Henry Huxley during the Victorian Age (1837–1900), a period of great cultural achievement. The topic of his speech, which he gave to students enrolled at a men's college in London, is what it means to have a liberal education.

> It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigor of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education, which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments. . . .
>
> That man, I think, has had a liberal education, who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.
>
> *Source:* Thomas Henry Huxley, "A Liberal Education," speech delivered at South London Working Men's College, London, 1868.

Identify the figure of speech in each sentence below. Then explain why it represents that type of figurative language. (This time, the figures of speech are not italicized.)

8. "Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education, which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments." (first paragraph)

_____

_____

_____

9. ". . . his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of" (second paragraph)

_____

10. ". . . whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work" (second paragraph)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Selection 4

This excerpt is from the novel *Rosie* by Anne Lamott. Rosie is a 13-year-old who plays competitive tennis.

1 "Well, I gotta go. Come over at four," said Sharon, leaving Rosie off at the boardwalk.

2 "Okay. See ya." She watched Sharon walk away. There was over five dollars in the pocket of her voluminous shorts, and nearly an hour and a half to kill. And she couldn't go home.

3 Rosie was lonelier than anyone had ever been before, except for Typhoid Mary. Everything felt wrong, like a creepy dream, and she was afraid she was going to die: Rosie was stoned with fear.

4 She bought a package of bubble gum at the five and dime, where she saw herself in a full-length mirror: ugly, skinny, evil. Her eyebrows looked like caterpillars. Her heavy black curls and her eyes were devilish, like that lady with snakes for hair, whose face turned you to stone. Don't look! Turn away! But for a moment, she didn't move a muscle.

Source: Anne Lamott, *Rosie* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 189.

11. What is the hyperbole in the sentence, Rosie was lonelier that anyone had ever been before, except for Typhoid Mary? What is the meaning of the figurative language?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What is the figure of speech in Her eyebrows looked like caterpillars (paragraph 4), and what is being compared? What is the meaning of the figurative language?

Selection 5

In this selection the author tells of his struggle with heroin addiction.

1 I never thought I'd hear the words heroin and chic mentioned in the same sentence. But lately the two have been paired, in movies and other pop culture. This shakes me to my very soul, as I recall the private hell that heroin brought to my life for over 20 years.

2 A single decision can determine one's life path. My seminal moment came on my nineteenth birthday. A friend stopped by to help me celebrate. At the time, I'd been experimenting with all kinds of illicit drugs. Marijuana had been the first. Soon the world was a veritable candy store: alcohol, uppers, downers, psychedelics—there was a pharmaceutical cocktail for every mood. Combine this with the invincibility of youth, and life became one long party. Or so it seemed. My true goal was self-anesthetization from the pains of life.

3 On my nineteenth birthday, however, I crossed a further threshold. For the first time, I tried heroin, and the drug became my life partner for the next two decades.

4 At first, there were no meetings in dark alleys or dingy bars. Drug use was easy and attractive. Heroin was just another adventure. A negative experience might have been the best thing to happen on that nineteenth birthday, but that wasn't the case. I felt right at home in the sedated euphoria caused by the drug.

5 The insidious danger of heroin is that in early use, you're in control. You feel you can take it or leave it; therefore, quitting holds no urgency.

6 Year after year passed. I went to school and became a social worker. It was all right; I just needed to use responsibly. Can you believe that? A responsible heroin addict.

7 By age 30, the addiction was a way of life. The pain was great, an all-consuming dull throb of hopelessness and dependence that possessed my life. Greeting the day was a chore of the greatest magnitude. Sometimes I would sleep until 5:00 P.M. because the light was too revealing. I was a creature of the night, a vampire sucking family and friends for all they were worth.

Source: Daniel Zanoza, *The American Enterprise,* September/October 1997. Reprinted with permission of *The American Enterprise,* a magazine of Politics, Business, and Culture.

13. What one figure of speech is used in all of these: the world was a veritable candy store, life became one long party, and I was a creature of the night, a vampire sucking family and friends for all they were worth?

14. What does the author mean when he says, the world was a veritable candy store? (paragraph 2)

15. What is the figure of speech in the drug became my life partner for the next two decades, and what does it mean? (paragraph 3)

Selection 6

This poem is by Billy Collins, a widely published, award-winning poet who was appointed Poet Laureate of the United States for 2001–2002. In addition, he holds the title of Distinguished Professor of English at Lehman College at City University of New York. This poem will mean even more to you now that you know Collins teaches English (and, therefore, poetry) to college students.

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to water-ski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Source: Billy Collins, *Sailing Around the Room Alone* (New York: Random House, 2001), p. 16.

16. What are the two figures of speech in the first four lines, and what is the poet's meaning?

Figures of speech:_____

_____

Explanations: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. In the last two stanzas (the final five lines), the writer says that students want to "tie the poem to a chair with rope and torture a confession out of it" and that "they begin beating it with a hose to find out what it really means." What figure of speech occurs in these lines? What is the meaning?

Figure of speech: _____

Explanation: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Bonus Item

(Tell your instructor I said to give you an extra point if you get this one right.)

The poem "Results and Roses," in the Chapter 11 exercises, contains the line "Must bend his back and dig." (The first stanza is given below.)

The man who wants a garden fair,
Or small or very big,
With flowers growing here and there,
Must bend his back and dig.

In the metonymy, what does back represent?

_____

_____

_____

Hats off to you! You've completed the first of the two chapters on literary skills! Keep moving—there's only one chapter left to go in this section. Stop and reflect on your experience with Chapter 12. What do you still need to learn? What do you need more practice on? What do you feel you've mastered?