

Metaphor

Literal language: if something is **literal** it is accurate or precise.

- A **literal** description tells what actually happens.
- Something that is literal reports on events.
- An example would be 'he is lazy'

Metaphor: if something is a **metaphor** it is **not literal**.

- A **metaphor** does **not report on what actually happens**.
- A **metaphor** tells us more about something by bringing ideas together.
- An example would be 'he is a couch potato'

A **metaphor** has three parts:

The tenor: the thing you want to try and describe to your audience.

The vehicle: The imaginative idea you compare it with to help your audience understand it. This is the 'made up' bit.


The ground: the thing the tenor and the vehicle have in common.

Here is an example:

'**Achilles** fought like a **lion**' (both Achilles and the lion are **strong**)

Achilles is the tenor because he is the thing being described. The lion is the vehicle because it is the imaginative idea Achilles is compared to. The ground is that they are both strong because this is what they have in common.

The poems and their key metaphors

	'Fog' – Carl Sandburg, 1878 – 1967 'The fog comes on little cat feet'	Both 'the fog' and the 'little cat feet' are grey, delicate and move gently.
	'November Night' – Adelaide Crapsey, 1878 – 1914 'like steps of passing ghosts,/ The leaves, frost –crisp'd, break from the trees and fall'	Both 'the leaves' and 'the steps of passing ghosts' rustle softly.
	'Dreams' – Langston Hughes, 1902 – 1967 '... if dreams die/ Life is a broken-winged bird/ That cannot fly'	Both a life without dreams and 'a broken-winged bird/ That cannot fly' are sad and wasteful.
	'Sally' – Phoebe Hesketh, 1909 – 2005 'She was a dog-rose kind of girl:/ Elusive, scattery as petals'	Both Sally and 'a dog-rose' are wild and not traditionally beautiful.
	'Frogs' – Norman MacCaig, 1910 – 1996 'In mid-leap they are/ parachutists falling/ in a free fall' '... their ballet dancer's/ legs'	Both frogs and 'parachutists' leap into the air and spread out when they fall. Both frogs and ballet dancers have powerful and elegant legs.
	'The Eagle' – Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1809 – 1892 'And like a thunderbolt he falls'	Both the eagle falling and 'a thunderbolt' are fast and dangerous.
	'A Case of Murder' – Vernon Scannell, 1922 – 2007 'The cat, half-through, was cracked like a nut' '... the wound of fear gaped wide and raw' '... the huge black cat pads out' (the cat turns from tenor into vehicle for the boy's fear)	Both the cat being slammed in a door frame and a nut being broken make a cracking sound. Both 'fear' and a 'wound' can be painful and can get worse. Both fear and a 'huge black cat' are haunting and can sneak up on you.