



WriteShop®

Grades 3-9

Let's Write
IMAGERY
POEMS

Let's Write IMAGERY Poems
Color Poems • Imagery Poems • Shell Metaphors

by **Kim Kautzer**

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Let's Write Imagery Poems (E-book)

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Using Imagery in Poetry

Poets are a lot like artists. Instead of painting scenes with oils or acrylics, poets use vibrant description and figurative language to paint word pictures we can “see” with our mind’s eye. In his famous poem “Fog,” Carl Sandburg compares fog to a cat. Can you picture this in your imagination?



FOG

The fog comes in
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

And here, Hilda Conkling creates a very different word picture. Our minds can visualize this soldier-like dandelion—even though she never actually uses the word “dandelion” in the body of the poem. What a great example of imagery!

DANDELION

O little soldier with the golden helmet,
What are you guarding on my lawn?
You with your green gun
And your yellow beard,
Why do you stand so stiff?
There is only the grass to fight!

Hilda Conkling

What Is Poetry?

Poetry doesn't have to be stiff, boring, or dry. It's a sensory writing experience that teaches you to play with words and word patterns to create images that evoke an emotional response in the reader. Not only is this important for writing a clever and engaging poem, but playing with poetry helps set the stage for writing more descriptive stories and reports, too.

In *Literature for Children: A Short Introduction*, David Russell helps us understand what poetry is:

- Poetry is the language of the imagination.
- Prose explains, but poetry sings.
- Poetry is musical, precise, memorable, and magical.¹

Unlike your favorite novels, poems are short. And because they're short, **every word counts**. That's why poets choose and arrange their words with planning and purpose. As the following verse shows us, poetry seeks to create images and moods.

POETRY

What is Poetry? Who knows?
 Not a rose, but the scent of the rose;
 Not the sky, but the light in the sky;
 Not the fly, but the gleam of the fly;
 Not the sea, but the sound of the sea;
 Not myself, but what makes me
 See, hear, and feel something that prose
 Cannot; and what it is, who knows?

Eleanor Farjeon



If you haven't had much experience reading or writing poems, these imagery lessons will start you off on a new adventure in this delightful genre!

¹ Russell, David L. *Literature for Children: A Short Introduction*. 5th. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005. 176-77. Print.

Descriptive Images

Appealing to the imagination, poetry leaves no room for dull, boring words. Through a poet's use of descriptive words, we can picture a poem's colors, light, and texture. But descriptive writing isn't limited to the sense of sight; it can also appeal to our senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Each carefully chosen word can invite us to

- **See** moonlight rippling on water.
- **Hear** the creak of a rusty gate.
- **Feel** the rough surface of volcanic rock.
- **Smell** the cool, piney scent of a forest.
- **Taste** a juicy summer peach.

Figurative Language

Before you begin writing your own poems, it will be helpful to understand some vocabulary words that might be new to you.

im•age•ry *n.* Descriptive writing used to awaken the reader's senses. Figurative language and vivid description create imagery.

po•et•ic de•vi•ces *n.* Literary techniques that make poetry pleasing to hear. [Alliteration](#), [rhyme](#), [assonance](#), and [metaphors](#) are examples of poetic devices.

fig•ur•a•tive lan•guage *n.* Language containing images that compare one thing to something else. *Similes*, *metaphors*, and *personification* are examples of figurative language.

Not only is poetry descriptive, it's often filled with emotion and hidden meaning. The same poetic images that stimulate our senses can also stir our emotions so we can feel joy, fear, or sadness. To create this sensory experience for the reader, poets often use **figurative language** to make unusual comparisons.

Figurative is the opposite of *literal*. Literal language tells exactly what something is. "The sky is filled with fluffy clouds" is an example of a literal image. It makes sense because it's accurate.

Figurative language, on the other hand, is something you have to "figure" out. "A flock of fluffy lambs frolics in the sky" is a figurative image that describes fluffy clouds in a more poetic way. When you come across figurative language like this in a poem, you may have to rely on your imagination to help you understand what the poet is trying to say.

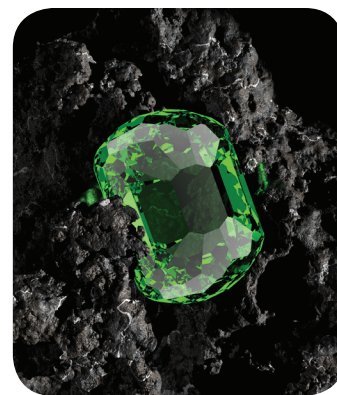
Similes, **metaphors**, and **personification** are examples of both figurative language and poetic devices. Let's look at each one.

Similes

Similes compare two things that are basically different but have strong similarities. Similes use LIKE or AS to compare things. A simile says *This* is like *That*, or *This* behaves as *That* does.

Find the similes and discuss each one:

- *The binocular owl / fastened to a limb / like a lantern* (May Swenson, "The Woods at Night")
- *Whispers are as soft as skin* (Myra Cohn Livingston, "Whispers")
- *We have tomorrow / Bright before us / Like a flame* (Langston Hughes, "Youth")
- *Emeralds are as green as grass, a ruby red as blood* (Christina Rossetti, "Flint")



Metaphors

Metaphors also compare two unlike things, but without the words LIKE or AS. Metaphors simply say *This* is *That*.

Find the metaphors and discuss each one:

- *The night is a big black cat / The Moon is her topaz eye* (G. Orr Clark, "The Night Is a Big Black Cat")
- *Seconds are bugs / minutes are children / hours are people / days are postmen* (Harry Behn, "All Kinds of Time")
- *The clouds are bunched roses* (Edith Sitwell, "Two Songs")



Personification

Personification gives human traits, characteristics, or qualities to a non-human subject.

Identify and discuss the personification:

- *I thought I heard the city crying in its sleep* (Lilian Moore, "Foghorns")
- *The rain has silver sandals / For dancing in the spring* (May Justus, "The Rain Has Silver Sandals")
- *Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight* (John Keats, "Sweet Peas")
- *The moon comes every night to peep / Through the window where I lie* (James Stephens, "The White Window")

Figurative language cannot be taken literally. Is an owl *really* a lantern? Is the night a cat? Do cities cry in their sleep? Of course not! These examples simply help us understand how figurative language makes things clearer to your reader by forming interesting pictures in their mind.

Did You Know?

Personification and similes are also a type of metaphor.

Let's Write Imagery Poems

Most poetry relies on imagery! But in this poetry pack, you will learn to write three different poems that come to life especially through the use of **comparison**.

Color Poetry

Color poems are **sensory poems**. Using similes, metaphors, and emotion words, you will compare a favorite color to objects and experiences you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. You will also use sensory words to help the reader “experience” the color you write about.

