

# From Sentence to Short Passage

## --Teaching and Grading--

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### Reading 1

#### *Poetry*

Poetry, like any other form of literature, shows the thoughts and feelings of the writer. The following poems illustrate three poets' views and observations on life.

##### Surplus Commodity

Richard Armour

The getting's easy, the giving's nice,  
The taking's the tough part about advice.

There have been times when we ask for advice on difficult choices and problems. For example, which school should we go to? How do we tell our parents we need more free time? Getting advice is easy because our friends and families are always ready to help us. However, how often do we make good use of the advice we get without wasting it?

##### The Sea-Gull

Ogden Nash

Hark to the whimper of the sea-gull;  
He weeps because he's not an ea-gull.  
Suppose you were, you silly sea-gull,  
Could you explain it to your she-gull?

All of us are unique in our own ways. Unfortunately, some of us fail to accept what we are and want to be someone else. The seagull in the poem complains that he is not an eagle. However, what would happen if he turned into an eagle and his wife (the she-gull) could not recognize him? Would it do him any good to fly into the sky as an eagle but lose someone he loves?

##### Janus

Laurence Perrine

Janus writes books for women's liberation;  
His wife types up the scripts from his dictation.

Many people say one thing and do another. The “Janus” in this poem writes about the equal status between men and women. Unfortunately, he fails to follow what he says because his wife takes dictation from him. Without a doubt, this means that the man enjoys a higher status than his wife. Interestingly enough, Janus is the name of the Roman god with two faces. This reminds us of the expression “two-faced,” a common way to say that one’s actions do not match his or her own words.

—by Monideepa Banerjee

## Reading 2

### *Images of Animals*

To speakers of a language, certain animals seem to take on interesting characteristics. For example, in Chinese, foxes are supposed to have magical powers, and cranes and tortoises are said to symbolize long life. Likewise, animal imagery can be found in many English expressions and has given color to the language.

For example, "as quiet as a mouse" is a common simile to describe someone who is quiet. You can say, "The boy was as quiet as a mouse in front of his angry father." However, if a person makes a lot of noise, the elephant would be a much better animal to use to describe the person. For instance, when a teacher says, "The students are running to the playground like a herd of elephants," he or she means that they are making too much noise. In addition, the expression "The car is a white elephant" is a metaphor used to describe a car that is useless or a waste of money.

Another elephant-related expression is "jumbo," which means "big." Originally, it was the word for "elephant" in an African language. Later, it was taken as the name of the first circus elephant in the U.S. Because of this elephant's famous and popular performances, "Jumbo" gradually became a common name for elephants. For English speakers, it seems that the word has also shared the same meaning with the word "big." As a result, we have jumbo jets, jumbo hamburgers, and so on nowadays.

In addition to mice and elephants, some birds and insects are commonly seen in animal-related expressions, too. For instance, if a girl is "as proud as a peacock," she gives people the impression of being too proud of herself. When you call someone a chicken, you mean that the person is a coward and doesn't have enough courage to do something. Also, the association between bees and diligence is very strong for speakers of English. If a friend of yours is always working or busy with something, then he or she is "a busy bee" or is always "as busy as a bee."

Aside from the above similes and metaphors, the proverbs that include animal imagery have made English an interesting language as well. Here are some examples:

"When the cat is away, the mice will play."

"Let sleeping dogs lie."

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

"Don't count your chickens before they're hatched."

As you have discovered so far, the use of animal imagery really gives color to the English language. Do you know any animal-related expressions in a language other than English?

—Adapted from *Working with Words* by Paul Snowden,

published by Kaitakusha Co., Ltd. in 1985.

### Reading 3

#### *Hey, Thanks!*

It all happened when I was a freshman in high school. I was walking home one day when I saw a new classmate, Kyle. He wore glasses and was carrying a huge pile of books. Immediately, I thought he must be a nerd, because no one with a good social life would take so many books home for the weekend.

I continued walking behind Kyle. Suddenly, a group of boys ran up to him and knocked the books from his hands. They pushed him to the ground; his glasses flew off, landing three meters away. The boys ran off as Kyle struggled to find his glasses. He had such a sad expression on his face that my heart went out to him. I picked up his glasses, helped him collect the books, and asked if he was all right.

"Don't worry," I told him, "those boys are just stupid."

"Hey, thanks!" he said with a grateful smile.

I helped him carry his books as we walked home together. On the way, I asked him whether he wanted to play football over the weekend, and he said yes. We laughed and chatted along the way until it was time for us to say good-bye. "He's a pretty cool kid," I thought to myself. Soon, the two of us became best friends.

Years later, Kyle and I were seniors. His glasses now suited him. Over the years, he had turned himself into a handsome and popular young man. Though sometimes I still teased him that he was a nerd, he was so popular that he dated more girls than I did!

On the last day of high school, Kyle had to give a speech. I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!"

He looked at me with the very same grateful smile as the one he had given me on the first day we met.

"Hey, thanks!" he said.

After he stepped up to the podium, Kyle cleared his throat and began his speech. "Graduation is a good time to thank those who have helped you make it through those tough years – your parents, your teachers, maybe your coach, but mostly, your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend is the best gift you can give." I just looked at my friend in disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He said he had cleaned out his locker and taken everything home so that his mom wouldn't have to do it for him – after he had killed himself. Then he looked hard at me and said, "Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable." I heard a gasp going through the crowd as this handsome, popular young man told us all about his weakest moment. Then, I saw his mom and dad looking at me with the same grateful smile. At that moment, it dawned on me just how strong our friendship had been, and how much I had helped Kyle that day when we walked home together for the first time.

—Adapted from *Stories for a Teen's Heart Book 2*, published by Multnomah Publishers, Inc.

## **Reading 4**

### *Colors at Play*

Frank Sinatra once said, "Orange is the happiest color." The world-famous singer was perhaps very aware that colors are not just for the eyes. Studies have shown that colors have an impact on our visual perception, emotions, cultures, and even languages. The study of colors and their impact on us is called colorgenics.

Believe it or not, colors can fool us when it comes to our visual perception. To prove this, a group of researchers conducted a study in a workplace. They first placed in a room heavy boxes and light boxes that were painted white and black respectively. Later, several workers were asked to determine which boxes weighed less. Surprisingly, most of the workers chose the boxes that were painted white – that is, the heavy ones. According to the researchers, this is because light colors tend to make objects "look" lighter in weight.

In addition to visual perception, our emotions are often influenced by colors. For example, pink is a color of calmness. If you are trying to settle an argument, you might want to wear pink. Violet and blue are soothing colors, and so is green. That's why, to keep patients calm, the colors commonly seen in operating rooms are violet and blue. Also, green is the dominant color for dressing rooms in theaters or TV studios because it helps performers or guests relax before a show.

Colors are also important culturally and have different symbolic meanings in

countries around the world. The Japanese, for example, hand out white envelopes filled with money for the Japanese New Year. In Taiwan and China, however, white is the color of death. As a result, it is appropriate for funerals, not festivals. The color symbolizing prosperity and good fortune in Taiwan and China is actually red. That's why red envelopes, instead of white ones, are given out for the Chinese New Year.

Colors have an impact on languages, too. For instance, in English, if someone is very angry, we say that this person "sees red" or "turns red with anger." If we are depressed, we could say that we have the "blues." In addition, "blue Monday" is a common expression for the reluctance and tiredness that we may experience on Mondays, especially after a weekend of relaxation and fun.

Although we often take colors for granted, their influence and power are everywhere in our lives. Thanks to colorgenics, we are now beginning to understand just what colors can do and how much they matter to all of us.

--by Theodore J. Piggott

## **Reading 5**

### *All Started by a Mouse*

He has a potbelly and a squeaky voice. His arms and legs are as thin as sticks. He wears funny-looking red shorts with big white buttons, and his ears are black. He is also one of the world's most famous movie stars. For a mouse, he has done pretty well - having starred in more than 130 movies and enjoyed worldwide fame as a superstar. However, few people know that he is the mouse that helped his creator rise above the toughest time of his life.

Mickey Mouse was born on a long train ride from New York to Los Angeles in 1928. His creator, Walt Disney, was on his way home after a disastrous business meeting. His financial partners had taken away the legal rights to his first successful character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. As a talented young animator with a promising future, Walt had never expected such a terrible disaster in his career. To him and his studio crew back in Los Angeles, all was lost.

