

Metaphorical & Allegorical Writing

by

J.B. Webster

Grades Seven & Up

Webster's Academy for Excellence in Writing

Metaphorical and Allegorical Writing

I Metaphors & Similes: to enhance description

1. In preparation for the wedding, our house (simile) was like a beehive or our house (metaphor) was a beehive of activity.
2. The classroom (simile) was as chaotic as a zoo or the classroom (metaphor) was a zoo.
3. His life (simile) resembled a three act tragedy. His life (metaphor) was a three-act stage play.

II Metaphorical Writing: to enhance description

1. Expand the metaphor to one paragraph.
2. In the topic state the metaphor & return to it in the clincher.
3. In the details use the vocabulary of the comparison e.g. the apiary: hive, worker bees, drones, queen, honeycomb & swarm.

III Model Metaphorical Paragraph: A Bee's Eye View of the City

From atop the slimline & skinny skyscraper the city had been transformed into a giant restless beehive. While the workers like automobiles arrived & departed in long lines, head to butt on the roads far below, those bees leaving from & returning to the hive in the hunt for honey & food were taking off & landing on the helipad which buzzed with activity, off to the south. Considering the frenetic comings & goings at the helipad which was as brisk & busy as a swarm of bees in a basin, the city seemed guaranteed good weather because, "if bees fly, the days are dry." Bustling with movement, a construction site to the near west was honeycombed with rooms where hundreds of workers were either moving up & down or like drones – the welfare burns – crossing side to side. They seemed busy as bees. Restlessly thousands of insects in a park far below appeared prepared to swarm as they milled about, weaving in & out, apparently waiting for their new queen to emerge. It seemed a good omen since according to ancient proverbs in apiculture "a swarm in May was worth a load of hay, while a swarm in July wasn't worth a fly" because after the spring flowers had died, filling a new hive with honey before the onset of winter became a difficult, if not impossible task. One might spend hours gazing at the city – apiary because of so much

movement, so much activity and hence so much to watch & to learn from this bee's eye view of the city.

IV Allegorical Writing: to explain a difficult concept or idea.

1. Expand the metaphor to a three-paragraph story.
2. The major topic in para I & the minor ones in II & III (and related clinchers) must refer to the metaphor.
3. Like a story, the allegory should progress: beginning, middle, end.
4. Famous allegories include: Plato's, "Allegory of the Cave," The Republic.
Shakespeare's allegorical poem, "All the World's a Stage."
Jomo Kenyatta, "The Gentlemen of the Jungle," African Short Stories.

V A Three-Act Play: An Allegory

by

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Life is a three-act stage play, sometimes a tragicomedy, more often a morality play & most often a tragedy. Basically Act I lays the foundation when three interacting sub-plots determines the lead actor's later life; his genetic inheritance, his education & his decision about a partner. While the play begins before the curtain rises with a DNA profile on a large screen TV & with a modern witch explaining its strengths, weaknesses & possibilities, it foreshadows future crucial & seminal events. Spanning world cultures & major religions, education is shown in scene four to develop understanding, appreciation & empathy for them while being painful as Plato argues. The hero's soliloquy is convincing. Education should not train for a career because the aims of training are normally in direct conflict with the objectives of education. Finally choice of partner is a game of chance in which success or failure depends upon the toss of a dice. In Act I the secondary characters become major because the lead actor appears late, because the parents are so influential & because of a host of minor characters. Hence in Act I the spotlight focuses & falls fiercely & predominantly upon three factors, one determined before the hero's entrance, another governed primarily by him & the third by the lottery he plays just before the curtain. As the curtain falls, the footlights come up blue & purple & his DNA chart again appears. Does it demonstrate that the

hero's genes have influenced or determined his attitude to education & choice of partner? The suggestion of a fatal flaw or genetic determinism by the interpreting witch is obvious as Act I lays the foundation or setting for the other two acts which will determine whether this play becomes comedy or tragedy.

Act II of life's journey covers the middle thirty years of man's brief span, usually the working years preoccupied with & dominated by career & children. While some men set goals – money or fame, gratitude or rampant reproduction – others drift with none or vaguely pursue “happiness,” an ill-defined objective, almost impossible to judge or quantify as the second soliloquy in scene 3 – “to judge or not to judge” – points out quite graphically. The wisest seek to do as little harm as possible, using the understanding, appreciation & empathy developed in their study of the macro-setting of international & ecumenical relations to infuse & lubricate their micro-environment of family & relatives, neighbourhood & community. Applying the twin concepts of the golden mean & golden rule, they may judge historical & current events in both their macro- & micro-environments while applying both as rules not only to judge but to govern behaviour as well. Obey the golden rules. Let them govern you. Judge others by them. Considering the partner lottery, more than half must role the dice at least twice before finding someone they can live with, without near & constant danger of murder. Few find real compatibility. By scene 6 has our hero abandoned all goals & is he settling for mere domestic peace in his second throw of the dice? In scene 8 spotlights focus on the children, their guidance being an important sub-plot. Obviously by the curtain it becomes clearly shown that the partner has abandoned the hero & his goals because she is devoting herself entirely to catering to the children which is disastrous to her, to the partnership & to the children. When the curtain falls the witch with his DNA charts returns & shows that the genetic patterns which remained incompatible between mother & father have been forced together in the DNA makeup of their offspring. With warring DNA, the children are beginning to show symptoms of schizophrenia, bi-polarism & psycho-sexual disfunction. Consequently by the end of Act II, the audience knows, it is in for a tragedy in the first degree. Foreshadowing is clear.

