

Metaphors and Similes

Metaphors and similes are both ways to compare things. We use metaphors and similes every day, but it can be hard to remember just which is which.

A metaphor is when you say something is something. A simile is when you say something is like something. For example, let's say you have a mean stepfather. If you say, "my stepfather is a bear," that's a metaphor. But if you say, "my stepfather is like a bear," that's a simile.

It's easy if you remember this: if two things are compared with the use of the words "like" or "as," that's a simile. A simile is what's called an open comparison. One memory aid is that you find the letter "i" in both "like" and "simile." But if there's no "like" or "as," that's a hidden comparison -- a metaphor.

Here is a list of similes and metaphors:

Similes

her hair was like silk

mean as Oscar the Grouch

the ship went down like lead

light as a feather

busy as a bee

her gaze was like ice

Metaphors

her hair was silk

meaner than Oscar the Grouch

dead fish are polished marble

those figures are fishy

car salesmen are sharks

her gaze was icy

Both similes and metaphors are used frequently in literature, especially in poetry. A famous poem by Robert Burns begins, "My love is like a red, red rose." That's a simile. But when Romeo says, "Juliet is the sun," in *Romeo and Juliet*, that's a metaphor.

It can be hard to write or talk about ideas, events and feelings. But using idioms, similes and metaphors can make it easier. For more information, click on any of the following links: