

1

Figure 1

Sunlight



- [1] The shadows danced beneath the trees
As sunlight filtered through the leaves.
I sat and watched this merry dance
That I happened to catch just by chance.
- [5] For in a moment, dark covered the light
As clouds took the sun out of sight.
And suddenly those dancing leaves
Were frantic in the quickening breeze.
- [9] I knew it would not be long at all,
And before too long the drops did fall.
I stood in the *midst* of this pouring rain,
And a happy thought came to my brain.
- [13] The sun would shine yet again,
And it was quite certain
That the leaves would dance once more
As they had just before.
- [17] As in the battles of the sky
The clouds and rain may try.
But the sun will always win
As long as Earth continues to spin.

Refer to Figure 1 and answer the following Question:

What is the main idea of this poem?

- (A) Trees like the rain.
- (B) Sometimes it rains.
- (C) The sun will always shine again.
- (D) The sun lets clouds take over sometimes.

Figure 2

A Different Point of View

[1] Sometimes an innocent remark can get someone thinking. A person might say to you, "You know, you look really good today." You might reply, "Thank you," or "What do you mean by that?" You might even say to yourself, "Does it mean that other days I don't look so good?" Such are the power of words and the mystery of language. From experience, we have learned that what people say is not always what they mean. Sometimes there is a hidden meaning to their words. Nowhere is this truer than in the language of poetry.

[2] In most cases, poets try to get you to think about a particular topic or to experience certain emotions by using language in a creative manner. They carefully use words to let you come to your own conclusion as to the point they are trying to make. They want you to think and feel as you read their words. This is called *figurative* language. For example, rather than talk about "the white clouds in the sky," they might refer to "the soft, fluffy pillows, white against the blue above." Using this type of "imagery," a poet causes us to think a little, which brings us more deeply into the poetry and also helps us to "feel" the softness of the clouds. This is the language of poetry. To look at this technique more closely, let's examine a poem by Walt Whitman entitled "O Captain! My Captain!"

[3] Walt Whitman wrote "O Captain! My Captain!" while reflecting on a very sad period in American history. The time is just after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. However, Whitman never comes right out and tells us that he is talking about Lincoln. He wants us to think and invest our knowledge in the poem. In this way, every person can take his or her own special meaning from the work.

[4] In the first stanza of the poem, Whitman introduces us to the *metaphor* he is using. As you probably know, a metaphor is a literary device. Writers use metaphors to talk about ideas or situations that are hard to address in a brief manner. To make it a little simpler for the reader, the writer might explain a more complicated situation by comparing it indirectly to something the reader might more easily understand. For example, let's suppose a poet was talking about a person he loved. The reader, having never met this person, might find it hard to "see" her through the eyes of the poet. However, suppose the poet told us his "love was a rose, soft and sweet and delicate." We might think of these qualities found in a rose and come to understand the gentle beauty of the poet's loved one. As you read the first stanza of the poem, remember that this is what Walt Whitman is doing.

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

[5] The captain Whitman is talking about is Abraham Lincoln. Try to understand why the writer is comparing Lincoln to a captain, and what he means by the "fearful trip." Most of you probably know enough about American history to make the necessary connections. Because of where this "trip" took place, it is viewed differently from other such "trips." The sadness and horrors of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam should never be underestimated. However, because of their location, their impact might be felt differently.

[6] Let's look at the remaining two stanzas, and try to understand Whitman's points.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up - for you the flag is flung - for you the bugle trills;
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths - for you the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

[7] In three short stanzas, Whitman has captured the feel of a monumental period in American history. This is what poetry does. Using few but carefully selected words, the poem lets us experience emotions and events by inviting us to "feel" what the author is trying to say. Understanding a poem is often not an easy task. However, once you "get it," the feeling will stay with you long after the words are forgotten. This is the magic of poetry.

Refer to Figure 2 and answer the following Question:

What mood does Whitman try to create in this poem?

- (A) A mood of anger because of Lincoln's death
- (B) A mood of exultation because the war has ended.
- (C) A mood of sadness because of Lincoln's death after the war.
- (D) A mood of confusion because it is not stated how Lincoln died.

3 Refer to Figure 1 and answer the following Question:

What is the mood of this poem?

