

SOUND AND SYMBOL (GRADES 11-12)

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In this lesson, students in grades 11-12 use sound effects to reflect and enhance an understanding of figurative language in narrative text. This lesson specifically targets the skill of comprehending and applying figurative language in writing. Designed for the upper-level English course, this lesson reinforces knowledge of simile, metaphor, and symbol as literary strategies through a creative, narrative writing task. Please feel free to either use this lesson exactly as suggested, or adapt the agenda to your own teaching needs as you and your students discover the world of Booktrack Classroom.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- High School
- Grades 11-12

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FROM THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2.D

Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF THE LESSON:

1. **Get informed.** Register your teacher account for Booktrack Classroom and add all of your students. Create a quick sample Booktrack Classroom project, just to see how everything works. It's very easy to use! But just in case you or your students have questions along the way, there are [video tutorials available here](#) that will guide you through the process of using Booktrack Classroom.
2. **What is Booktrack Classroom?** Introduce your students to Booktrack Classroom using [this promotional video](#). Briefly discuss what Booktrack Classroom can do, and field initial student questions and comments about this awesome educational tool!
3. **Supply headphones.** While working with Booktrack Classroom, the ability for each individual student to listen to sound on their device is crucial. Make sure that each student will be able to provide headphones of their own, or borrow sets from your classroom library on the days of the lesson.
4. **Sign-up.** Have your students sign in to Booktrack Classroom accounts on a school computer or by adding the Booktrack Classroom App to their internet devices. Select the type of sign-up that works best for your school's technology capabilities. It might be good to have a Booktrack Classroom "play day" at the time of sign-up, too, so that students can get an initial feel for how Booktrack Classroom looks and works. They can also use this chance to get out some of the inevitable first giggles of excitement about the fact that they have control over their own sound effects!

TIMELINE

Designed for four sessions of 50 minutes each.

ACTIVITIES

DAY ONE – DEFINITIONS AND DISCOVERY

1. Introduce or review the concept of metaphor, simile, and symbol as examples of figurative language. Use Handout #1 to help students differentiate between the terms. Have students add the terms and examples to their class notes.
2. Poem study: Give students some practice with identifying metaphor, simile, and symbol in literary works. You may wish to use examples of poetry that are already in your own syllabus. This lesson suggests the use of three poems—"The Fish" by Elizabeth Bishop, "Once by the Pacific" by Robert Frost, and "Harlem [Dream

Deferred]" by Langston Hughes. Have students examine the poems along with a partner, and ask them to work together to record examples of metaphor, simile, and symbol that appear in each piece.

3. When students have finished identifying the devices, bring the class back together as a whole to discuss and compare findings. If appropriate, point out key symbols, metaphors, and similes that students may have missed, and talk through how to interpret the author's intention.
4. For homework, ask students to think about an important experience in their lives. If they were to apply a metaphor, a simile, and a symbol to aspects of that experience, what would they be? Share the following example, or your own, to prompt their thinking:
 - Experience - Canoeing in Minnesota
 - Metaphor: the sheer glass surface = water of the river
 - Simile: insects buzzed constantly like the low hum of a refrigerator motor
 - Symbol: canoe = togetherness, because family members sit close inside and work together to move it forward

DAYS TWO AND THREE—CREATING A BOOKTRACK

1. Distribute Handout #2, the idea list for figurative language. Tell students that they will be writing a poem, based on the experience that they chose yesterday, that demonstrates figurative language. In addition to their three homework ideas, have them fill out at least five ideas on Handout #2 as a prewriting strategy. (The ideas on this sheet match well with the available sound effects on Booktrack, and will set students up for an effective final product.)
2. When students are ready to start writing, it's time to move to Booktrack! Have each member of the class log in to Booktrack and select "Create" from the menu at the top of the screen. If the editor does not automatically open a blank page, select the "new Booktrack" button. This will open a new document where the students can add text. On their screens, they'll see the blue ribbon of step one, "Text," highlighted. Instruct students that they should stay on the Text ribbon until their writing is completed.
3. The first step is to write the text of the poem. Encourage students to create their poem in any style they choose, whether structured rhyme or free verse. To demonstrate their growing understanding of figurative language, the students should incorporate at least two metaphors, two similes, and one symbol into their

poems. Give them adequate time and guidance to create thoughtful poetry that they are proud of.

4. Once students have completed their poems, it's time to connect symbol to sound! As students move forward to the second blue ribbon step, "Sound," they can start adding sound effects to reinforce the figurative language within the text. Provide students who are ready for this step with Handout #3, the sound key instructions, so they know which sounds to place in which part of their poetry. As students work, the teacher can circulate, troubleshoot, encourage, and redirect as necessary.
5. When students feel that their poems are complete, they can move on to the final blue ribbon step, "Publish," to add the track to their library. If your school uses Twitter, Facebook, or Google+, encourage students to share the links to their finished poems with the school community!