Blue can **sound** like the lapping of lake water or the crash of ocean waves.

Pink can **smell** like a strawberry smoothie.

Green can **feel** prickly, like a cactus, or slick and smooth, like your favorite rain boots.

Comparison Poetry

How is a fox like a cloud? How is a toaster like a dragon? How is a stream like a happy child?

While most poetry includes some form of imagery, the poems in this lesson will be especially rich in figurative language. As you write your own **poems of comparison**, you'll combine poetic devices with descriptive adjectives, strong nouns, and active verbs to make an impact on the reader.

In these student examples, can you find a metaphor? A simile? An example of personification? Descriptive word choices?

Downy and puffy, like fluffy pillows,
Clouds float like bubbles on a cool breeze... – Katelyn H.

Gathering storm clouds are sly foxes, gray and bleak.
Skulking, sneaking, they creep past stars,
and hide the face of the moon... – Blayne E.

Like a silver-scaled dragon,
the fearsome toaster heats
soft bread in its glowing red mouth... – Nathan T.

Gushing, splashing, singing little stream!
Awakening from winter's frozen sleep,
She frolics and skips upon colorful pebbles... – Andrew R.

Shell Metaphors

Do you remember what a metaphor is? It's a figure of speech that compares two things. Those things are not alike, yet they still share some common elements.

In your Imagery Poem, **the whole poem will be a single metaphor**. It might compare a cloud to a lamb or a thunderstorm to a freight train. When you write your poem, you will include even more examples of metaphors, similes, and personification, but the entire poem will always focus on just one thing, such as *how a cloud is a lamb*, or *how a storm is a train*.

Your **Shell Metaphor** will be very different. As you study a seashell from every possible angle, you'll begin to see how it reminds you of many things. It will not always be just a fan, or just a bowl, or just a crown. From one angle, your shell might be a unicorn's horn or a mighty drill. From another angle, it could be an ice cream cone or an Olympic torch. Your point of view and vivid imagination will bring the Shell Metaphor to life!

Did You Know?

Poems don't have to rhyme. And they definitely don't have to be boring! When you choose concrete words and use figurative language, your poems will be fun to write—and even more fun to read!

Color Poems

Everyone has a favorite color, whether it's princess pink, inky black, or the rippling green of a grassy meadow. It only makes sense, then, to introduce this Imagery Poetry unit with a lesson on writing a color poem!

Tips for Teaching the Lesson

Before you print the worksheets, here are a few suggestions to help your children avoid common pitfalls as they plan and write their poems.

Pick a Common Color

Your children will need to pick a color as the center of their poem. This should be a basic color—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, brown, black, white, or gray. As they brainstorm for details, they'll be able to include more unusual or exotic color words within the poem itself.

Use the Right Lists

When students are filling in the blanks on their "Color Poem Planner" page, make sure they're taking words from the correct lists on the Brainstorming Worksheet.

Create Accurate Word Pictures

Suppose a child writes: *Smoke smells red*. Even though smoke is associated with fire, smoke is typically gray in color. Explain that there are so many more accurate things that could "smell" red, such as red fruits, a spice like cinnamon, a certain scent of candle, or a fragrant red flower.

Once they have chosen more appropriate words, such as *strawberries* and *roses*, invite them to add bright and vivid adjectives to their red smell words: *Crushed strawberries and wild climbing roses smell red*.

Avoid Repeated Words

If they use *ocean* three times to describe how blue *looks*, *sounds*, and *smells*, guide them toward replacing two of these with other images, such as *gurgling creek* or *bar of soap*.

Replace Vague Words

Encourage students to pick more concrete or specific words. If their color is black, suggest *orca* instead of the generic *whale*.

Similarly, invite them to replace *tree* with *cedar*, *maple tree*, or *elm* when describing green. And while the word *candy* is too ambiguous for brown, words like *malt balls*, *Snickers*, or *chocolate chips* create a more vivid impression.

Teaching Different Ages

Your entire family will love this activity. Try these tips when working with different ages.

Teens

Older students should be able to write their color poems with little or no supervision. Provide them with a good thesaurus (our all-time favorite is [The Synonym Finder](#)).

Upper Elementary

Children in this age range may require a bit more help from you. Because they often lack the skills needed to make sophisticated word choices, their poems may fall flat without guidance.

- To introduce the concept of **color imagery**, consider checking out a poetry book from the library, such as *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* or *My Many Colored Days*.
- Or, send children on a scavenger hunt throughout the house and garden in search of specific colors. ("Gather 10 things that are orange," or "Make a list of 12 gray objects.")

Primary Ages

Even your youngest children can participate in this activity, but you'll need to work side by side through the entire process. The concept of a color having a smell or taste is too abstract and will likely go right over their heads. Try some of these ideas to help your little ones:

- Explore a book about objects of different colors. Even a toddler's board book will help a young student think about things that are black or purple or green.
- Do a Google search for terms like *red foods* or *red objects*. (*Always supervise your children and use discretion when searching online.*)
- Talk about objects, foods, and textures that are associated with a particular color. For example, brown objects might include *pennies*, *cowboy boots*, a *sparrow*, and *soil*. Brown foods include *walnuts*, *fried chicken*, *fudge*, and *bran muffins*. Brown textures could include *lizard skin*, *cowhide*, *fur*, *sandpaper*, and *leather*.

Advance Prep

Print the following pages, one for each child..

- Write a Color Poem (pp. 11-12)
 - Color Poem Brainstorming Worksheet (p. 13)
 - Emotions Word Bank (pp. 14-15)
 - Color Poetry Word Bank (pp. 16-17)
 - Color Poem Planner (p. 18)
 - Color Poem lined writing page in the color that matches your child's poem (pp. 19-24)
- Note: Your teen might find these colored printables too young for their taste. The lesson will give them the option of typing their poem on the computer using colored fonts and their own clipart.*

Color and Imagery

Using colors in your poetry often makes a visual or emotional impact. But when your *entire poem* is about one color, the effect is especially dramatic and powerful!

Color poems are another type of **imagery poem**. They rely on similes, metaphors, emotion words, and the five senses to create a vivid word picture. Explain or review the poetic devices your children will use to create their poems.

Similes and Metaphors

These devices help students compare any color to objects and experiences they see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

Emotion Words

When children use emotion words in their poems, it can cause the reader to feel or connect with those emotions.

Sensory Words

Including words about taste and smell or hearing and touch helps the reader perfectly imagine the scene or experience your child is describing.

Imagery examples:

White can **sound** like the silence of falling snow or the whoosh of seafoam on a cresting wave.

Brown can **taste** like warm chocolate-chip cookies or **smell** like a crackling bonfire.