- (A) Depressed
- (B) Optimistic
- (C) Dreary
- (D) Joyous

Figure 3

Summer Is Here



- [1] When he heard the engine of the lawn mower,
He knew that spring had sprung and it was time.
Green leaves sprouted quickly and flowers bloomed slower.
In his favorite season, he felt in his prime.
- [5] When that first grass was cut,
The scent lingered in the air for an hour.
He put his sleds in the shed before the door was shut,
Just before the sky *nurtured* the ground with a brief shower.
- [9] His teachers noticed his attention was like a toad.
His ideas jumped around and around.
He looked out the window and down the road.
He desperately wanted to be out on the ground.
- [13] The weeks passed and school let out.
He opened the door and ran like a world class sprinter.
Following behind him his friends, could hear him shout,
"Spring has turned to summer which is way better than winter!"
- [17] The world that day was a novel of empty pages,
Waiting to be written with the story of his actions.
The summer months would be filled with all different stages,
As he filled his days with fun and forgot all about fractions.

Refer to Figure 3 and answer the following Question:

"The scent lingered in the air for an hour" is an example of

- (A) imagery
- (B) simile
- (C) metaphor
- (D) rhyme

5 Refer to Figure 3 and answer the following Question:

The teachers notice that the boy's attention is "*like a toad*." This is an example of a

- (A) simile
- (B) metaphor
- (C) rhyme
- (D) symbol

6 Refer to Figure 3 and answer the following Question:

The second stanza has a line that reads, "Just before the sky *nurtured* the ground with a brief shower." The word *nurtured* means

- (A) supplied with vitamins
- (B) supplied with water
- (C) supplied with rain
- (D) supplied with nourishment

7 Refer to Figure 3 and answer the following Question:

In the last stanza, the boy's world is described as a "*novel of empty pages*." This is an example of a

- (A) symbol
- (B) simile
- (C) metaphor
- (D) image

How Do You Get to Where You Want to Go?

How do you get to where you want to go?

“One Step at a Time” is what they say.

“Keep moving forward – you’ll find your way.”

“One leg up! One leg down!”

5 “Eyes fixed forward – both feet on the ground.”

So off I venture, straight and strong.

But wait, that’s strange. Something’s gone wrong.

The road starts to zig and to zag and to twist.

It crazily curves, it leaps and it loops.

10 I feel like I’ve must have ignored, or just missed

A landmark, a sign or a . . . oops!

A bump in the road

I saw it too late.

The floor isn’t flat.

15 The street’s not so straight.

So I pick myself up, and I pick up my pace.

For it looks like I’ve suddenly entered a race.

And every few steps brings a yet higher hurdle.

With the bumps and the jumps, I’m as fast as a turtle.

20 Others, it seems, want the same things I do.

Zippering right by me, they laugh “Get a clue.”

Another one shouts, “You get out. Go away.”

“This isn’t for you. In your place you should stay.”

One of them even gives me a nudge,

25 Then a push,

Then a shove,

And I fall.

I want to shove back, want to clobber them all.

But I say to myself, “Keep your eye on the prize.”

30 That’s what they say; that’s what they advise.

It’s not so simple (though it sounds very wise).

Is there something I lack? Have I lost my knack?

I take two steps forward, then three steps back.

It’s true that I’m not fantastic at math.

35 But two minus three . . . it seems to me,

I’m nearing the START of the path.

Now what?! Here’s a trap.

So what do you do

When you don’t have a map,

40 When you don’t have a clue?

Maybe I need to lighten my load.

Or maybe, just maybe . . .

I’m on the wrong road.

How do you get to where you want to go?

45 I think I know.

You look all around.
Put both feet on the ground.
Though you're sore and exhausted and queasy.
In no book have I read,

- 50 Nor has anyone said,
"One step at a time" would be easy.

Refer to Figure 4 and answer the following Question:

The author of the poem uses alliteration in a number of places. Which of the following is an example of alliteration?

- (A) "One leg up! One leg down!" (line 4)
- (B) "A landmark or sign or a . . . oops." (line 11)
- (C) "Zipping right by me..." (line 21)
- (D) "The street's not so straight." (line 15)

9 Refer to Figure 4 and answer the following Question:

What is the main theme of the poem?

- (A) Achieving goals may be more difficult than it sounds.
- (B) Most people that you meet will not want you to succeed.
- (C) Always make sure that you know where you are going.
- (D) Preparation is important in all aspects of life.

