A special person — poetry lesson

Older students: metaphor poem
Younger students: simile poem

Lesson introduction

Discuss a metaphor or simile with the students. Check they understand the language feature.

Definitions:

A **metaphor** equates one thing to another, without the use of ‘like’ or ‘as’.
Example: You are my sunshine.

A **simile** compares one thing to another, often using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’.
Example: Her eyes were like blue sapphires.

1. Motivation

Introduce the special person for the poetry.

‘**Think, pair, share**’ ‘Who will you write your poem about?’
Ask students to describe their special person to their partner.

Share an exemplar

**Metaphor poem** — read one of the exemplar poems for Mothers’ Day
**Simile poem** — read ‘My Mum’ or ‘My Dad’ by Anthony Browne
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I74KmtKyhho](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I74KmtKyhho)

Ask the students: ‘What do you notice about this poem/text?’

**Metaphor poem**: Proper/pronoun is a ____ ____, ____. Example: My nana is an ocean, casting bad times away.
**Simile poem**: My dad can ... like a ... OR My dad’s as ... as a ...

2. Generating ideas

Discuss the metaphors/similes used by the author. Ask students to identify one that they think is unique and interesting and to share with their partner. Then share examples as a class.

‘**What will you compare your special person to?**’
Make a list of ideas. For metaphor poems, it works well to list possible categories. For example, **animals**, **special objects**, **nature**, **weather**, **special clothing**, **tasty food**.

Students could:
- list ideas on whiteboards
- share ideas with a partner
- go for a ‘walk and talk’ and share ideas with other students.
3. Possible criteria — unpack with the students and record visually

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early writers</th>
<th>Fluent writers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Write four similes (like a / as ___ as)</td>
<td>• Write four metaphors</td>
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| Note: consider choosing one option                                          | • Add more detail using the structure: Proper noun/pronoun is a ___ ing verb ...
| • A. (capital and full stop for each simile)                                | • Use interesting and unique comparisons                             |
| • New simile = new line                                                     |                                                                     |
| 🌟 Challenge: include four 'wow' words.                                      |                                                                     |

4. Mini-lesson and shared writing

Model writing a simile/metaphor using the structure above.
Examples:
*My nana is an ocean, casting bad times away.*
*My nana is like a crystal blue ocean.*

**Mini-lessons:** Students write a metaphor or simile about their special person.

**Partner-check:** Share the simile/metaphor with a partner and check it meets the criteria.

*Note: students could use this simile/metaphor in their poems.*

5. Independent writing

Students write their poem.

6. **Self-check** (Model this first if the students are not familiar with proofreading.)

*Read your poem in a quiet voice.*
*Does each simile/metaphor start with a capital and end with a full stop?*
*Check the structure of the simile/metaphor.*

7. **Partner-check** (Model this first if the students are not familiar with ‘partner-checking’.)

*I like … because …*

*Choose your favourite simile/metaphor. Identify it with an SS (super simile) or SM (super metaphor) in the margin.*

8. Wrap-up

Project an example of a poem from one of the students onto a screen/board (ask permission first).

1. Give the author feedback: *I like … because …*
2. Share the super metaphor or super simile.
3. Ask students to share their examples.

**Simile poem** – highlight/circle four ‘wow’ words (the challenge for the lesson).

**Metaphor poem**

*Can we improve one simile/metaphor?*

Ask students to work with their partner to improve a line in their poem.

For more information about the organisation of a writing lesson, refer to *The Writing Book* (Cameron and Dempsey, 2013). [www.thewritingbook.com](http://www.thewritingbook.com)