

UNLOCKING LANGUAGE

LITERAL VS. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

LITERAL LANGUAGE	FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
DIRECT, EXACT, AND FACTUAL.	IMAGINATIVE, USES CREATIVE COMPARISONS.
MEANS <i>EXACTLY</i> WHAT IT SAYS.	YOU HAVE TO <i>FIGURE</i> IT OUT.
EXAMPLE: "IT IS VERY COLD OUTSIDE TODAY."	EXAMPLE: "MY HANDS ARE BLOCKS OF ICE!"

LITERAL VS. FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

It is freezing cold today.
The actual temperature is low.
My hands are blocks of ice.
That is figurative language.

DENOTATION VS. CONNOTATION

- **Denotation (D = Dictionary):** The literal, objective definition of a word.
- **Connotation (C = Cultural/Connection):** The emotional meaning or feeling attached to a word.
- **Word:** *Home*
- **Denotation:** A physical structure where people live.
- **Connotation:** Warmth, family, safety, and comfort.

- **Denotation = D** is for **Dictionary**. Denotation is the strict definition.
- **Connotation = C** is for **Connection** or **Cultural feeling**. Connotation is the vibe or emotion a word brings.
- 'skinny' versus 'slender.'
- Both words mean thin (denotation), but 'slender' feels like a compliment, while 'skinny' can sound insulting (connotation).

THE 'BIG THREE' FIGURES OF SPEECH

- **Simile:** Comparing two things using '*like*' or '*as*'.
- *Example:* He fought like a lion.
- **Metaphor:** Direct comparison stating one thing *is* another (no '*like*' or '*as*').
- *Example:* He is a lion in battle.
- **Personification:** Giving human traits to non-human things.
- *Example:* The lightning danced across the sky.

SIMILE

- She sings *like* a nightingale.



METAPHOR

- She *is* a nightingale.



PERSONIFICATION

- My alarm clock screams at me every morning.



CRITICAL LANGUAGE USAGES

- Bias: a one-sided viewpoint that lacks fairness or balance.
- Prejudice: pre-judging someone based on stereotypes rather than facts.
- Emotive language: using high-emotion words to manipulate how the reader feels.

EXAMPLE

- The reckless driver caused chaos.
- The driver was involved in an accident.

LOOK OUT FOR CRITICAL LANGUAGE USAGES.

- This is language designed to influence your mind, often found in advertisements, social media, or news articles.
- Authors use **emotive language** to force an emotional reaction.
- Notice how 'reckless driver caused chaos' makes you angry, while 'the driver was involved in an accident' is neutral.
- Spotting this helps you recognize **bias** and protect yourself from being manipulated.

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE AND JARGON

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE	JARGON
Informal, casual, everyday speech.	Specialized, technical terms used by specific professions.
Used with friends or family.	Used by doctors, lawyers, programmers, or mechanics.
Examples: "what's up?", "chill", "bru".	Examples: "acute inflammation", "data packet".

- **Colloquial language** is your everyday, relaxed street talk or local slang.
- You use it when texting friends or talking at break time.
- **Jargon** is highly formal, specialised language.
- If a doctor says you have 'bilateral periorbital hematoma', they are using medical jargon for what everyday people call a 'black eye.'
- **Always make sure your register matches your audience.**

REMEMBER

- The wind whispered through the trees.
- **Personification**
- Dictionary definition
- **Denotation**
- A lawyer saying 'sub judice'
- **Legal jargon**
- I have a million things to do.
- **Figurative language**

ACTIVITIES

SECTION A: LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Activity 1: Literal or Figurative?

Write **LITERAL** or **FIGURATIVE** next to each sentence.

1. The boy opened the door. _____
2. My mother is the heart of our family. _____
3. The baby is sleeping. _____
4. The classroom was a zoo. _____
5. The sun was shining brightly. _____
6. She has a heart of gold. _____
7. The dog is barking outside. _____
8. The news hit him like a hammer. _____
9. The learners wrote their examination. _____
10. He has butterflies in his stomach. _____

Activity 2: Simile, Metaphor or Personification?