Figure 5

Morning Thoughts Before Rising From Bed

- k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock
 The click of a clock. k'tick, k'tock
 The second hand cruises from nine to ten.
 One minute more it will do it again. But
- 5 what's the real difference 'tween now and then?
 When is now? Then was when?
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock, The
 past and the future both seem to exist. But the
 moment I glance at this thing on my wrist,
- 10 the present is something I seem to have missed.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock, Do I
 travel through time like I travel through space? But
 all at one pace with no chance to retrace my
 footsteps, which keep a perpetual pace in my
- 15 marathon, marching, monotonous race.
 k'tick, k'tock, The next
 moment is always and always and always and
 always and always and always in front of my face.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, Does the
- 20 Future speed toward me, then through me, then on? For the
 instant inside me, it's Present -- then gone! It
 joins with my Past, and will soon be redrawn. For my
 memory edits with each new day's dawn.
 k'tick, k'tock, But
- 25 Maybe it's all an illusion, this motion.
 The notion of time produces confusion.
 Time may be slow. Or not really "go." I'm
 Sure that I'll never know. Ever know. No.
 k'tick, k'tock, k'tick, k'tock
- 30 The click of a clock. k'tick k'Buzzzzz!
 The sound of a moment that was.

Refer to Figure 5 and answer the following Question:
 What is the mood of the poem?

- (A) Highly suspenseful
- (B) Angry and sad
- (C) Proud
- (D) Slightly tense

Figure 6

Onomatopoeia

- [1] Now here's a word you might not know:
Onomatopoeia. We'll take it slow.
For "ono," say "On a." that's the start.
"Mato," like "Ma tuh"
- [5] Then the next part.
"Peia" sounds like "see ya."
So "On a ma tuh peeya."
But what does that mean to you?
Well, take the word "cuckoo."
- [10] A funny sounding word
It's the name of a bird and
If you've ever heard
A cuckoo bird
You'll know that its sound and name
- [15] Are one and the same.
And when we call a thing by the sound that it makes
That's all that it takes to call that word
An onomatopoeia.

Next take the word "bark." It's what a dog does.

- [20] While a bee, as you know, a bee likes to buzz.
"Buzz" can be heard as it flies about
And "bark!" is the sound of a dog's sudden shout.
A dog doesn't buzz; doesn't sound that way.
It sounds like "BARK!" So that's why we say,
- [25] "The dog barked at the buzzing bee."
Onomatopoeia. Are you starting to see?

Animal sounds – lots are like that.
The squeak of a mouse, the purr of a cat.
But this also applies to all sorts of things.

- [30] Why do we say that a telephone rings?
There were actual bells on old-fashioned phones and
The bells went "rinnnnggg" – they didn't make tones
Or play little songs like they do nowadays, or
"Crack of a whip" – let's look at that phrase.
- [35] "Whip" is the sound, I'm sure you're aware of a
Whip as it speeds on its way through the air.
While "crack" is the noise that makes horses run
(Here's a few more; we're almost done.)

A train through a tunnel it really does "rumble"

- [40] And the wheels on the track – they make a "click-clack."
If you don't speak clearly, you're told "Please don't mumble."
And what about "whisper" and what about "whack!"?
"Zipper" and "clatter" and "splash" and "hummmm."
Onomatopoeias – can you think of some?

Refer to Figure 6 and answer the following Question:
Which of the following describes onomatopoeia?

- (A) A word that describes an animal sound
- (B) A word that sounds like what it describes
- (C) A word that is used to describe how some people speak
- (D) A make-believe word that can mean anything

12 Refer to Figure 6 and answer the following Question:

Which of the following best describes the mood of the poem?

- (A) Serious
- (B) Slightly annoyed
- (C) Light-hearted
- (D) Educational

13 Refer to Figure 6 and answer the following Question:

Which of the following is an example of onomatopoeia?

- (A) Slam
- (B) Place
- (C) Remove
- (D) Lift

14 Refer to Figure 6 and answer the following Question:

Which of the following best describes the main idea of the poem?

- (A) It can be fun to consider the many words in our language that are onomatopoeias.
- (B) Onomatopoeias are silly words that are only used by children.
- (C) It is a good idea to know how to properly use onomatopoeias.
- (D) You should use onomatopoeias in your writing to make it more interesting.

Figure 7

Beginning Clarinet

by Stephanie Hemphill

[1] Nothing smooth or tonal
but a moose in the throat
who rattles the door,
bellows out the window
[5] and scares the neighborhood kids
indoors and into piano lessons.

The metronome mock-mocks me
each measure—each note
I bleat a distress call;
[10] an adolescent changing voice,
I stutter sounds out-of-control.

My brother laughs at my rendition
of Three Blind Mice, but I refuse
to quit as he did after only
[15] two weeks of trumpet.

