

LIST 85. SIMILES

A simile is a figure of speech that uses the word “as” or “like.” Figures of speech are used like adjectives or adverbs. They modify or describe a person, place, thing, or action with a colorful and often visual term or phrase. Creative writers and poets make good use of these. The following are frequently used similes.

Similes Using “As”

as bright as the noonday sun
 as blind as a bat
 as busy as a bee
 as certain as death and taxes
 as clear as a bell
 as clear as day
 as clear as the nose on your face
 as cold as ice
 as comfortable as an old shoe
 as cool as a cucumber
 as cuddly as a baby
 as cute as a button
 as dark as night
 as deaf as a doorpost
 as deep as the ocean
 as dry as a bone
 as fat as a pig
 as flat as a pancake
 as fresh as dew
 as green as grass
 as happy as a lark
 as hard as nails
 as hard as rock
 as hungry as a bear
 as innocent as a newborn baby
 as large as life
 as light as a feather
 as loud as thunder
 as lovely as a rose
 as mad as a wethen
 as meek as a lamb
 as old as the hills
 as quick as a wink
 as quiet as a mouse
 as rough as sandpaper
 as skinny as a rail
 as slow as molasses in January
 as sly as a fox

as smart as a whip
 as smooth as glass
 as soft as old leather
 as soft as silk
 as stiff as a board
 as strong as an ox
 as stubborn as a mule
 as sweet as honey
 as white as new fallen snow

Similes Using “Like”

acts like a bull in a china shop
 chatters like a monkey
 cheeks like roses
 cry like a baby
 drinks like a fish
 eat like a pig
 eat like it's going out of style
 eats like a bird
 eyes like stars
 feel like two cents
 fits like a glove
 fought like cats and dogs
 laugh like a hyena
 moves like a snail
 run around like a chicken with its head
 cut off
 run like a deer
 sing like a bird
 sit there like a bump on a log
 slept like a dog
 sparkled like diamonds
 spoke like an orator
 stood out like a sore thumb
 waddle like a duck
 walk like an elephant
 work like a dog
 works like a charm

See also List 80, Descriptive Words; List 86, Metaphors; List 183, Common Word Idioms.

LIST 86. METAPHORS

Metaphors are figures of speech that compare two things, but do not use the words “like” or “as.” These colorful phrases are used like adverbs or adjectives to describe persons, places, things, or actions; however, some metaphors are used so often that they lose their appeal. Metaphors do not have literal meanings, so they are sometimes difficult for English language learners. This list will help you familiarize students with how metaphors work and enable them to recognize them in print as well as write their own.

The small boat was a ping-pong ball bouncing around on the waves.

Viewed from the airplane, the rush-hour traffic was an army of ants working its way slowly toward home.

There was no rush, so we sent the letter by snail mail.

Michael clammed up and refused to say anything.

At a flick of a switch, the theater came alive with music.

The car slowed as it approached the hairpin turn.

I work so hard during the day that I become a couch potato at night.

Her eyes lit up when she saw that her friend was safe.

The birch tree danced in the breeze.

The fog was a blanket covering the valley floor.

The stars were diamonds sparkling in the sky.

Her heart was overflowing with kindness.

She was so shy that she kept her ideas bottled up inside her.

Mr. Mather’s bark is worse than his bite.

The air conditioning was so strong that the room became an icebox.

That car is a dinosaur. It’s time to get a new one.

The toddler was a clinging vine on his mother.

The children grew up near a lake and were fish in the water.

My mother gave me a real tongue lashing when she saw my poor grades.

The branches of the tree were fingernails scratching my bedroom window.

The students were so excited about the new project that they became a fountain of ideas.

The growing boy’s stomach was a bottomless pit.

Her porcelain skin contributed to her beauty.