The finale or Act III of life's drama – the final thirty years – involved retirement & second childhood. In Shakespeare's allegory, “All the world's a stage/ And all the men & women merely

players," the picture is somberly painted. When a man became "lean & slippered" with a shrunk shank" second childishness led to "mere oblivion/ Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste & sans everything." Old age was gloomy indeed. Not surprisingly the final act of the three-act play, has seven scenes in line with the bard's seven ages of man, where the whole cast of characters sits discussing the joyful & artful irresponsibility of the hero. They disappear by ones & twos until the final scene where he finds himself alone. It represented the dying off of a generation but it gave an opportunity for a public discussion of what was appropriate for old age. Must it be all gloom & doom or could it be a ready & raucous ride to a grave in the ground as the hero had shown. Relieved of the burdens of making money & worrying about children, the hero had reveled in & enjoyed his second childhood or more correctly his second teenage which he had turned into an age of irresponsible merriment. If he forgot parental duties, it was blamed on Alzheimer's, if delinquent in social etiquette on senility & if sexually experimental, an excuse for incarceration in a senior citizens lock up. It was carefree joy. It was his reward. Loved & lived longer. Following a soliloquy in which he laid out his philosophy of eat, drink & be merry because to-morrow cometh the dismal darkness of death & dust, the witch suddenly appeared, only to be rudely dismissed. Generations of critics would debate who the witch represented: clergyman or guru? psychologist or geneticist? or a composite reflecting the deadening consensus of the early twenty first century? As the actor slowly stretched out in a large wing-backed leather chair, the floodlights revolve from bright yellow to blood red, then moonlight silver. Finally black as life's three-act play comes to a close. A slow closing curtain.

Subject-Verb-Object: English as a Second Language

Using

Structure and Style in Composition

by

J.B. Webster

Fox, Crow

1. squatted, branch
2. walked
3. gripped, piece
4. flattered, beauty
5. crouched
6. flattered, voice
7. cawed
8. cheese dropped
9. grabbed
10. walked, forest

Wolf! Wolf!

- herded cattle, slopes
asked, attacked
became bored, shouted
hustled up
assured, was joking
warned, not to shout
promised
shouted again, ignored
killed
sorrowful

What we are teaching and Practicing

1. The
2. pronouns, subject, object
3. past tense verbs “ed”
4. Synonyms
5. Sentence openers
6. Dress up

2. Pronouns

<u>Subjective</u>	<u>Objective</u>
I, he, she it	me, him her it
We you they	us, you, them

4. Synonyms in Wolf! Wolf!

boy: lad, youth, child,
young man, he, him.

6. Dress Up
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1) who/which | 2) because |
| 3) <u>www.asia</u> | 4) “ly” |
| | 5) dual verbs |

1. The

- Rule before 90% of nouns.
* Never before names “John” or one-name countries ex. The Netherlands
* Always before two names ex. South Africa
* The big barn Her purse

3. Past Tense Verbs

Classy & easy: use “ed”
Avoid cheap & difficult: see-saw-seen, do-did, go-went, was-were, come-came

5. Sentence Openers

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. subject | 4. ing/ed |
| 2. Prepositional | 5. <u>www.asia</u> |
| 3. “Ly” | 6. VSS |

The Fox & the Crow

Add sentence openers		subject-verb-object	Pronouns
No major word repeat		all verbs "ed" "The"	
1. When morning dawned,	5	The crow squatted on the branch.	leave as is
At dawn	2		
2. Thinking of his empty stomach,	4	The fox walked along the road	leave
Quietly	3		
3. Firmly	3	The crow gripped a piece of cheese	subject
as is	1		
In her beak	2		
4. Hoping to distract her,	4	The fox flattered the crow about her beauty	subject +
Cunningly	3		object
5. As is	6	The crow crouched quietly. [No object]	subject
Ignoring the fox,	4		
6. Since the crow seemed	5	The fox flattered the crow about her voice	subject +
gullible, As is	1		object
7. As is	6	The crow cawed. [No object]	subject
Loudly	3		
8. While the fox rejoiced,	5	The cheese dropped near the fox	object
In a sad slip	2		
9. In a flash	2	The fox grabbed the cheese.	subject +
As is	6		object
10. Wagging his tail,	4	The fox walked into the forest	leave
As the crow wept,	5		

Dress up

- 5 When morning dawned, the
Crow squatted on the branch.
- 3 Quietly the fox walked along the
road. which meandered through the forest.
- 2 In her beak she gripped a piece
of cheese tightly gripped
- 4 Hoping to distract her, he
flattered her about her beauty. because the fox hoped to get the
crow to speak.
- 6 She crouched quietly.
- 1 He flattered her about her voice melodious singing voice.
- 3 Loudly she cawed cawed & sang.
- 5 While the fox rejoiced, the cheese
dropped near him.
- 2 In a flash he grabbed it. while thinking how clever he was.
- 4 Wagging his tail, the fox walked
into the forest.

