

Ministry of Education
Secondary Engagement Programme
September 2020

WEEK THIRTEEN: Lesson Three

Subject: English Language

Grade: Eleven

Topic: Short story writing

Sub-topic: Figurative devices

Objectives: At the end of the lesson students will write an effective short story using various figurative devices.

Concept: Figurative devices aid the writer in making his/her descriptions more vivid.

Content:

Simile- is a comparison of two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”. The simile says one thing is *like* another.

Example: His heart was as heavy as lead, weighed down by the memory of what he’d done.

Metaphor is a comparison of two unlike things without the use of the words “like” or “as”. The metaphor says one thing *is* another.

Example: His heart was lead, weighed down by the memory of what he’d done.

Personification is the giving of human qualities to inanimate objects.

Example: Squatting in the corner was a felt chair covered in the dust and damp of abandonment.

Read the short stories below and label the examples of metaphor, simile and personification.

A Whiff of Bleach

Bills gather in heaps at my feet. I watch them beat about on the paint encrusted tiles, in the slight breeze seeping in under my door through a space big enough to let in the lizards, centipedes and mice which use my house for shelter when the rains come. But the rains have not come. A week to Easter, and still no rain. Not even back to back cricket matches, usually enough to entice the rains to douse the field just when our team is winning, can sweeten the rain to fall. Young fruit die sunburnt under confused mango trees that flower and bear at the same time. The plants look like when you drink something sour and your face falls into itself. The cow itch vine, whose windblown fibres make me want to scratch skin off my bones, head in the ground. Even the weeds are seeing trouble.

In many places, the grass pull away up to two inches from the edge, like close family who suddenly vex, and cracks appear under the washing line, large enough to lose a foot. Under the washing line, any meager drips get sucked up by the heat, and never bless the grass. Only the necessities can be washed, by hand in a bucket, and then only at night. In the day, they dry in half hour, covered in dust and grit. Every mouthful of water leaves me thirstier. Anything else congeals heavy in my stomach. All the windows are open, but my only comfort is a damp washrag on the back of my neck, another between my legs spread open before two fans working tirelessly to stir this thick soup of heat with dust dumplings. Grit in the sheets, in my skin, in my teeth.

When the rains do come, overnight the Sahara becomes the Amazon, thick lush and all consuming. But not today. I went out early, early this morning to cutlass. My blade hit a stone, set off a spark. Next thing, smoke. A bucket of water to flush the toilet later, douses what could have become one of those fires that red the sky almost every night for the past few weeks. Careless people. Malicious people with nothing better to do than watch people house and land burn. To watch the engines run

back and forth along the river road, to find a hydrant to fill their tanks. Sirens echo across the valley all hours. The river is too low, too dry to use. 200 fires for the year. For every fire, thousands of gallons of water use up, and the next morning my tap still dry. I cannot tell you how unwholesome it is to drink water sitting in a plastic bottle nine days old. It tastes as what it appears, still with a hint of brown and a whiff of bleach. My kitchen looks like the long days and nights after that last hurricane - every available container filled with water, bleached covered and waiting.

Aah, the heat makes me crazy. My man gone two years ago, in a dry season such as this. Too much for him to be in a hot house, in perpetual dust, and me biting everything within reach. He gone with that beautiful smile a swift planass stick to his face. This damn heat. The hills, some mornings are covered in a thick mist. Usually that means rain is on the way. But these days, the mist disappears, and then sun, more sun. When the rains come, and they will come, I'll go out in the backyard and tend to his grave.

by Suelin Low Chew Tung

CXC CSEC English A exam: Best short story 2004

The story is based on the photograph below



He hungrily gulped in the fresh air, the clean tang of the sweet smell of rain still lingered in the atmosphere and his nostrils welcomed it – it was something he knew. All the lush vegetation around him blended into a monotonous shade of green. Everything seemed so clean and new – almost rejuvenated. Although great, big tufts of grey lurked around ominously in the sky overhead, he felt calm ... serene. Perhaps today he would remember which way home was.

He had been walking for days it seemed. His wet suit hung tiredly from his gaunt body and once again he smothered the pangs of hunger assaulting his stomach. Noticing a speck at the end of the long, winding road, his heartbeat accelerated – was this home? He pushed his old bones to walk a little faster, maybe he would be home soon. As he got closer and closer to the end of the road, the speck began to take on a definite form and with a laden heart, he realized that a shack was the only thing that stood out among the blur of green.

On reaching the tiny shack – obviously abandoned since it was overwhelmed by clinging green vines – he suddenly felt tired. All his strength seemed to be sapped away by an unseen force and he lowered his tired form to the grassy ground. Cradling his legs to his chest, he rocked back and forth, trying to draw some comfort from the soothing movement.

That was the way Susan found him. His hair stood up in all different directions, wrinkled creases marred his brow and his whole posture was that of a frightened, confused man. A twig snapped under her feet and he suddenly jumped up, his bones creaking in protest.

The young woman before him smiled. A smile that seemed to be a brilliant beam of sunlight in his otherwise melancholy world. Her rich, chocolate-brown eyes were filled with warmth and understanding. These eyes mesmerized him – they seemed to reach out to him in an unspoken, yet thankfully loud, message.

He found himself offering up one wrinkled, trembling hand and without a thought, the young woman grasped it – hung onto it as though it were something to be treasured and he felt the warmth of her hand spread all through his entire body. That warmth, combined with the warmth of her smile and the warmth in her beautiful dark eyes seemed to banish all the cold loneliness and bewilderment in his heart.

Susan found her eyes welling up with tears and tried her best to remain standing. This time he had been gone for so many days that it seemed like a miracle that he was alive. “Home?” he asked, his voice sounding as trusting and as innocent as that of a child. “Yes, home, grandpa,” she reassured him as she led him slowly out into the road where her car was parked.

His bearded face split into a grim as he spotted her car. He was so very thankful that he did not have to walk again - he was completely fed up of walking. As Susan saw his grateful smile, she once again cursed the disease that had robbed her grandfather of all his intelligence, vitality and all his control of life itself, leaving in its wake this scared, confused shell of an old man - Alzheimer's, the disease that her grandfather, a renowned doctor, had tried to fight, but had lost.

Lianna Baboolal, Naparima Girls High School, Trinidad and Tobago

In 400-450 words rite a short story on ONE of the topics below:

1. "The crystal ball"

OR

2. "Peter and Susan were happy until they opened the gift, given to them by the old lady"