DAY FOUR—LISTENING GALLERY

1. Day four is all about sharing! Have each student bring up his or her Booktrack on a computer or other web device, with headphones available. Advise students that the reading speed setting on Booktrack should be set at the same speed at which they typically read silently. A good starting setting is 150 words per minute, which can be sped up or slowed down depending on each student's reading speed. Also, ask students to leave a blank piece of paper at their stations.
2. Have students rotate around the room to read and listen to one another's poetry. (If you don't have time for all students to listen to all poems, have them set a goal of making it to ten different stations.) After reading each poem, require students to leave comments on the feedback sheet at the station. What was memorable about the poem? Were there particularly effective literary devices or word choices used? What connections or feelings were evoked by the poem? Have students leave their initials after writing their feedback.
3. When they return to their own stations, students can read their feedback sheets to see how their readers reacted to the poetry. Continue to refer back to these poems in further discussions of figurative language throughout the year. [This activity could be duplicated later in the course, using specific text from a literary work to analyze and apply sound to figurative language.] Hopefully, your students will now have a strong base of knowledge to work from!

HANDOUT #1

DEFINING METAPHOR, SIMILE, AND SYMBOL

“SOUND AND SYMBOL”

Writers use figurative language to make meaning through association.

-Sometimes strictly factual words aren't enough to express exactly what we mean. So, we use comparisons to draw on the vast amount of associations that we have with various objects or experiences.

-For example, we may compare a very long, difficult test with a marathon—we tend to associate marathons with immense amounts of work, time, and sweat. This comparison helps us understand that this particular test must have been *really* challenging!

Figurative Language is a term for a whole collection of literary devices that function through these kinds of comparisons.

-We'll look at three types of figurative language today: metaphor, simile, and symbol.

-These three types of figurative language often appear in poetry.

METAPHOR

Metaphor makes a direct comparison between a subject and something the author associates with it. The words “like” or “as” will not appear. Rather, we’re using the metaphor almost as another name for the subject.

It is the East, and **Juliet is the sun!** (*Sun = beautiful woman*)

A **lumbering beast** of a man stood in the doorway. (*Lumbering beast = large, hulking man*)

After he insulted her, **a hot fire burned** within her. (*hot fire burning = anger growing*)

SIMILE

Simile makes an indirect comparison between a subject and something the author associates with it. The words “like” or “as” appear here.

After getting out of the water, she shook **like a terrified baby bunny.** (*Shaking in a vulnerable, pitiable, severe way*)

His eyes were as green **as a freshly mowed summer lawn.** (*Not only very green in color, but also appealing and warm*)

The children laughed **like caffeinated squirrels.** (*Self-explanatory, right?*)

SYMBOL

A symbol is an object, figure, action, or other element that appears in a literary work in order to represent an idea. These can be tricky, but think like a detective about the associations we naturally make with the symbols below:

Sunshine is something warm and beautiful that makes people happy >> *often a symbol for happiness or prosperity.*

Blue is the color of the sea and clear sky >> *often a symbol for calm, healing, or peace.*

Lions are associated often with the idea of courage, wildness, leadership (think King of the Jungle), and power >> *a lion could be a symbol for any of those ideas.*

HANDOUT #2

IDEA LIST FOR FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

“SOUND AND SYMBOL”

You'll soon be writing a poem, based on one of your own experiences, which utilizes figurative language. To do that, you need to be able to make comparisons between aspects of the experience and other things that can serve as metaphors, similes, or symbols to lend power to your description.

Can something about your experience compare to these ideas? To get your ideas flowing, pick at least five of the items on this list, and turn each one into a piece of figurative language that you can use in your poem about your experience. If you feel ambitious, try more than five!

Something I could compare to a Monster: _____

Something I could compare to a Road: _____

Something I could compare to a Body of water: _____

Something I could compare to an Element of nature: _____

Something I could compare to an Animal: _____

Something I could compare to a Machine: _____

Something I could compare to a Street: _____

Something I could compare to Wind, rain, or other weather: _____

Something I could compare to a Battle: _____

Something I could compare to an Alarm: _____

Something I could compare to a Crash, explosion, or flame: _____

Something I could compare to Magic: _____

Something I could compare to a Song: _____

Something I could compare to a Sport: _____

HANDOUT #3

SOUND KEY

"SOUND AND SYMBOL"

METAPHORS

Your poem should include at least two metaphors. For each metaphor that appears in your poem, highlight it and use the *ambience* or *effect* options on Booktrack Classroom to add a sound that matches the metaphor.

The metaphor sounds I used were...

Simile

Your poem should include at least two similes. For each simile that appears in your poem, highlight it and use the *ambience* or *effect* options on Booktrack Classroom to add a sound that matches the simile.

The simile sounds I used were...

Symbol

Your poem should also include at least one symbol. Highlight your symbol, and use the *ambience* or *effect* options on Booktrack Classroom to add a sound that reflects the symbol.

The symbol sound I used was...