As an **experience**, yellow can be lunch at McDonald's or a walk in the sunshine.

Look at the examples of Color Poetry on the next page. Ask your children to pay attention to the different feelings and emotions they experience as you read each poem aloud.

TICKLED PINK

Courtney, age 13

Pink is as fragile as delicate porcelain.
 Pink is rosy cheeks and flamingoes
 and the feeling of bashfulness.
 Pink is fuchsia, salmon, and rose.
 Pink is the sweet taste of candy hearts
 and watermelon Kool-Aid.
 Juicy strawberries and blooming
 carnations smell pink.
 Being in love makes me feel pink.
 Pink is the sound of romantic songs
 and old hymns.
 Giggling and painted sunsets are pink.
 Pink is sweet and shy.

MORNING BLUE

Matthew, age 10

Blue is as fluffy as cotton candy.
 Blue is cloudless sky and berry pie and
 the feeling of rest.
 Blue is sapphire, indigo, and denim.
 Blue is the cold taste of mint
 mouthwash.
 Blueberry pancakes and early morning
 rain smell blue.
 Loneliness makes me feel blue.
 Blue is the sound of scrub jays
 screeching and ocean waves
 crashing.
 Far-stretching sea and Hawaii are blue.
 Blue is endless.

CALIFORNIA CASUAL

Kaeli, age 15

Orange is as exotic as a brilliant tiger lily.
 Orange is a skittish clownfish and cool
 cantaloupes and the feeling of fizzy
 Fanta tickling my nose.
 Orange is peach, copper, and melon.
 Orange is the tangy taste of California
 citrus.
 Spicy cinnamon and delicate orange
 blossoms smell orange.
 Confidence makes me feel orange.
 Orange is the sound of a crackling fire
 and Spanish guitars.
 Cruising the Caribbean and dancing the
 Mambo are orange.
 Orange is laughter on the beach at
 sunset.

Write a Color Poem

Brainstorm for Ideas

Print a copy of the Color Poem Brainstorming Worksheet, Emotions Word Bank, and Color Word Bank (pp. 13-17)

1. For now, put away the color poem samples so you're not tempted to borrow from them. Trust yourself, for you have many wonderful ideas in your head and will be able to write a descriptive color poem of your own!
2. Follow the directions on the Color Poem Brainstorming Worksheet.

Plan Your Poem

Use the Color Poem Planner (p. 18) to help you arrange your ideas and write a rough draft.

1. Fill in the blanks on the Color Poem Planner using words and phrases from your brainstorming lists. Write your color word on each bold, dark line.
2. As you transfer your ideas from the Brainstorming Worksheet to the Color Poem Planner, make sure you put the right words in the right spaces by matching the line numbers.
3. On the first line, use a word from any of your lists to create a simile that compares two things using *as*. For example, *soft as a lamb* or *loud as thunder*.
4. Make each word count.
 - **Do not** repeat any main words (except for the color word you have chosen).
 - Use interesting, specific nouns. For instance, instead of *bird*, choose *canary*, *cardinal*, or *parakeet*. Instead of *sports car*, choose *Corvette*, *Viper*, or *Ferrari*.
 - Use strong verbs. You might replace *moving* or *going* with *flitting*, *racing*, or *soaring*.
 - Add descriptive adjectives where appropriate, such as *juicy*, *ripe*, or *plump* strawberries.
5. Skim through your poem. What ideas or objects seem especially interesting to you? Think of a clever title based on one or two of these ideas. You can include the color word in the title, or you can leave it out.
6. When finished, read your color poem aloud to hear how it flows.
 - Are you happy with the amount of vivid description?
 - Do you need to replace weak or uninteresting words or add more detail to your poem?
 - Write the changes on the Poem Planner.

Write Your Final Draft

1. This poetry pack includes 6 decorated pages for writing poems about each color. Print the page that matches your color, and copy your poem onto the blank lines. For added fun, write your final draft using a pen in your poem's theme color.
2. If there isn't a page for your color, copy your poem onto lined notebook paper. You can also type your poem, which will let you experiment with different fonts in your poem's color. It's always better to use an easy-to-read font for the body of the poem and save fancier fonts for the title. Add optional clipart as a finishing touch.
3. Do not write your poem in paragraph form. Begin each sentence on a new line, like the samples on page 10. If a sentence continues onto a second line, *indent* the second line.

Want to Do More?

Plan and write another poem, choosing a different color as the subject.

Name: _____

Color Poem Brainstorming Worksheet

Directions: Choose a simple color for your poem. Write it here: _____

Fill in the following blanks with “color” ideas, words, and phrases. Some of these ideas are abstract. After all, a color doesn’t really have a “smell” or a “taste,” does it? This means you’ll have to challenge yourself to think creatively. [BLUE] is used as an example here. Change it to your own color, writing at least three or four things for each list.

List 1 What things look [BLUE]? _____

List 2 What things sound [BLUE]? _____

List 3 What things smell [BLUE]? _____

List 4 How does [BLUE] feel (textures, temperatures, etc.)? Save emotion words for List 5.

List 5 What emotions make you feel [BLUE]? Use your Emotions Word Bank for ideas.

List 6 What tastes [BLUE]? _____

List 7 What experiences, sights, and ideas seem [BLUE]? _____

List 8 Can you think of any places that look or feel [BLUE]? _____

List 9 What are four one-word synonyms for your color? For ideas, use your Color Word Bank or visit the [Color Thesaurus](#).

Do your choices make sense? For example, *cornflower*, *periwinkle*, and *turquoise* are good synonyms for “BLUE,” but *dodger*, *cadet*, and *colt* will not make sense.

Do not add extra adjectives. For example, write *orchid*, not *light orchid*. Write *slate*, not *gray blue*.