I am learning to breathe, after all,
learning to wet my reed,
to see little black dots as music,

to make something ugly
[20] into something genius, something divine,
something like Mozart
and that takes time.

- Excerpt from "Beginning Clarinet" by Stephanie Hemphill, from CRICKET magazine, January 2006.

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Refer to Figure 7 and answer the following Question:

Which literary device does the writer use in the first stanza?

- (A) Metaphor
- (B) Simile
- (C) Alliteration
- (D) Hyperbole

16 Refer to Figure 7 and answer the following Question:

Which literary devices are used in the following stanza?

*The metronome mock-mocks me
Each measure—each note
I bleat a distress call;
an adolescent changing voice,
I stutter sounds out-of-control.*

Select all that apply:

- ☐ Personification
- ☐ Simile
- ☐ Metaphor
- ☐ Allusion
- ☐ Irony
- ☐ Alliteration
- ☐ Rhyme Scheme

Figure 8

Burn Day

by Candace Pearson

- [1] We gather cornhusks in a pile,
empty-sleeved, old scarecrows,
rustling in the wind.
- [4] We add dry vines of tomato
and grape. Heavy with the memory
of fruit, they twist around the husks.
- [7] Then we throw rotten apples on top,
the leftovers of wheat and alfalfa,
stalks crackling brown.
- [10] The stack grows larger with cotton boll
and potato leaf. My father strikes
a match as the season makes way
- [13] For gray winter, in fires
that signal farm to farm to farm
another season is near.

- Excerpt from "Burn Day" by Candace Pearson, from CRICKET magazine, November 2011.

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Refer to Figure 8 and answer the following Question:

What is one theme in this poem?

- (A) Individual vs. society
- (B) Change of seasons
- (C) Man against nature
- (D) Value of hard work

18 Refer to Figure 8 and answer the following Question:

Which literary device is used in the following lines?

*Then we throw rotten apples on top,
the leftovers of wheat and alfalfa,
stalks crackling brown.*

- (A) Onomatopoeia
- (B) Personification
- (C) Metaphor
- (D) Repetition

19 Refer to Figure 8 and answer the following Question:

How is the poem organized?

- (A) Three stanzas with five lines each
- (B) Five stanzas with three lines each
- (C) Three stanzas with fifteen lines each
- (D) Fifteen stanzas with five lines each

Figure 9

The Farm

by Laurie O. Curtis

[1] I'm an old white house
with black shutters, willow trees and lilacs
I'm the scratchy screen doors that catch the stitch in your sweater
and the worn blue jean jackets smelling of silage

[5] and hanging on hooks on the back porch

I'm a field
peppered with cow pies
and purple prickly plants
I'm the long swishing tails
[10] of the black-and-white Holsteins
batting away flies

I'm the warm green water in the pond
where sunnies hide and bluegills
bump into knees and toes
[15] and tiny clumps of algae cling to fingers
and pigtails

I'm the knot on the string
holding the hay bales tight
and the wooden ladder to the hayloft
[20] missing a rung

I'm the musty burlap feed bag
crouched on the concrete floor
with the faded red letters
SOUTHERN STATES on the side
[25] and the tiny mouse holes
chewed on the bottom

I'm the heavy black milking straps
hanging on their hooks
still warm and sweaty
[30] from the cows' last milking

I'm the barn cats crowded around
a dented tin bucket
with heads cocked for a quick squirt of milk
and the fly strips hanging in the barn

[35] I'm the distant *putt* of a tractor
and the wagon, sides swollen and swaying,
stacked to the top with hay

I'm a farm

- Excerpt from "The Farm" by Laurie O. Curtis, from CRICKET magazine, September 2011.

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Refer to Figure 9 and answer the following Question:

The first stanza contains all of the following literary devices *except*

- (A) Alliteration
- (B) Personification
- (C) Imagery
- (D) Simile

21 Refer to Figure 9 and answer the following Question:

The writer uses a metaphor comparing the barn to all of these things *except*

- (A) A house
- (B) A field
- (C) A cow
- (D) A feed bag

22 Refer to Figure 9 and answer the following Question:

Which literary device is used in the following lines?

