

Descriptive Writing

Lesson 4: Lesson Guide

Do Now

Students explain why the image is exciting.

Metaphors

A reminder of tenor, vehicle and ground is provided. Students who did not complete the programme in year 7 may need more support.

Extract from Life of Pi

Read the passage and identify the tenor, vehicle and ground. Then discuss the effect of the metaphors.

Descriptions of people

We have spent some time practising descriptions of settings. We are now expanding to descriptions of people. We begin with Barry Tamerlane from 'The Daydreamer'. Some students may not have read the novel in year 7 but the passage is accessible.

Identifying metaphors

Students identify tenor, vehicle and ground in the metaphors used to describe Barry Tamerlane.

Emotional impact

Students annotate the emotional impact of the metaphors on the reader.

End of lesson quiz



Describe why this image is exciting.



Extension: Continue this description, *'When the diver hit the water, the surface rippled and ebbed away...'*





Effective writers use metaphors to craft their writing.
A metaphor is a way of describing something.

It is **not** a literal description.

You compare it to **something it is not**.



A metaphor is made up of three parts:

1. Tenor The thing you want to try and describe to your audience.

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

3. Ground/s The things the tenor and the vehicle have in common.



Here are two examples of metaphors that we have studied.

1

In mid-leap frogs are parachutists falling in a free fall.



2

Without dreams life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.



In pairs, identify the **tenor**, **vehicle** and **ground** of these two metaphors.

1. Tenor The thing you want to try and describe to your audience.

2. Vehicle The imaginative idea you compare it with to help your reader understand it. This is the 'made up' bit.

3. Ground/s The things the tenor and the vehicle have in common.

1

In mid-leap frogs are parachutists falling in a free fall.



1. Tenor The frog is the thing being described.

2. Vehicle The frog is being compared to a parachutist.

3. Ground/s Both fly through the air with their arms and legs stretched out. Both look exciting and dramatic.

2

Life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.



1. Tenor Life without dreams is the thing being described.

2. Vehicle Life is being compared to a broken-winged bird.

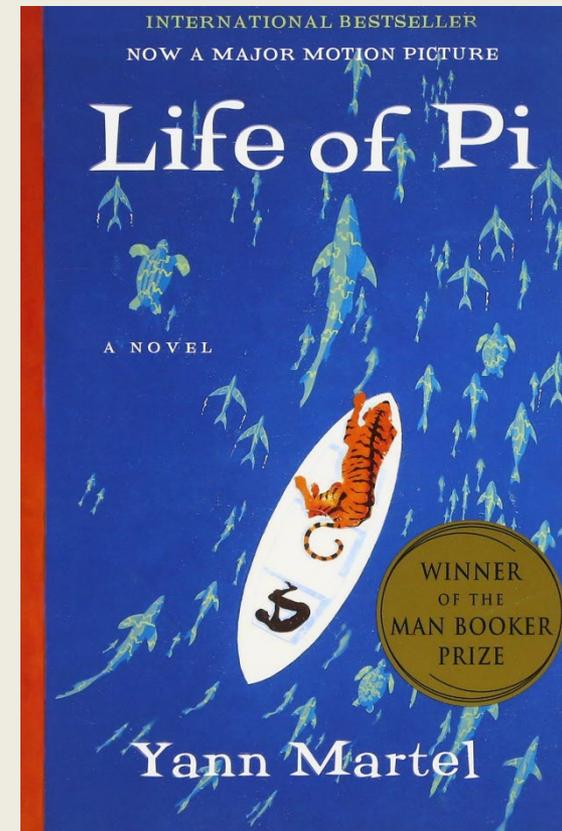
3. Ground/s
Life is fragile and easily damaged.
We need dreams to give us hope.

Extract from Chapter 45, 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel

Try to picture the scene in your mind as we read.

Daybreak came. It happened quickly, yet by imperceptible degrees. A corner of the sky changed colours. The air began filling with light. The calm sea opened up around me like a great book.