Emotions Word Bank

Happy

amused
beaming
bright
cheerful
content
delighted
elated
excited
exhilarated
exuberant
festive
genial
glad
gratified
joyful
jubilant
laughing
lightheaded
lighthearted
lively
merry
playful
pleasant
pleased
radiant
satisfied
spirited
sunny
thrilled
victorious

Sad

confused
dark
dejected
depressed
desolate
despondent
dismal
downhearted
dreary
droopy
embarrassed
empty
gloomy
glum
grave
grief-stricken
grim
hurt
melancholy
miserable
morbid
morose
mournful
pained
pathetic
pensive
serious
solemn
somber
sorrowful

sullen
tearful
tired
troubled
vacant
weary
wistful
woeful
wounded

Brave

audacious
bold
courageous
daring
dauntless
determined
encouraging
fearless
gallant
hardy
heroic
intrepid
persistent
plucky
resolute
spunky
stalwart
stouthearted
unafraid
valiant
valorous

Emotions Word Bank *continued...*

Angry

agitated
 annoyed
 bitter
 boiling
 bristling
 burning
 cross
 cruel
 displeased
 disturbed
 enraged
 fretful
 fuming
 furious
 grouchy
 hateful
 huffy
 incensed
 indignant
 inflamed
 infuriated
 irked
 irritated
 livid
 mean
 mean-spirited
 miffed
 nettled
 offended
 peeved
 piqued
 rabid

raging
 riled
 seething
 simmering
 sizzling
 smoldering
 sore
 stormy
 surly
 vengeful
 vexed
 wrathful

Fearful

afraid
 alarmed
 anxious
 apprehensive
 ashamed
 awed
 bashful
 cowardly
 cowed
 cringing
 disconcerted
 eerie
 frightened
 guilty
 jumpy
 nervous
 palpitating
 panicky
 paralyzed
 petrified
 quaking
 quivering
 scared
 shaking
 shivering
 shrinking
 shy
 skittish
 staggered
 stunned
 stupefied
 suspicious

terrified
 timid
 trembling
 uncertain
 uneasy
 wary
 wincing

Color Poetry Word Bank

Red

brick
cardinal
cherry
crimson
maroon
mulberry
rouge
ruby
scarlet

Pink

blush
carnation
flamingo
fuchsia
magenta
rose
salmon

Orange

apricot
burnt orange
butterscotch
melon
peach
pumpkin
tangerine

Yellow

amber
banana
buttercup
canary
dandelion
flax
gold
goldenrod
honey
lemon
ochre
straw
sunflower
sunshine
topaz

Blue

aqua
azure
baby blue
cerulean
Delft
denim
indigo
navy
periwinkle
powder blue
royal
sapphire
sky blue
turquoise

Purple

burgundy
grape
lavender
lilac
mauve
orchid
plum
violet
wine

Green

apple
celadon
celery
emerald
evergreen
forest
lime
mint
moss
olive
sea green
spring green
teal
verdant

Brown

auburn
bronze
camel
chestnut
chocolate
cinnamon
cocoa
coffee
copper
drab
fawn
ginger
mahogany
mocha
nut-brown
nutmeg
rust
sepia
sienna
spice
tan
terracotta
walnut

Color Poetry Word Bank *continued...*

White

bleached
chalk
cotton
dove-white
milk
pale
pasty
pearl, pearly
powdery
snowy
sugary
whitewashed

Off-white

beige
buff
cream, creamy
ecru
eggshell
ivory
oatmeal
sandy
unbleached
vanilla

Gray

ash
charcoal
cloudy
dove-gray
dusky
granite
gunmetal
pearl gray
silver, silvery
slate
smoke, smoky
smudged
steel

Black

coal
ebony
inky
jet
onyx
pitch
raven
sable
sooty

Name: _____

Color Poem Planner

(Title)

_____ is as _____ as _____. (Any List)
(adjective)

_____ is _____ and _____. (List 1)

and the feeling of _____. (List 4)

_____ is _____, _____, and _____. (List 9)

_____ is the _____ taste of _____. (List 6)
(adjective)

_____ and _____ smell _____. (List 3)

_____ makes me feel _____. (List 5)

_____ is the sound of _____ and _____. (List 2)

_____ and _____ are _____. (Lists 7, 8)

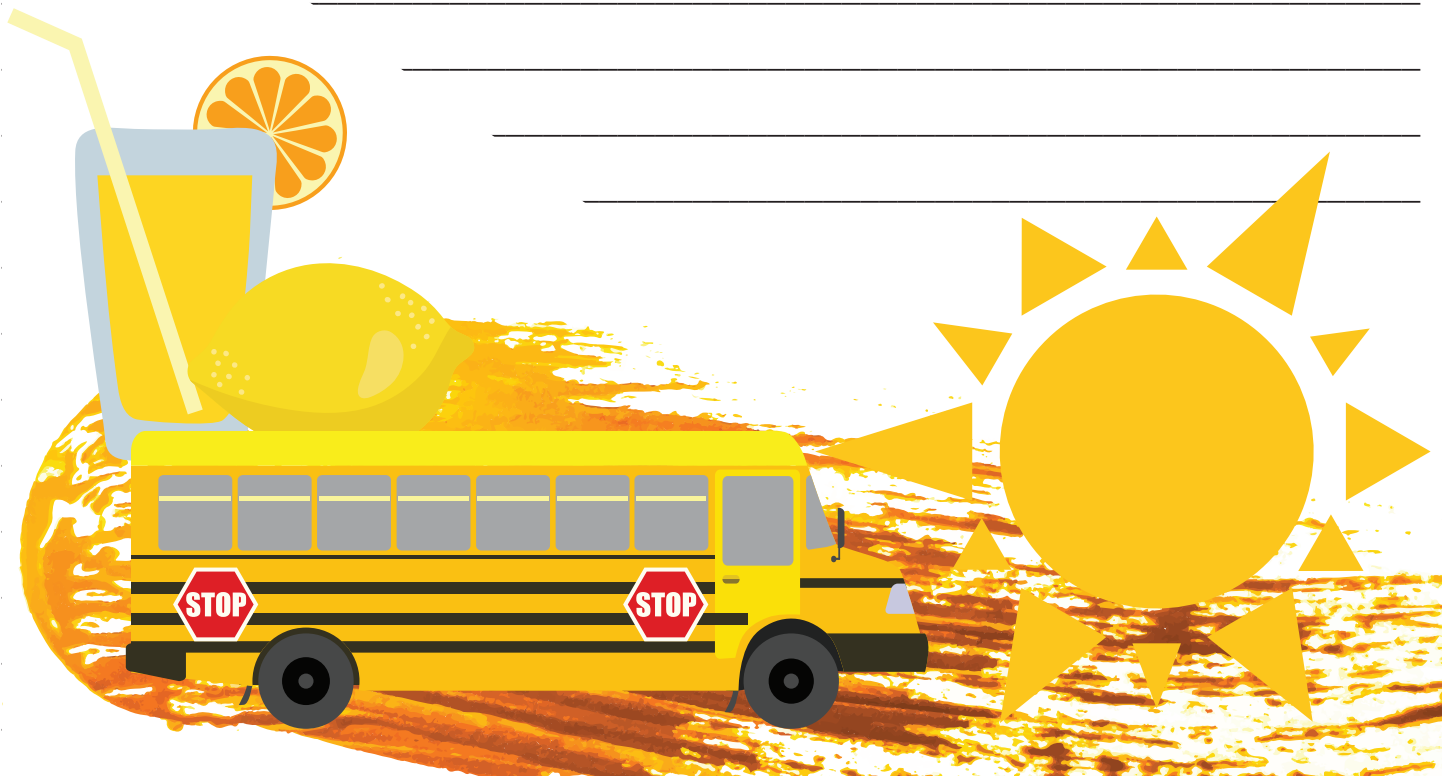
_____ is _____.
(From any list, choose a word you haven't used yet.)



