

## Figurative Language in *The Pearl*

### Why Authors Use Figurative Language

Read these two passages.

#1. News travels fast in small towns.

#2. A town is a thing like a colonial animal. A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet. A town is a thing separate from all other towns, so there are no two towns alike. And a town has a whole emotion. How news travels through a town is a mystery not easily to be solved. News seems to travel faster than small boys can scramble and dart to tell it, faster than women can call it over the fences (p. 21).

How are they different? It's not just that #1 is shorter than #2. #1 is literal, while #2 uses figurative language.

Authors use figurative language to help us paint pictures in our minds. That is why it's also called *imagery*.

These are the main types of figurative language:

\*Idiom: A figure of speech passed through a culture.

\*Simile: A comparison of unlike things using words such as "like" or "as".

\*Metaphor: A comparison using a verb, saying that something is something else.

### Steinbeck's Use of Figurative Language

Steinbeck often uses figurative language, making comparison to help you paint a picture in your mind. Read the examples of figurative language below and identify them as idioms, similes or metaphors.

*A town is a thing like a colonial animal.*    Idiom    Simile    Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

*A town has a nervous system and a head and shoulders and feet.*    Idiom    Simile  
Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

*Although the morning was young, the hazy mirage was up.* (14) Idiom Simile  
Metaphor What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*The lip-like flesh writhed up and then subsided.* (19) Idiom Simile Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*It was as large as a sea-gull's egg.* (19) Idiom Simile Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Before panting little boys could strangle out the words, their mothers knew it.* (21)

Idiom Simile Metaphor What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*The news swept on past the brush houses, and it washed in a foaming wave into the town of stone and plaster.* (21) Idiom Simile Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*The poison sacs of the town began to manufacture venom, and the town swelled and puffed with the pressure of it.* (23) Idiom Simile Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now find at least one other example of figurative language in *The Pearl*.

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Idiom Simile Metaphor

What two things are being compared? \_\_\_\_\_

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