Use Similes

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn about using similes.
• Practice creating similes.
• Discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, write the sentence frames and word bank entries from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper to support ELs.

1. Focus

Explain Using Similes

Say: Writers use figurative language to give fresh meaning to words. Figurative language can be language that has a meaning different from what individual words say. It can also be language that describes something vividly by comparing it to something else. A simile is one type of figurative language that makes comparisons. You can identify similes because they use the words like or as to compare one thing to another. Fiction writers use similes to help readers visualize their stories. Similes can be particularly useful to historical fiction writers who need to relate unfamiliar things from the past to more familiar things that readers will understand. Today I’m going to show you how to use similes to bring images alive in your historical fiction stories.

Model How Writers Use Similes

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for the simile as you read the text aloud.

Modeling Text

It was hard to write with gloves on, but Patrick didn’t dare remove them. If he did, his fingers would freeze like ten icicles in the Rocky Mountain air.

Say: I can identify the simile in the second sentence by the word like—“his fingers would freeze like ten icicles.” The simile compares the character’s frozen fingers to icicles. The writers could have just written that “it was too cold to take his gloves off.” But the simile makes the image much more vivid. We immediately understand how cold it was in the mountains where the character was trying to write in his journal. The author has used this simile to help bring to life this historical fiction scene from the American wilderness. I’m going to underline this phrase and label it simile. Underline and label the identified phrase.
2. Rehearse

Practice Creating Similes

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

The _____ feels like _____.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to complete the sentence to create one or more similes. Students may completely rewrite the sentence if they wish. Pairs of students should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class. They should be ready to explain the similes they wrote.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their similes. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they write or revise their historical fiction stories.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that we can use similes in our stories to create vivid images for readers. Similes are comparisons that use the words like or as. Remember, a good historical fiction story is based on events that occurred or could have occurred. As a writer, it is up to you to bring the story to life for readers. Similes are a tool you can use to help bring stories to life.

Encourage students to use similes as they draft or revise their writing during independent writing time. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of similes and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to read aloud a section of text in which a simile creates a vivid image or creative comparison.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Invite beginning ELs to draw pictures comparing two things, such as icicles and fingers, or the warm sun and a warm blanket. Use gestures and their drawings as you say a simile aloud. Say: The sun is as warm as a blanket. My fingers felt like icicles.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity. Provide this sentence frame: The _____ feels like ______. Supply the following word bank to help them complete one or more similes. Encourage students to compare items from the first column with items from the second column. Ask them to explain why their similes make sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog’s fur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a blanket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a campfire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: comparison/la comparación; figurative/figurado(a); simile/el símil.