Name: _____

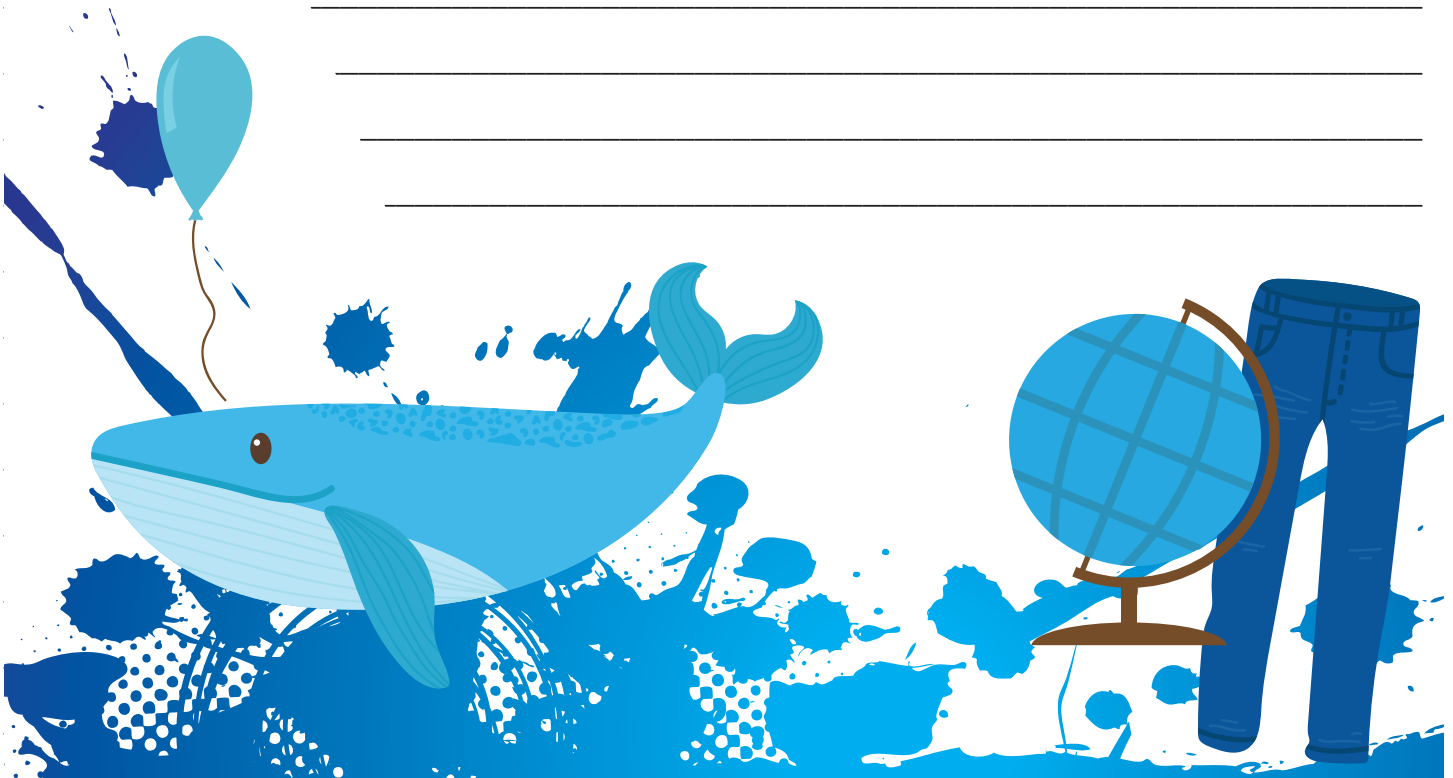


Name: _____

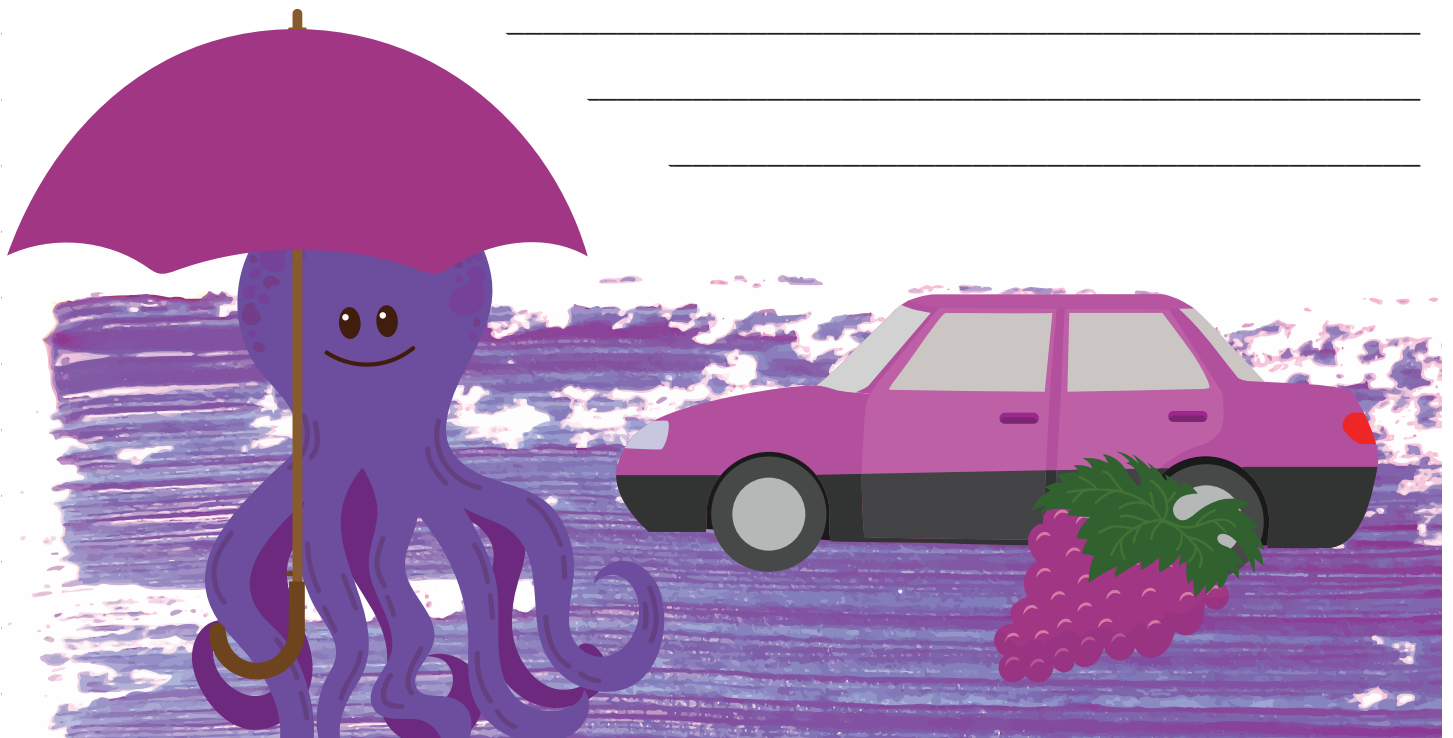




Name: _____



Name: _____



Comparison Poems

As you introduce this lesson to your children, remind them of how poems spring to life when the poet uses images to create comparisons. Ask:

- How can a river can be like a snake?
- How can a train can be like a thunderstorm?
- Can you picture Night as a lady who wanders around throwing shadows as if they were a black cape?

Poets weave tiny tapestries from vibrant words and figurative language. In this lesson, students will write a **poem of comparison** that is filled with figurative language. They'll combine poetic devices with vivid description, emotion words, and exciting action words to make a strong impression on their reader.

Advance Prep

Print the following pages. Each child will need one of each page.

- Find the Imagery Worksheet (p. 26)
- Write a Comparison Poem (pp. 27-28)
- Comparison Poem Brainstorming Worksheet (p. 29)

Find the Imagery Worksheet

Here is an example of a poem of comparison. Can you spot figurative language, descriptive adjectives, and strong nouns and verbs? As you read the poem, what emotions do you think the poet wants you to feel? How does the setting of a dark, spooky forest contribute to those emotions?



NIGHT FOREST

Wild and scary, like a nightmare,
 Darkness hovers over the ancient forest.
 Mist is a mantle that shrouds the woods.
 Trees moan weakly
 As a wailing wind whips at their black branches.
 Tall pines lift gnarled arms upward
 Waiting for the peace of dawn.

Directions

Are you ready for a fun activity? Grab a box of colored pencils and identify the features that make “Night Forest” interesting, vivid, and full of imagery.

1. **Underline** similes in **green**.
2. Use a **purple** pencil to **underline** any metaphors.
3. In **blue**, **underline** examples of personification.
4. **Circle** adverbs that begin with “-ly” in **red**.
5. Place an **orange** “x” over each adjective (words that describe).
6. **Circle** alliteration examples in **brown**.

If you are not familiar with **alliteration**, it’s a poetic device that relies on repetition of the same consonant sound (such as *Frosty snow falls in fat flakes and flurries*). The words don’t have to start with the same letter as long as they have the same beginning *sound* (such as *giant jar of jelly beans* or *Claire Kelly’s chemistry quiz*).

Write a Comparison Poem

A poem of comparison is filled with imagery that comes from using **poetic devices** to compare and create a mood. Your poem does not have to be spooky like “Night Forest.” Though it can be deep and serious, it can also be light and humorous, depending on the topic you choose and the mood you want to set. Be sure you use figurative language that compares—*similes*, *metaphors*, and *personification*—for without it, your poem will have missed the point of the lesson.

Choose a Topic

Your topic should lend itself to being compared with other things. You may come up with a great idea on your own, but if you can’t think of something, try one of these!

- train, car, or plane
- kitchen appliance, like a toaster or mixer
- stormy clouds with thunder and lightning
- white fluffy clouds
- rivers, streams, creeks, waterfalls
- beach, ocean, waves
- mountains or hills
- field or meadow
- season (summer, fall, winter, spring)
- howling wind or gentle breeze
- rainstorm or blizzard