Warmth came only when the sun, looking like an electrically lit orange, broke across the horizon, but I didn't need to wait that long to feel it. With the very first rays of light it came alive in me: hope. As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, hope increased until it was like a song in my heart. Oh, what it was to bask in it! As the horizon became a neat, sharp line, I scanned it eagerly. That morning the horizon might curve one way, my lips resolutely curved the other, in a smile.



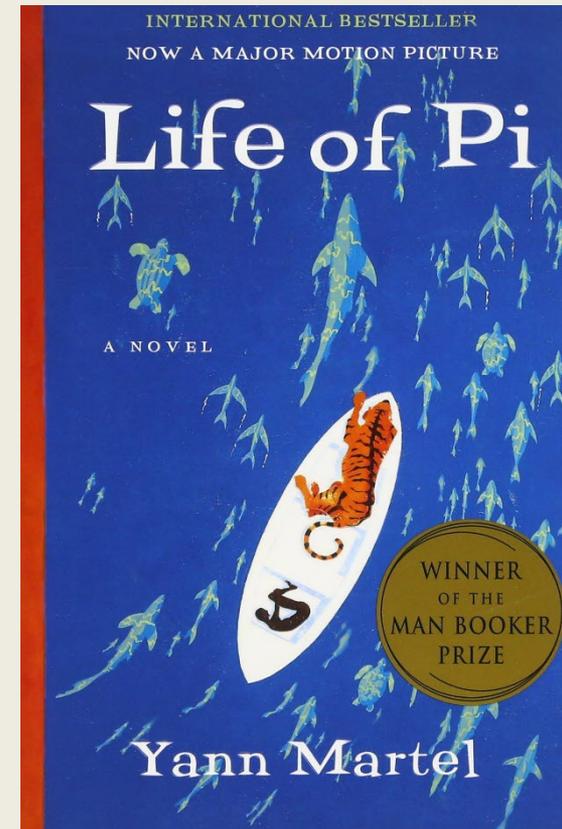


Extract from Chapter 45, 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel

In pairs, highlight the metaphors. Then identify the **tenor**, **vehicle** and **ground** of the metaphors.

Daybreak came. It happened quickly, yet by imperceptible degrees. A corner of the sky changed colours. The air began filling with light. The calm sea opened up around me like a great book.

Warmth came only when the sun, looking like an electrically lit orange, broke across the horizon, but I didn't need to wait that long to feel it. With the very first rays of light it came alive in me: hope. As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, hope increased until it was like a song in my heart. Oh, what it was to bask in it! As the horizon became a neat, sharp line, I scanned it eagerly. That morning the horizon might curve one way, my lips resolutely curved the other, in a smile.





Extract from Chapter 45, 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel

Here are some examples of metaphors from this passage. You can also see the **tenor** and the **vehicle** for each metaphor.

The **calm sea** opened up around me like a **great book**.

Warmth came only when the **sun**, looking like an **electrically lit orange**, broke across the horizon.

As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, **hope** increased until it was like a **song** in my heart.

In pairs, discuss these two questions:

- 1. What is the ground for each of these metaphors?**
- 2. What is the effect of these metaphors on a reader?**



Extract from Chapter 45, 'Life of Pi' by Yann Martel

Let's discuss your answers.

Both have great depth and are relaxing

The calm sea opened up around me like a great book.

Warmth came only when the sun, looking like an electrically lit orange, broke across the horizon.

Both are bright and round

Both hope and a song lifts the spirits

As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, hope increased until it was like a song in my heart.

Martel describes the start of the day and the impact it has on the speaker's mood. The sun brings hope and delight.

Descriptions of people

When we read **'The Daydreamer'** last year, we met a character called **Barry Tamerlane**. He is a bully.

Let's re-read the opening of the chapter. As we read, think about the metaphors that are used to describe Barry Tamerlane.



As we read, think about the metaphors that are used to describe Barry Tamerlane.

The very name Barry Tamerlane was enough to make you feel an icy hand reaching into your stomach. You were frightened of him because everyone else was. He was frightening because he had a reputation for being frightening. No one was able to stop him having what he wanted. He wasn't able to stop himself. He was a blind force. He sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do. Barry Tamerlane was a mystery. Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.





