Soulful Similes and Musical Metaphors

Fifth Grade
Reading

by Brandy Metzger

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Baby, you're a firework! In this musical lesson, your students will use context clues to determine the meaning of similes and metaphors in popular music. They will then use this knowledge to write their own metaphors and similes.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to identify and determine the meaning of metaphors and similes.

Materials and Preparation

- "Firework" by Katy Perry
- "Firework" lyrics
- "Life is a Highway" by Rascal Flatts
- "Life is a Highway" lyrics (1 copy per student)
- "S.O.S." by Jonas Brother
- "S.O.S" lyrics (1 copy per student)
- Music player
- Paper
- Pencil

Key Terms

- simile
- metaphor
- lyrics

Introduction (15 minutes)

- To begin, introduce the key terms to your class, giving them examples of each figure of speech. Explain that a simile is used to compare two things with the words like or as. For example: She smells as sweet as a rose. Explain that a metaphor is used to make a more implied or hidden comparison by using descriptions in a figurative way. For example: She is a winter rose.
- Tell your class that they will be listening for metaphors and similes in the lyrics, or words, of a song.
- Play the song "Firework" by Katy Perry.
- On the board, show students the lyrics to the song.
- Have a short discussion with students about what they think the song means. Possible discussion questions include: What does the word firework mean in this context? Why? What clues lead you to that conclusion?

Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (15 minutes)

- Highlight the main metaphor that repeats throughout the song: Baby, you're a firework. Discuss why this is a metaphor and its meaning in the song. Remind your students that context clues help to highlight the meaning of figurative language like this.
- Draw your students' attention to the first simile in the song: Do you ever feel like a plastic bag, floating in the wind, hoping to start again? Discuss why this is a simile and the meaning. For example, perhaps the main character feels like she can be set free from a bad experience with a new wind or situation.
- Guide students through the rest of the song lyrics to identify other similes, and discuss their meanings.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)

- Play the song "S.O.S." by Jonas Brothers for your class.
- Arrange the class into pairs, and give them each the lyrics to this song.

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• Have your students work with their partners to identify the similes and metaphors in the song and determine their meanings. Instruct them to underline the similes and metaphors and write the meanings in the margins.

**Independent Working Time (10 minutes)**

• Pass out individual copies of the lyrics to "Life is a Highway."
• Play the song for your class.
• Ask your students to read all the lyrics and identify the central metaphor. Encourage them to write about the metaphor on sheets of paper. Great discussion questions include: *What does this metaphor mean? Why might life be considered a "highway" here?*
• Challenge your students to write their own metaphors about life, and have them write explanations of their metaphors.

**Differentiation**

• **Enrichment:** Have students who need a greater challenge write lyrics to a song using their own metaphors and at least three similes.
• **Support:** Ask your students to complete the following simile with three different endings: *Friends are like...*

**Assessment (10 minutes)**

• Ask your students to interpret the following metaphor and simile: *The Earth is a delicate flower. Life is like a box of chocolates.*
• Tell your students to write at least two sentences to provide evidence that supports their interpretations.

**Review and Closing (5 minutes)**

• Ask your students to define metaphors and similes in their own words. Discuss why musicians sometimes use them in their lyrics.

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