- insect such as a praying mantis or butterfly
- animal such as a panther, owl, or snake



Brainstorm for Ideas

Use a variety of methods and poetic devices to write your own comparison poem. Use the printable **Comparison Poem Brainstorming Worksheet** (p. 29) to help you plan and set the mood.

1. Use descriptive imagery, including bold, colorful words.
2. Fill in the chart with a combination of similes, metaphors, and personification.

THINK!

- How does my subject *look* like a person?
- How does my subject *act* like a person?
- What can I compare my subject to? What else could my subject *be*? What can it be *like*? For example, compare your subject to an *animal*, *machine*, *vehicle*, *color*, *smell*, *taste*, or *texture*.

Plan Your Poem

When you have finished filling in the Comparison Poem Brainstorming Worksheet, write a rough draft of your poem on a fresh sheet of paper.

1. Do not write your poem in paragraph form. Instead, write individual lines. Begin each line with a capital letter. Look at the “Night Forest” example to see how this is done.
2. Your poem should not rhyme.
3. Think of creative ways to describe some of your nouns without actually naming them. Instead of writing *butterfly*, you could say *winged fairy*. Instead of saying *storm clouds*, you could write *gray-scaled dragons*. *Lightning* could be *streaks of fire*.
4. Use vivid images. Try to appeal to your reader’s senses of sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste.
5. Include [alliteration](#). Examples from “Night Forest” include *mist is a mantle* and *wailing wind whips*.
6. *Optional*: Begin one sentence with **paired adjectives**. You can use paired adjectives anywhere in your poem! In “Night Forest,” they appear in the very first line:

Wild and scary, like a nightmare ...

Review and Revise

Review your finished comparison poem and make corrections on the rough draft. Here are some questions to ask:

- Did I find any boring, vague, or weak words? (Your **thesaurus** will help you find stronger, more interesting replacements.)
- Does my poem include words that create an emotional response?
- Does my poem include examples of poetic devices that compare one thing to another?
 - ☐ I used similes.
 - ☐ I used metaphors.
 - ☐ I used personification.
- Did I add alliteration?

When satisfied, rewrite your poem on a clean sheet of paper or type it on the computer. For added fun, insert some clipart photos to go along with your poem. Finally, share your masterpiece with a friend or family member!

Want to Do More?

Write a poem with a different mood. For example, if your poem is dark or gloomy, try writing one that’s cheerful or funny.

Name: _____

Comparison Poem Brainstorming Worksheet

1. Topic or Subject (Example – *Forest at nighttime*)

2. Mood you want to create (Example – *Mysterious, eerie, spooky*)

3. What is really happening? (Example – *It is a foggy, windy night in the forest.*)

4. Think of objects or elements you might want to include in your poem. Add them to the chart below.

Object or Element	What It Does or What It Compares To	Figurative Language or Poetic Device
Example – <i>mist</i>	<i>is a mantle that covers the woods</i>	<i>metaphor</i>
Example – <i>wind</i>	<i>wails like a person and whips at the branches</i>	<i>personification</i>

Shell Metaphor Poems

Nothing says “summer” quite like the beach, and what beach trip is complete without gathering at least one seashell as a keepsake?

