

# Just How Important is Metaphor?

*How deeply do you want to think about language's ability to express ideas and experiences?*

**The Metaphor Family:** Metaphor  
Simile  
Allegory, Parable  
Personification  
Euphemism  
Metonymy, Synecdoche

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**RESPOND/REFLECT:** What did you learn here? What were your thoughts/questions?

"It is metaphor above all else that gives clearness, charm and distinction to the style." ~ Aristotle

"The greatest thing by far, is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblance." ~ Aristotle

"If you remember only one thing I've said, remember that an idea is a feat of association, and the height of it is a good metaphor. If you have never made a good metaphor, then you don't know what it's all about." ~ Robert Frost

"It is precisely through metaphor that our perspectives, or analogical extensions, are made--a world without metaphor would be a world without purpose." ~ Kenneth Burke

"Metaphor is right at the bottom of being alive." ~ Fritjof Capra

"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass." ~ Anton Chekhov

"Science is all metaphor." ~ Timothy Leary

"Metaphors have a way of holding the most truth in the least space." ~ Orson Scott Card

"What I like in a good author is not what he says, but what he whispers." ~ Logan Pearsall Smith

"Language is memory and metaphor." ~ Storm Jameson

"All slang is metaphor, and all metaphor is poetry. If we paused for a moment to examine the cheapest cant phrases that pass our lips every day, we should find that they were as rich and suggestive as so many sonnets. To take a single instance: we speak of a man in English social relations "breaking the ice." If this were expanded into a sonnet, we should have before us a dark and sublime picture of an ocean of everlasting ice, the sombre and baffling mirror of the Northern nature, over which men walked and danced and skated easily, but under which the living waters roared and toiled fathoms below. The world of slang is a kind of topsy-turveydom of poetry, full of blue moons and white elephants, of men losing their heads, and men whose tongues run away with them--a whole chaos of fairy tales." ~ Gilbert K. Chesterton

"The metaphor is perhaps one of man's most fruitful potentialities. Its efficacy verges on magic, and it seems a tool for creation which God forgot inside one of His creatures when he made him." ~ José Ortega y Gasset,

"It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact. Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite; flowers express to us the delicate affections. Light and darkness are our familiar expression for knowledge and ignorance; and heat for love. Visible distance behind and before us, is respectively our image of memory and hope... The world is emblematic. Parts of speech are metaphors, because the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson