



Day Four: Shall I Compare Thee? Please do

Comparisons that state how one thing is like another, and makes your language colorful. Similes use 'like' or 'as', and metaphors...don't. Comparisons tend to be used in abundance in poetry, fiction, songs, for example:

- *'Love is a battlefield'*, Pat Benatar - simile
- *'Cause darling I'm a nightmare dressed like a daydream'*, Taylor Swift - metaphor
- *'Cause baby you're a firework*  
*Come on show them what you're worth*  
*Make them go oh, oh, oh*  
*As you shoot across the sky'*, Katy Perry - extended metaphor

You get the drift.

The trick with comparisons is to make it something that's not clichéd. It's easy to slide into the same 'ole, same 'oles — *as sweet as honey, as good as gold, as meek as a lamb*. We know these ones, we've seen them many, many times before.

We're looking for the original comparison. For example:

***"Love is the ultimate outlaw. It just won't adhere to any rules. The most any of us can do is to sign on as its accomplice."*** Tom Robbins

***"Do you ever just put your arms out and just spin and spin and spin? Well, that's what love is like; everything inside of you tells you to stop before you fall, but for some reason you just keep going."*** Alice Hoffman

***"I will tell you what Jeanne was like. She was like a piano in a country where everyone has had their hands cut off."*** Angela Carter

### Your turn

Complete these sentences. DON'T go with the first comparison that springs to mind – there's a strong likelihood it will be clichéd.

- Purple paint spilled over the floor like....

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- A kitten in the washtub is like...

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- The car sped towards me like...

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- A broken heart is....

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- Winter is....

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- A cancelled date was as big a relief as...
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## Extending your metaphors

A comparison doesn't have to be reduced to one sentence. An entire paragraph or even longer can continue the metaphor. For example,

### *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost:

**“Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth  
...  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.”**

Poetry is particularly rich with figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, and personification which evoke rich comparison.

## Your turn

Write a poem on first love, a womaniser or a femme fatale using an extended metaphor.

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## Making something human

We tend to give inanimate objects human qualities all the time, not to mention anthropomorphize animals (for example giving our pets human characteristics).

For example:

*The flowers danced in the wind.  
Winter extended its cruel cold fingers.  
Look at my car! She's a beauty.*

## Your turn

Write a passage of the waning moon on a warm summer's day, using personification.

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## TO RECAP:

- Comparisons make your writing vivid and evocative – use figurative language to capture your reader’s imagination
  - Similes use ‘like’ or ‘as’
- Personification attributes human characteristics to inanimate objects
  - Avoid clichés like the plague
- Read poetry or song lyrics to see how figurative language ‘paints a picture’