*I'm the scratchy screen doors that catch the stitch in your sweater
and the worn blue jean jacket smelling of silage*

- (A) Onomatopoeia
- (B) Alliteration
- (C) Allusion
- (D) Repetition

Figure 10

Cave

by Ann Pedtke

- [1] The cling of stickers and droning insects
pulls at us—the intruders—
as we approach the crack in the hillside.
This is no
- [5] echoing cavern,
no cathedral of gleaming columns
and subterranean pools,
but a sweeter secret,
a place where we are first and last and only.
- [10] We sport heavy lights on our helmets,
extra batteries strapped around our waists
like life preservers
to buoy us up in the darkness.
We wear heavy clothing, thick-soled shoes.
- [15] At first, though, the walking is easy,
a trickle of water carving out
the way for us.
Exploration is a simple thing.
- Then the walls close in,
[20] stony fingers reaching through shadows
to grasp at our waists, our shoulders.
Over, under, deeper,
the cool Earth swallowing us down.
We find ourselves trusting in ages,
- [25] in the truce of violent
geologies.
One ledge could crumble, one stone
could block off the narrow way,
but the years hold back disruption.
- [30] Deep inside,
we switch off our lights for a moment
and our eyes surrender, our insecurities
quiet themselves in the blackness.
We are not yet born, but still
- [35] suspended,
each subconsciously listening
for the heartbeat that is Earth's
and our own.

- Excerpt from "Cave" by Ann Pedtke, from CRICKET magazine, November 2007.

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Refer to Figure 10 and answer the following Question:

Which literary device is employed in the lines below?

*We are not yet born, but still
suspended,
each subconsciously listening*

- (A) repetition
- (B) alliteration
- (C) simile
- (D) personification

Figure 11

October Beach

by Sandi Leibowitz

- [1] The sullen lake looks like
 it's never known a laugh.
 It seems to have forgotten
 all its summer Sundays.
- [5] Wearing autumn's shawl
 around its gray shoulders,
 it breathes out fog like ghosts
 resentful of winter's coming.
- [10] But written on the sand
 a splatter of hoofprints tells
 of secret revels,
 the deer's moonlit dance.
 They bowed.
 Antler clicked antler.
- [15] Then they reared and bucked,
 galloped in wild circles.
 Faster, they went! Faster!
 —and leapt
 back to scarlet woods
- [20] mantled in black and silver.

- Excerpt from "October Beach" by Sandi Leibowitz, from CRICKET magazine, October 2010.

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Refer to Figure 11 and answer the following Question:

Identify two literary devices used in the following lines.

*The sullen lake looks like
it's never known a laugh.
It seems to have forgotten
all its summer Sundays.*

- (A) personification and alliteration
- (B) metaphor and personification
- (C) repetition and alliteration
- (D) flashback and metaphor

Figure 12

Winter Landscape

by Sandi Leibowitz

[1] The white horse surveys
 the white hill.
 Warm in her red blanket,
 she wonders at the wet tickle
[5] of frozen stars
 melting on her muzzle.

 She stomps—
 once, to wake a wearied leg,
 a second time to interrupt
[10] the long quiet.

 She snorts
 and the cloud of her breath
 rises like white flies.

- Excerpt from "Winter Landscape" by Sandi Leibowitz, from CRICKET magazine, January 2017.

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Refer to Figure 12 and answer the following Question:

Which literary device is used in the following lines?

*She stomps—
Once, to wake a wearied leg*

- (A) Simile
- (B) Metaphor
- (C) Hyperbole
- (D) Alliteration

26 [Langston Hughes, A Dream Deferred]

Which literary device is being used in the following lines?

*"Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?"*

- (A) Metaphor
- (B) Simile
- (C) Repetition
- (D) Onomatopoeia

27 [Langston Hughes, A Dream Deferred]

What can you *infer* about the poet from this poem?

- (A) He wishes he had more time to daydream.
- (B) He has probably been told not to pursue a dream.
- (C) He wants everyone to know how scary his dreams are.
- (D) He would like to get more sleep.

28 [Langston Hughes, A Dream Deferred]

The poet uses repeated food *imagery*: shriveling raisins, rotting meat, crusted-over sweets. How does the poet think dreams and food are alike in this poem?

- (A) Everyone has dreams, and everyone eats food. They are similar because they are universal.
- (B) Everyone can have enough food and attain their dreams if they just pay attention.
- (C) Ignored food rots and becomes useless, even poisonous if eaten. Ignored/unattained dreams fall apart, any number of ways, in our hearts and minds, and can poison our spirits
- (D) If the poet dreams of rotting food, he knows he is ignoring a subconscious dream.

29 [The Road Not Taken]

Which literary device is used throughout this poem?

- (A) Simile
- (B) Metaphor
- (C) Alliteration
- (D) Personification