Identify the figure of speech used in each sentence.

Choose from:

SIMILE | METAPHOR | PERSONIFICATION

1. The baby slept like a log. _____
2. The moon smiled down on the village. _____
3. Her voice was music to his ears. _____
4. The athlete ran as fast as a cheetah. _____
5. The wind whispered through the trees. _____
6. The classroom was a battlefield. _____
7. His hands were as cold as ice. _____
8. The flowers danced in the breeze. _____
9. The girl is a shining star in her community. _____
10. The old house groaned during the storm. _____

SECTION B: CRITICAL LANGUAGE USAGE

Remember:

Term	Meaning
Bias	Showing an unfair preference for or against a person, group or idea.
Prejudice	An unfair opinion about someone or a group formed without sufficient knowledge or experience.
Emotive language	Words chosen to create strong feelings such as anger, fear, sadness or excitement.
Colloquial language	Informal language commonly used in everyday conversation.
Jargon	Special words or expressions used by a particular profession, subject or group.

Activity 4: Identify the Language

Identify the term illustrated by each sentence.

Choose from:

BIAS | PREJUDICE | EMOTIVE LANGUAGE | COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE | JARGON

1. That lazy group of learners never does anything properly!
2. The doctor said that the patient has hypertension.
3. That school is obviously the best because its learners are smarter than everyone else.
4. Guys, that movie was absolutely awesome!
5. People from that neighbourhood are all troublemakers.
6. The heartbroken family struggled to accept the tragic news.
7. The patient must undergo a CT scan.
8. I'm gonna call you later.
9. Only a completely foolish person would support that decision.
10. Our school is clearly better than every other school in the district.

Activity 5: Spot the Bias

Read the statements below.

Statement A

Our school has the best learners in the district. Other schools simply cannot compete with us.

Statement B

The three schools achieved different results in the June examinations.

1. Which statement is **biased**?
2. Quote words from the statement that show bias.
3. Rewrite the biased statement so that it is **objective and balanced**.

Activity 6: Prejudice or Not?

Write **PREJUDICE** or **NOT PREJUDICE**.

1. All teenagers are irresponsible.
2. Some teenagers enjoy participating in community projects.
3. People who speak with an accent are not intelligent.
4. The learners arrived late because their bus broke down.
5. Older people cannot understand technology.
6. Some learners need additional support with reading.

Activity 7: Emotive Language

Read the sentence:

The innocent children were forced to live in terrible, overcrowded conditions while the heartless officials did nothing to help them.

1. Identify **TWO emotive words** from the sentence.
2. What feeling does the word “**innocent**” create?
3. What feeling does the word “**heartless**” create?
4. Why might a writer use emotive language in an article?

Activity 8: Colloquial Language

Identify the **colloquial expression** in each sentence.

1. That test was a piece of cake!
2. I'm gonna finish my homework tonight.
3. The movie was really cool.
4. Hey, guys, what's happening?

Rewrite each sentence in more formal English.

5. That test was a piece of cake!
6. I'm gonna finish my homework tonight.
7. The movie was really cool.

Activity 9: Jargon

Identify the **jargon** in each sentence and state the field in which it is used.

1. The patient needs an ECG before the operation.
Jargon: _____
Field: _____
2. The lawyer will present the evidence to the court.
Jargon: _____
Field: _____
3. The programmer needs to debug the software.
Jargon: _____
Field: _____
4. The teacher must complete the moderation of the SBA.
Jargon: _____
Field: _____
5. The footballer was given a red card for a serious foul.
Jargon: _____
Field: _____

SECTION C: APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Activity 10: Analyse the Advertisement

Read the paragraph below:

DON'T MISS OUT! Buy our amazing new energy drink and become the strongest, fastest and most successful learner in your school! Thousands of smart learners are already choosing it. Why be ordinary when you can be a champion?

Answer the questions.

1. Identify **ONE example of emotive language**.
2. Identify **ONE example of persuasive language**.
3. Is the advertisement biased? Give a reason for your answer.
4. Does the advertisement provide evidence that the drink will make learners stronger or more successful?
5. Why should readers think critically about this advertisement?