Here are all the metaphors that describe Barry:

- The very name Barry Tamerlane was enough to make you feel an icy hand reaching into your stomach.
- He was a blind force.
- He sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.
- Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.



For each of the metaphors, you need to find:

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 things the tenor and the vehicle have in common.

Highlight the different parts on your worksheet.

- The very name Barry Tamerlane was enough to make you feel an icy hand reaching into your stomach.
- He was a blind force
- He sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.
- Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.





Last lesson we considered the emotional impact that our descriptions can have on the reader.

Let's consider the impact McEwan's description of Barry Tamerlane has.

The very name **Barry Tamerlane** was enough to make you feel an **icy hand** reaching into your stomach.



McEwan shows the impact that bullying can have on someone's emotional and physical wellbeing.

McEwan presents a cold hand as a terrifying and deathly experience.

Barry's bullying makes you feel physically sick.



Now annotate the emotional impact of McEwan's descriptions of Barry Tamerlane.

He [Barry] sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.

Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy [Barry] turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.

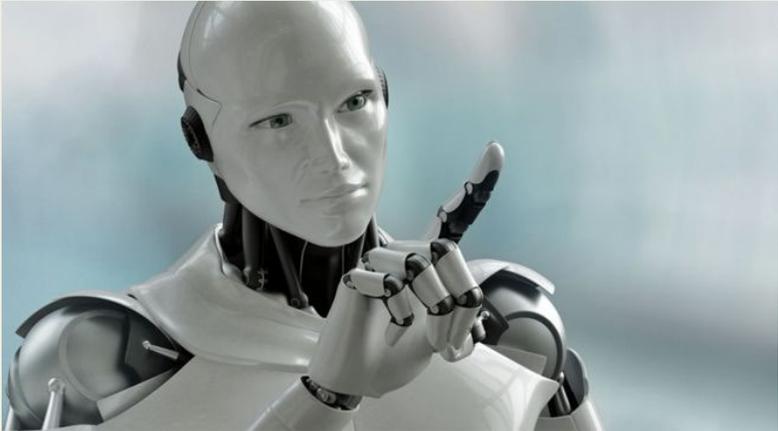


Let's see what you came up with.

He [Barry] sometimes seemed to Peter like a **robot** who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.

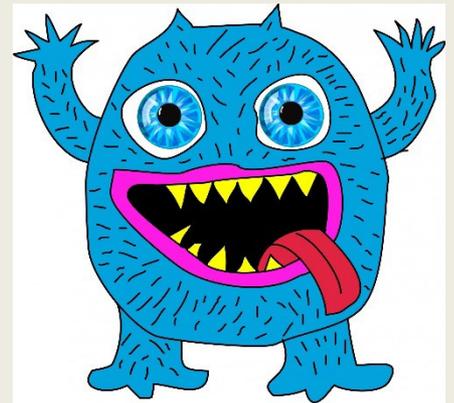
McEwan shows that Barry is unfeeling – he does not care about the impact of his actions on those he bullies.

Barry only cares about one thing – and that is getting what he wants. He does not care about anything else, including other people's feelings.





Let's see what you came up with.



Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school **the boy [Barry]** turns into a **monster**, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.

McEwan seems to show that Barry has both the capacity to be kind and to be a monster. He wants the reader to know that Barry can change if he wants to.

Barry has a changeable personality, like a monster.

Which of these sentences does not contain a metaphor?

- a) Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.
- b) He sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.
- c) Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy picks up his favourite snack from the corner shop.
- d) Warmth came only when the sun, looking like an electrically lit orange, broke across the horizon.
- e) As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, hope increased until it was like a song in my heart.

Which of these sentences does not contain a metaphor?

- a) Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy turns into a monster, and at the end of the day, the monster turns back into a boy.
- b) He sometimes seemed to Peter like a robot who was programmed to do whatever he had to do.
- c) Each morning, somewhere along the way from home to school the boy picks up his favourite snack from the corner shop.**
- d) Warmth came only when the sun, looking like an electrically lit orange, broke across the horizon.
- e) As things emerged in outline and filled with colour, hope increased until it was like a song in my heart.



English Mastery

Love the lesson? Have some suggestions for improvements? Noticed a mistake or an error?

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