



Hello Year 6!!

Here's a fun metaphor writing poetry task for you. This is a free writing exercise in that you create your own images freely and with only one or two minor requirements. This idea comes from a poem by Simon Armitage. The poem is also a little like a list poem. It lists a person's appearance, actions, and personality in metaphors. It does not rhyme.

Here is an extract of examples from Simon Armitage's poem.

Each metaphor is building up a picture of his character's appearance, actions, and personality. What do you think he means by each of these metaphors? Don't worry if you don't understand some or all of them. These were his ideas and he had a reason for each of them.

Simon Armitage poem (extract of examples)

*His hair was a crow fished out of a blocked chimney
and his eyes were boiled eggs with the tops hammered in
and his blink was a cat flap
and his teeth were bluestones or the Easter Island statues
and his bite was a perfect horseshoe.
His nostrils were both barrels of a shotgun, loaded.
And his mouth was an oil exploration project gone bankrupt...
and his tongue was an iguanodon
and his whistle was a laser beam
and his laugh was a bad case of kennel cough.
and his arguments were outboard motors strangled with fishing line
and his neck was a bandstand...
and his arms were milk running off from a broken bottle.
His elbows were boomerangs or pinking shears...
and the palms of his hands were action paintings
and his heart was a first world war grenade discovered by children...
and his knees were fossils waiting to be tapped open
The balls of his feet were where meteorites had landed
and his toes were a nest of mice under the lawn mower.
and his shadow was an air raid shelter.
and his promises were hot air balloons floating off over the trees
and his jokes were footballs through other peoples' windows
and his grin was the Great Wall of China as seen from the moon.*



Simon Armitage – How he wrote his amazing metaphors

When Simon Armitage wrote this poem about a mystery man, he listed all the different things about the man's appearance, actions, and personality that he wanted to share (E.g. his teeth, his jokes, his arguments). Then he thought of things that reminded him of these characteristics.

e.g. *This man tells bad, annoying, or even insensitive jokes.*

He then thought about something that this reminded him of.





e.g. *Footballs through other people's window. (and his jokes were footballs through other peoples' windows)*

What does Simon Armitage mean? Well, different people will interpret this line in different ways. This is the beauty of reading poetry. We all have our own experiences and this line may mean something different to you, to me, and indeed Simon Armitage. What are your thoughts? Here are mine...

e.g. *His jokes are like footballs through other people's windows because when you have your window smashed by somebody's football it is not funny. It is careless and without thought for other people's feelings. Nobody is laughing and they are annoying jokes rather than funny ones.*

Task 1

Before writing your own list of metaphors in a poem, have a go at explaining some or all of metaphors in the table on the next page (page 3). An example of somebody's interpretation is included to help you. **Remember** there are no wrong answers here as you may interpret it differently from others. Write these in your book or if you wish in the table provided.

Metaphor example	What you think it means (no wrong answers as it's your personal interpretation)	The effect (no wrong answers as it's your personal interpretation)
<p><u>Physical appearance</u> <i>His hair was a crow fished out of a blocked chimney.</i></p> 	<p>Sam's (aged 12) interpretation example: <i>I think it means that is hair is untidy and very dirty/black even.</i></p>	<p>Sam's (aged 12) explanation example: <i>This metaphor makes the reader know that the man is scruffy and maybe does not keep himself clean. He is wild and free like a crow but maybe careless.</i></p>
<p><u>Physical movement</u> <i>His blink was a cat flap.</i></p> 	<p>Your interpretation:</p>	<p>Your explanation:</p>
<p><u>Outer Personality</u> <i>And his promises were hot air balloons floating off over the trees.</i></p> 	<p>Your interpretation:</p>	<p>Your explanation:</p>
<p><u>Inner Personality</u> <i>His confidence was an empty paper bag.</i></p> 	<p>Your interpretation:</p>	<p>Your explanation:</p>

This sheet does not need printing out. If you prefer, record your interpretations into your homework book.

Here's another example but this is about a mystery woman and is written by a 12 year-old.

Her hair was broken bedsprings and bare brambles,
and her eyes were beggars' bowls,
and her blink were seams, un-stitching,
and her teeth were millstones,
and her bite was a bear trap,
Her nostrils were rubbish chutes.
And her mouth was a prison,
and her smile was a tug-o'-war across the Grand Canyon,
and her tongue was a blue whale bottlenecked in an estuary,
and her laugh was flags flapping, at half-mast,
and her arguments were mayflies at the end of day,
And her throat was a sea wall,
and her arms were a reef knot,
And her wrists were bolts of embroidered gossamer,
and her handshakes were nose-diving kites,
And her knuckles were conch shells,
and her shoulder blades were cross-bows,,
and her toes were a diagram of the phases of the moon,
and her promises were carriages made from magical pumpkins pulled by mice.



Now it's your turn

The beauty of writing one of these poems is that you can let your imagination run wild. Please enjoy this task and make sure you don't worry about whether your metaphors are perfect. There are no wrong ways of doing this.

Write a poem of about 10 metaphors (or more) in the style to the mystery woman poem above about ANYONE you know very well. It might be a friend, relative, or a famous person. Please make sure you are not unkind in your descriptions. Choose characteristics that make your person different and unique to anybody else. Present your work neatly on lined paper and give the poem a mysterious title.

Optional: draw a silhouette of the person and neatly write the metaphors around the edge of your drawing.

We are looking forward to reading these metaphor poems and trying to develop a picture of their personality for ourselves. Good luck!!

Tip: *Alliteration* can help add rhythm to your poem. E.g. beggars' bowls.