Webster's Academy for Excellence in Writing

Kamikaze Chickens: Advanced Decorations

by
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High School

Kamikaze Chickens: Advanced Decorations

by J.B. Webster
Inspired by Travelblog
in the Globe & Mail, August 5, 2006



Structural	Stylistic (Imagery)
<i>Mark in left margin: one from each category in every paragraph</i>	
1. dramatic opening/closing	1. simile
2. 3 sss	2. metaphor
3. conversation/quotations	3. alliteration/assonance
4. question in topic/elsewhere	4. personification
5. transition	5. irony/sarcasm
6. reference	6. allusions/foreshadowing

Style
(Structural
decorations
underlined)

quotation

personification

foreshadowing

sarcasm

reference

Alison Garner writes an amusing story about her experiences on the roads of Africa with its amazing and daredevil chickens. Frequently the road networks in the continent range from terrible to disastrous such that local drivers must display courage and steely nerves with rare use of the brakes, which may or may not work. Pecking casually by the roadside an African chicken will choose the “exact moment for flying leaps which place them just centimeters beyond the wheels” as the car hurtles by while the bird inevitably lands safely on the opposite side. By close observations, it becomes obvious that those leaps of chicken faith are not random because the same flock will repeat the manoeuvre “in the opposite direction in front of vehicles coming along behind even before we were out of sight.” It was chicken bravado. While the males might claim bragging rights in the flock, even the females with tiny yellow chicks in tow would fly before the speeding vehicles with their brood intact as if determined to teach the next generation the sport of kamikaze leaping. In twenty years in Africa I never saw a chicken hit nor spotted a driver who swerved to avoid them. On the contrary, some young drivers would swerve specifically to target them. Older drivers understood the futility of such a prank. Nevertheless it was damaging to the driver’s ego to be outfoxed, outrun and outwitted by a chicken. According to Darwin’s theory, the unfit with poor timing had, eons ago, been eliminated from the gene pool of the African chicken.

Garner's story reminded me of my own experience. In Kampala, the capital of Uganda where we lived for a number of years, an average chicken could be bought for less than two dollars while in the rural north where I conducted research, they cost only fifteen cents each. Following a month-long stretch in the field conducting interviews, I and my mates decided to purchase and transport some chickens back to Kampala. Who could resist such a bargain? While in the market, I became carried away with excessive and ill-considered enthusiasm purchasing 100 hens, and deciding optimistically to ship them south by bus. Eagerly purchasing a large reed or wicker basket in which Africans carry their fowl, we watched as the driver tied the basket with its century of hens on the top of the bus. The bus pulled out. We followed in the car because we were worried that the basket might not be firmly fastened. None of us in the car considered what we would do if the basket slid off, spilling and spreading spastic hens over the savanna. Would male egos survive leaping through the grasses, falling into holes or stumbling over logs in a scramble for a few pennies worth of chicken flesh before a busload of squawking, gawking, mocking spectators? Men might wrestle hungry lions in such an arena. But chickens?

question

alliteration
irony

assonance allusion

d. open: transition
reference

The ancient contraption accelerated. When the bus pulled on to the highway, it was dangerously rocking from side to side because that was the nature of what a Ghanaian would call a "mammy wagon." At about eighty kilometers an hour those daredevil, kamikaze chickens began to wiggle and escape through the raffia. Suddenly flying off in all directions, they looked like an erupting exploding volcano. Some remained airborne for a couple of miles, landing far off in the trees or fields. One shot straight up. Into the blue. Momentarily disappearing. Catching the jet stream, it took off west still vigorously sailing until it disappeared over the horizon, possibly landing as a dove of peace during civic strife in neighboring Congo. Those closer to home were landing three hundred meters away in farmers' fields like raining hand grenades sprayed by a helicopter gunship. Gazing skyward, farmers who had been cultivating routinely must have thought the heavens had opened and sent a miracle much better than manna. Surely the gods had gone crazy. As the bus gained speed, the volcanic eruption intensified until a dozen hens could be seen in a spiral high into the sky. At the top of the spiral, they shot off in all directions like long ribbons of debris bouncing and flapping in the breeze. It was a community fowl supper, chicken "take-a-way" or "chicken-to-go". That evening in henhouses across northern Uganda, some chickens were claiming kamikaze bragging rights while farmers around their fires had marvelous even far fetched stories to tell. Only six hens reached Kampala and the family stewing pot. Each cost exactly \$2.50.

simile

3 sss

allusion reference

simile

allusion

simile

metaphor
personification

d. close