Do you have a special shell that brings back fond memories? Perhaps you collect a certain kind of seashell, such as cowries, conches, or even sea glass. Maybe your mom has a clear glass jar filled with an assortment of shells that sit on a shelf or decorate a tabletop.

This month, you will write a poem comparing a shell to many different things. Your shell’s shape and coloring will determine what you compare it to, making each poem as unique as the shell it’s based on.

Figures of Speech: Metaphors and Similes

When writing your shell poem, sometimes you will need to use a figure of speech called a **metaphor**. You may remember that a metaphor compares two objects or ideas that are unlike, yet they contain amazing similarities. Look at the pictures on the right. Do you see how different the shell and the fan are? Yet you can also see how they resemble each other in some ways.

Using a metaphor to make a comparison, you would say the shell *IS* something else. In this case, *the shell is a Chinese fan*.

Everyone knows a shell isn’t really a Chinese fan, but using a metaphor creates a special comparison that **creates a lovely picture** in the reader’s mind.

Other times, you will use another figure of speech known as a **simile**. A simile also compares two things, but it always uses the word “like” or “as.” When writing a simile, you would say *the shell is like a Chinese fan*, OR *the shell is as delicate as a Chinese fan*.



Advance Prep

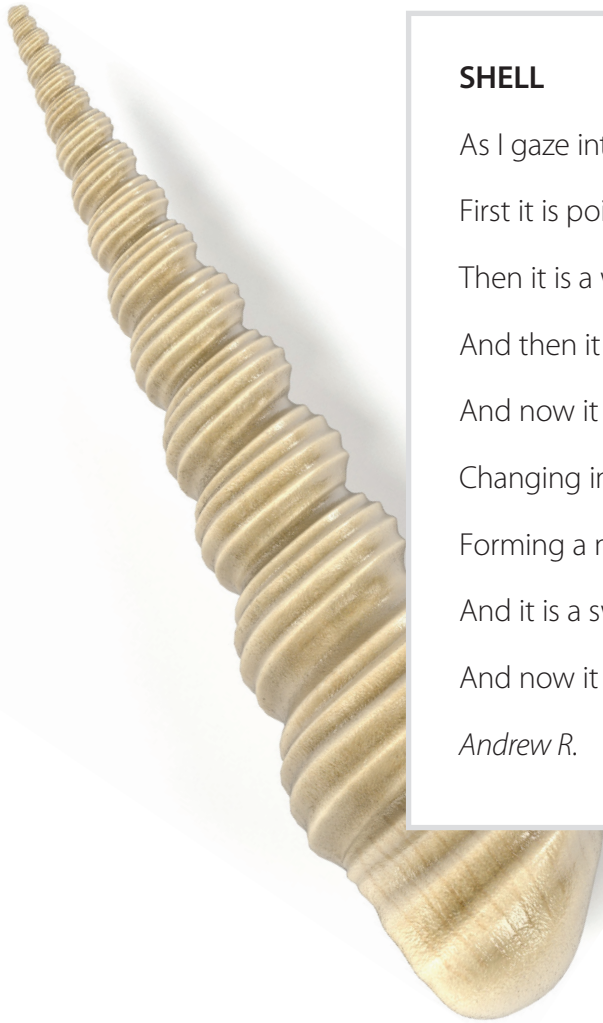
Print the following pages, or ask someone to help you. Each child will need one of each page.

- Find the Imagery Worksheets (pp. 31-32)
- Write a Shell Metaphor Poem (pp. 33-34)
- Shell Metaphor Brainstorming Worksheet (p. 35)
- Shell Word Bank (p. 36)
- Shell Metaphor Poem Planner (p. 37)
- Shell Metaphor lined writing page (p. 38)

Find the Imagery Worksheet: Shell

Directions

In this student's example, see how the shell metaphors change seven times throughout the poem. Grab a pencil and underline each thing the shell becomes.



SHELL

As I gaze into the spiral of my cream-colored shell

First it is pointy and sharp like a pearly unicorn horn

Then it is a white rosebud as it starts to bloom

And then it is a crispy waffle cone

And now it becomes a glistening snow-covered slope

Changing into a blazing torch, bright and shining

Forming a marble statue

And it is a swordfish swimming in the deep blue sea

And now it is swept away with the evening tide.

Andrew R.

(Answers on page 39)

Find the Imagery Worksheet: Cloud Drifts

Have you ever lain in the grass on a summer day and looked for cloud shapes? As the clouds float across the sky, It's fun to spot a crouching cat or a fire-breathing dragon!

Even if the cloud shapes aren't *exactly* like a cat, dragon, or other object, they can still *remind* us of familiar things. Here is an example of a poem using a cloud metaphor instead of a shell.

Cloud Drifts

As I gaze into the drifts of a cumulus cloud
First it is soft and puffy like pink cotton candy
Then it is a sailboat bobbing gently in the ocean foam
And then it is like a sweet swirl of vanilla ice cream in a
blue china bowl
And now it becomes a mound of fresh, fluffy popcorn
Changing into a circus elephant, plump and gray
Forming a tropical island covered in sparkling white sand
And it is like a spring lamb bounding across a sky-meadow
And now I watch it float peacefully away over the rosy
horizon.



Directions

1. Like the "Shell" example, "Cloud Drifts" compares a cloud to seven different things. Use a **green** colored pencil to underline each of these things.
2. Use a **blue** colored pencil to circle the descriptive adjectives.
3. Use a **red** colored pencil to circle the strong verbs.
4. Place an **orange "S"** next to each line containing a simile.

(Answers on page 39)

Write a Shell Metaphor Poem

Before you begin, select one shell to observe as you brainstorm and write. It can be small or large, dull or shiny, white or colorful, flat or cone-shaped. You can even choose a starfish, sand dollar, sea urchin, or piece of coral or sea glass. Whichever you pick, you'll be able to find many interesting things to say about it.

No seashells at home? Maybe you can find a snail shell in your garden! If not, look for a clear, high-quality image of a shell in a book or online. If you need help, you will find interesting photos at these websites.

Tip: Clicking on a photo often lets you see the shell from two or more angles.

- Seashells.org
- Australian Shells

Brainstorm for Ideas

Use the Shell Metaphor Brainstorming Worksheet (p. 35) and Seashell Word Bank (p. 36) as you brainstorm to help you examine the features of your shell. Though it's tempting to borrow ideas from the "Shell" and "Cloud Drifts" samples (pp. 31 and 32), **put these poems away** so you are not tempted to copy.

