

Metaphor/Simile Discussion Prompt

Instructions: We'll be looking at some poetry and prose that makes interesting use of figurative language, specifically looking at metaphors (and perhaps some similes). You will need to be prepared to discuss the poetry based on what types of nouns the poet used to create their metaphors. At the end, you need to be able to justify an intelligent opinion about the following essential question:

What order of nouns is used to create the most intriguing metaphors in poetry and writing?

There are four options below based on the two types of nouns I want you to think about as we discuss.

- **Concrete noun:** a noun WITH physical form, usually a noun that can be experienced by all five senses, but mostly touch. If you can touch it, it's probably concrete—like cement.
- **Abstract noun:** a noun WITHOUT physical form, usually things like an idea or concept (freedom), a quality (thoughtfulness), an emotion (anger) or a state of being (relaxation).

There are four order options, and I've provided short poetry examples of each to enhance your understanding:

<p>1. <i>Abstract</i> noun compared to <i>Concrete</i> noun</p> <p><u>Fame</u></p> <p>Fame is a bee. It has a song - It has a sting - Ah, too, it has a wing.</p> <p>(Emily Dickinson)</p>	<p>2. <i>Abstract</i> noun compared to <i>Abstract</i> noun</p> <p>Love is a Madness</p> <p>Love is a madness, love is a fevered dream, A white soul lost in a field of scarlet flowers— Love is a search for the lost, the ever vanishing gleam Of wings, desires and sorrows and haunted hours...</p> <p>(Edgar Lee Masters)</p>
<p>3. <i>Concrete</i> noun compared to <i>Abstract</i> noun</p> <p><u>Leaves of Grass</u> (from the preface)</p> <p>...And your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body...</p> <p>(Walt Whitman)</p>	<p>4. <i>Concrete</i> noun compared to <i>Concrete</i> noun</p> <p><u>The Garden Hose</u></p> <p>In the gray evening I see a long green serpent With its tail in the dahlias. It lies in loops across the grass And drinks softly at the faucet. I can hear it swallow.</p> <p>(Beatrice Janosco)</p>

As we discuss poets' use of metaphors and these nouns over the next few lessons, and as we discover them in our writing later this year, we will come back to this discussion prompt. The most important thing you need to do for me, oh student of reading and writing, is be able to justify your opinion by citing examples and sharing metaphors that you have created while writing in this class.

The essential question—once again—is here for you to think about:

What order of nouns is used to create the most intriguing metaphors in poetry and writing?