Activity 11: Make the Language Objective

Rewrite each sentence so that it is **objective and neutral**.

1. The useless teacher gave us another ridiculous test.
2. Those lazy learners never want to work.
3. This wonderful school is obviously better than all the others.
4. The terrible government decision destroyed the community.

SECTION D: MIXED CHALLENGE

Activity 12

Read the paragraph:

“Our school is a shining star in the community. Our brilliant learners work like machines, while the lazy learners from other schools sit around doing nothing. Honestly, those schools are hopeless! Our teachers use innovative pedagogical strategies to improve learner outcomes.”

Answer the questions.

1. Identify the metaphor in the paragraph.
2. Identify the simile in the paragraph.
3. Identify **ONE example of emotive language**.
4. Identify **ONE example of bias**.
5. Identify **ONE example of prejudice**.
6. Identify the jargon.
7. What is the effect of the emotive language?
8. Rewrite this sentence in neutral language:

Those schools are hopeless!

MEMORANDUM

Activity 1

1. Literal
2. Figurative
3. Literal
4. Figurative
5. Literal
6. Figurative
7. Literal
8. Figurative
9. Literal
10. Figurative

Activity 2

1. Simile
2. Personification
3. Metaphor
4. Simile
5. Personification
6. Metaphor
7. Simile
8. Personification
9. Metaphor
10. Personification

Activity 3

Any suitable explanations.

1. Thabo is a kind/generous/good person.
2. The news spread very quickly.
3. The wind made a soft, whispering sound / moved gently through the trees.
4. She is outstanding or very successful at school.
5. I have a very large amount of homework.

Activity 4

1. Emotive language
2. Jargon
3. Bias
4. Colloquial language
5. Prejudice
6. Emotive language
7. Jargon
8. Colloquial language
9. Emotive language
10. Bias

Activity 5

1. Statement A
2. **“best learners” / “simply cannot compete”**
3. Possible answer:
“Our school performed well compared with some other schools in the district.”

Activity 6

1. Prejudice
2. Not prejudice
3. Prejudice
4. Not prejudice
5. Prejudice
6. Not prejudice

Activity 7

1. Any TWO: **innocent, terrible, overcrowded, heartless, tragic**
2. It creates sympathy / makes the children appear vulnerable or deserving of help.
3. It creates anger or disapproval towards the officials.
4. To influence the reader's feelings or persuade the reader to support the writer's viewpoint.

Activity 8

1. **a piece of cake**
2. **gonna**
3. **cool**
4. **guys**

Possible formal versions:

5. The test was very easy.
6. I am going to finish my homework tonight.
7. The movie was very enjoyable.

Activity 9

1. **ECG** — Medical field
2. **evidence** — Legal field
3. **debug** — Computer/Information Technology field
4. **SBA / moderation** — Education field
5. **red card / foul** — Sport/football field

Activity 10

1. Possible answers: **amazing, strongest, fastest, successful, smart, champion, ordinary**
2. **“Don't miss out!” / “Why be ordinary when you can be a champion?”**
3. Yes. The advertisement presents the product in an entirely positive way without considering disadvantages or alternative views.
4. No. It makes claims without providing reliable evidence.
5. Advertisements are designed to persuade consumers, so readers should question claims and look for evidence.

Activity 11

Possible answers:

1. The teacher gave the learners another test.
2. Some learners do not complete their work consistently.
3. This school has performed well compared with some other schools.
4. The government decision had a significant effect on the community.

Activity 12

1. **Our school is a shining star in the community.**
2. **Our brilliant learners work like machines.**
3. Possible answers: **brilliant, lazy, hopeless, shining star**
4. **Our school is a shining star.../ Our brilliant learners...**
5. **the lazy learners from other schools sit around doing nothing** — unfairly generalises about learners from other schools.
6. **pedagogical strategies / learner outcomes**
7. It creates strong positive feelings about the writer's school and negative feelings about the other schools.
8. Possible answer: **Those schools face challenges that may affect their performance.**