

Metaphors are bridges. They create images, and, by connecting any two different ideas, persons, places, and things, show things in new ways.

Trees are earth's hair. —CARL MCCREARY, age 16

White is time ticking. —NIC SHELTON, age 9

Work is the velcro that keeps reality sticking to you. —CATHY CHRISTENSEN, Adult

Hair is a broom for your pillow. —SAM WEYER, age 17

Television is the pacifier of teens. —KARL HANGARTNER, age 15

Morning is the topic sentence of my day. —SUSAN BEAUCHAMP, Adult

A doll is a place to store your love when no one else is around. —JENNYFER SCHAUBEL, age 12

Food is solidified love. —SHEA JUDD-HUME, age 11

Hands of the artist are branches on omniscient redwood. —MEL CARTER, age 18

Clocks are electric roosters. —RYAN MACKIE, age 12

Hate is a worn out light bulb. It has no use. —JENNY MILLER, age 14

A circle is a line that eats its own tail. —SHIRLENE ROMAIN, Adult

Friends are the mast of companionship. —JASON SIMONTON, age 13

Doubt is a raging fire lit against the paper of confidence. —BARBARA JACKSON, Adult

Cars are armor for weary gladiators. —MEL CARTER, age 18

Activity: Writing Metaphors

To complete this activity, you will write metaphors comparing one noun to another unrelated noun.

A. First, write metaphors on the lines below.

Examples: Hair is a broom.
Love is the wind.

B. Then, answer the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? or How? about some of your comparisons. Note: You do not need to do these metaphors in order.

Example: Shoes are hairs (Where?) at the other end.

1. Heart of _____

2. Mountains of _____

3. War is a _____

4. Love is _____

5. A school of _____

6. Tears are _____

7. Marriage is

8. The ocean is a

9. Television is

10. The moon is a

11. Bottle of

12. Kiss of

13. Heaven is a

14. The army is

15. House of

16. Cigarettes are

17. Ropes of

18. Hate is

19. Shoes are

20. School is

21. Tomado of

22. Smiles of

23. Jaws of

24. Hands are

25. Mind of

26. Teeth are a

27. Life of

28. Shoulders are

Like smoke from a campfire, a single metaphor often suggests a series of images. Melinda wrote, "The sun is a fireball in the sky," and saw the following pictures unfold from it.

SUN AND MOON

The sun, a fireball in the sky,
burns a hole in the universe.
Parents take their children to the ocean
to look at the sunset
And they tell their children,
if you listen carefully,
you will hear the sun
going into the water.
And they say, you can hear
the sizzle of the sun going out
and the rumble of the moon coming up,
walking, to watch over the universe.

MELINDA JACOBS, age 15

Select a favorite metaphor from pages 5–7 and write it at the top of a piece of paper. Then continue writing all of the thoughts that come to your mind, letting your ideas flow freely and unedited. See *Writing and Editing Poetry*, in the Introduction on pages xii–xiv, for suggestions on this composition and editing process.

Writing Extended Metaphors

Poetry occurs spontaneously in thoughts and speech. One day at lunch, my friend Deborah said, "Do you want some music in your coffee?" Like Deborah, people often think and speak in verse, but how do they move from poetic ideas and conversation to written poetry?

The **extended metaphor** provides a structure for expanding thoughts and speech, gathering content for poems. Choose a favorite metaphor from those on pages 5–7, and write it at the top of a piece of paper. Then list characteristics of the second noun. For example:

Spelling is war
trenches
blow up
bombs
bullets
escape
ammunition

After generating the above list, Matt asked how the characteristic of the second noun, "war," could be used to describe the first noun, "spelling." In the poem on the next page, Matt used his answers to this question for his content.

SPELLING

Spelling is war.

Words fly like bullets.

Your ears blow up like bombs.

You dig trenches

on your paper

for escape.

MATT LANGHANS, age 12

Activity: Writing Extended Metaphors

Tony used an extended metaphor, shown below, to gather words and ideas for his poem, "Life Is Dirt." Now you write some extended metaphors.

Metaphor: Life is dirt.

List characteristics of second noun:

Life is dirt

mud

weeds

brown

rocky

smooth

throw it

shrinking

earth

bumpy

Answer: Life is dirt. Who? What? Where? When?

Why? How?

LIFE IS DIRT

The longer you hang on
the smaller it gets.

Get it wet,

and you've got mud
on your hands.

Take care of life
or it's overrun
with weeds.

Life can be rocky or smooth
and it's great
for throwing at people.

TONY CASE, Adult

Metaphors About People

Ask eight people what they see when they look at a tree, and you're likely to get eight different answers, depending on their points of view. Roots, shade, paper, agelessness, leaves, home, strength, and work are some of the many possibilities. By writing poetry in which you compare yourself to things, you will probably reflect what you see in the objects back onto yourself.