1. Spend several minutes observing your seashell. Look at it from different angles. Turn it upside-down. Peek inside. Study the back. Each time, it may remind you of something new.

This is an exercise in using your imagination. Does your shell make you think of a rocket ship, treasure chest, or hot dog bun? That's great! Even if your ideas seem unusual or farfetched, it's not about what *others* think your shell should look like; it's about what the shell says to *you*!

2. As you brainstorm, ask yourself these questions:
 - How is my shell shaped?
 - What does the shell look like?
 - What does its texture remind me of?
 - What does its color seem like?
 - What object can I compare it to? Does my seashell have any special features that look like something else?
 - In my imagination, **what else could this shell possibly be?**

Plan Your Poem

Use the Shell Metaphor Poem Planner (p. 37) to help you arrange your ideas and write a rough draft.

1. Use figurative language as you plan your poem. One line will require you to write a simile. Two lines will ask you to write either a simile or a metaphor. The rest of the lines give you freedom of choice.
2. Fill in each blank on the Poem Planner worksheet with a *highly descriptive* word or phrase. Do not

use weak words in your poem, such as *pretty*, *very*, or *awesome*. Instead, use plenty of strong, concrete adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs.

3. It's fun to use unusual color words like *crimson* or *butterscotch*, but don't overdo it! Everyday color words like *red*, *gold*, and *purple* often say just the right thing.
4. Avoid repeating main words in your poem. For example, if you have used the word *shiny* twice, replace the duplicate word with another descriptive choice from your **Seashell Word Bank**, such as *sleek* or *glossy*.
5. When you see a slash between words, such as "a/an" or "my/the," circle the word you will use.

Write Your Final Draft

1. When you have finished filling in the Shell Metaphor Poem Planner, you may pull out the sample "Shell" and "Cloud Drifts" poems. If you want to add something to your poem, and it's still in your own words, write the changes on the Poem Planner.
2. This poetry pack includes a **printable page** with blank lines for writing your Shell Metaphor. If you prefer, copy your poem onto blank paper and decorate it with drawings, or type it on the computer and add optional clipart.
 - Write your poem in **lines**, *not* as a paragraph.
 - If using blank paper, skip lines or double-space.
 - Don't center the poem. Begin each line at the left margin.
 - Don't put a period at the end of each line. Just place a single period after the very last line.
3. Choose a title for your poem. You can simply write "Shell" or "Spider Conch," or you can write a more descriptive title such as "Shimmering Shell" or "Shell of Dreams." Write your title at the top of the page.

Want to Do More?

Now that you've practiced using metaphors and similes to write your shell poem, plan and write other poems. For example:

1. Choose a different kind of seashell (preferably one that is shaped very differently from the first shell).
2. Write about something else from nature, such as a stream, volcano, leaf, flower, rock, or twig.



Name: _____

Shell Metaphor Brainstorming Worksheet

Directions

Write words or phrases on the blank lines below. Fill in as many blanks as you can. The more ideas you come up with during brainstorming, the easier it will be to write your poem. When finished, turn to the Shell Metaphor Poem Planner.

My shell reminds me of _____

My shell looks like _____

Its colors remind me of _____

Its texture reminds me of _____

My shell is shaped like a _____

My shell could be a _____

Seashell Word Bank

Texture

bony
brittle
bumpy
chalky
coarse
cold
cool
corrugated
cracked
craggy
crisp
crusty
delicate
encrusted
fragile
glassy
glossy
gnarled
grainy
gritty
grooved
jagged
lumpy
porous
ribbed
ridged
rough
sharp
satiny
scaly
silky
slick
smooth
spiked
spiny
stiff
unbreakable
wrinkled

Appearance

angular
circular
creased
crumpled
curved
dark
dull
elegant
exotic
exquisite
fancy
flat
furrowed
gleaming
glistening
hollow
iridescent
lustrous
opaque
ornate
pale
pearly / pearly
polished
rugged
scalloped
shimmering
shiny
sleek
speckled
spiral
spotted
streaked
striped
swirled / swirling
translucent
twisted
wavy
whorled

Color Words

bleached
snowy
chalky white
milky white
creamy
eggshell
ivory
vanilla
gray
pearl-gray
silver / silvery
sooty
black
inky
ebony
butterscotch
caramel
chocolate-brown
coffee-colored
toffee-colored
copper / coppery
tan
brown
golden-brown
gold / golden
yellow / pale yellow
topaz
lime-green
olive-green
lavender
mauve
pink
rose/rosy
coral
salmon-colored
crimson
purple
violet

Words to Avoid

Weak Adjectives

awesome
beautiful
big
cute
fine
good
little
nice
pretty
small

Weak Verbs

comes
does
eats
gets
goes
moves
puts
sees
takes

Other Weak Words

thing
really
very

Name: _____

Shell Metaphor Poem Planner

Line 1	As I gaze inside/into the _____	_____ of a/my/the _____	_____ shell
		(kind of shell OR descriptive adjective)	
Line 2	First it is _____	_____ like a/an _____	_____
	(adjective)	(adjective)	(noun or noun phrase)
Line 3	Then it is _____	_____	(simile or metaphor)
Line 4	And then it is _____	_____	(simile or metaphor)
Line 5	And now it becomes a/an _____		
Line 6	Changing into a/an _____	_____ and _____	_____
		(noun phrase)	(adjective)
Line 7	Forming a/an _____		
Line 8	And it is a/an _____	_____ (strong verb ending in "-ing")	_____ (phrase telling "where")
	(noun phrase)		
Line 9	And now _____		

Name: _____



Find the Imagery: Answer Key

SHELL

As I gaze into the spiral of my cream-colored shell
 First it is pointy and sharp like a pearly unicorn horn
 Then it is a white rosebud as it starts to bloom
 And then it is a crispy waffle cone
 And now it becomes a glistening snow-covered slope
 Changing into a blazing torch, bright and shining
 Forming a marble statue
 And it is a swordfish swimming in the deep blue sea
 And now it is swept away with the evening tide.

CLOUD

As I gaze into the drifts of a cumulus cloud
 S First it is soft and puffy like pink cotton candy
 Then it is a sailboat bobbing gently in the ocean foam
 And then it is like a sweet swirl of vanilla ice cream in a blue china bowl
 S And now it becomes a mound of fresh fluffy popcorn
 Changing into a circus elephant, plump and gray
 Forming a tropical island covered in sparkling white sand
 S And it is like a spring lamb bounding across a sky meadow
 And now I watch it float peacefully away over the rosy horizon.