Feeling angry and disappointed, Walt and his wife, Lillian, got on the train and began a long journey back to Los Angeles. As the train rolled along, Walt worried about telling his crew how he had lost Oswald. However, he knew there was no time for despair. He needed a new character that would give him and his crew a new beginning. "But what would it be?" Walt asked himself as he began drawing and searching for ideas. To the young animator's disappointment, no matter what he drew on the paper, nothing seemed right.

Then, his thoughts turned to a little mouse in his first studio in Kansas. It was a time of stress as his career had just begun. During those exhausting and lonely nights, it was the little mouse that kept the young animator company. As Walt recalled the fond memories of the mouse, his hand began sketching a mouse with big round ears, a pointed nose, and little red shorts. One stroke after another, the first sketch of the new character was finished before the train reached Los Angeles. It was at that moment that the future superstar was born! Later, Walt named the new character "Mortimer the Mouse," but his wife thought a friendlier name would be better. She suggested "Mickey." Walt agreed, and that was how the world-famous mouse got his name!

Mickey Mouse was an instant success, and Walt Disney's dream of becoming a successful animator came true as a result of Mickey's exploding popularity. However, no matter how successful Walt became, he always knew whom to thank. Once, when Walt looked out over the first and most majestic Disneyland, he said, "I only hope that we don't lose sight of one thing - that it was all started by a mouse."

—Introductory paragraph adapted from "Mickey Mouse", in Times for Students, January 2000. © 2000 Classic Communications, Co.

Remaining Paragraphs by Carol Lauderdale.

## **I. Introduction**

Not surprisingly, a great number (22642 students) of participants in the college SAT test in 2009 failed the English writing section. Who is to be blamed? The Education Administration Department, schools, teachers, or students? As an English teacher, I only want to focus on what we can do in our position.

Every three years, I have a chance to meet freshmen. The students are cute and keen to learn, and step into their first English class with wide eyes. However, not very long, after this, they get lost in an English jungle. Frankly speaking, many English teachers are still stuck in the old days, employing a very teacher-centered, one-way method of teaching, and seldom care about how students learn. In other words, most teachers just focus on two things – the school year schedule and the grades their students get in tests. Our battles to deal with the pressures created by the school calendar, large class sizes, and parents' expectations of high scores all stop our inside voices from being released. We are paralyzed.

I am so delighted to have received an opportunity to join the action research project in basic writing – from sentence writing to mini-passage writing for 10th graders. I am a proponent of combining reading with writing, because reading offers rich ingredients for writing, such as information, vocabulary, and effective sentence patterns. As we know, a lot of EFL students are reluctant to write due to their blank minds – they feel they have nothing to say. This reduces their willingness to write. They have anxieties about such aspects as their handwriting and spelling, and this diminishes their confidence in writing tasks, as well as adversely affecting their performance in language learning.

Can EFL learners learn to write by themselves, like fish drinking water, if led with an appropriate approach and evaluated with meaningful rubrics? I definitely believe the answer is yes, if we just spend a little time building positive writing habits. If we provide practical, step by step models, with enough language instruction and information to activate their awareness of good writing practice – including sentence making, sentence connections, and paragraph writing – then I believe, writing can become a joyful part of their English language learning.

This is a longitudinal classroom action research project. In this paper, I want to share some elements of writing teaching and grading that I use to combine different texts from Book 2 of the Sanmin English textbook (2008). I believe this method is effective in building students' writing habits through a cooperative learning approach with visual and auditory activities. In addition, pair-conferencing is held during the process of writing, and an evaluation rubric is applied to help the instructor work on the development of writing habits and to assist with grading.

Initially, when Chinese students started their English writing, EFL teachers believed that simply being sensitive to the learners' needs would be enough to ensure successful classroom interaction. However, in the vast majority of senior high school EFL classes this has not proven to be the case. The diagrams below, from Jin & Cortazzi's research, show the 'Transmission' model, which is standard in English classes in China, and the 'Acquisition' model, which is standard in English EFL classes. The two diagrams present a quite familiar picture to EFL instructors here in Taiwan.

Figure 1 - A Chinese cultural model of learning English  
Extracted from Jin and Cortazzi, 1998, pp102-103

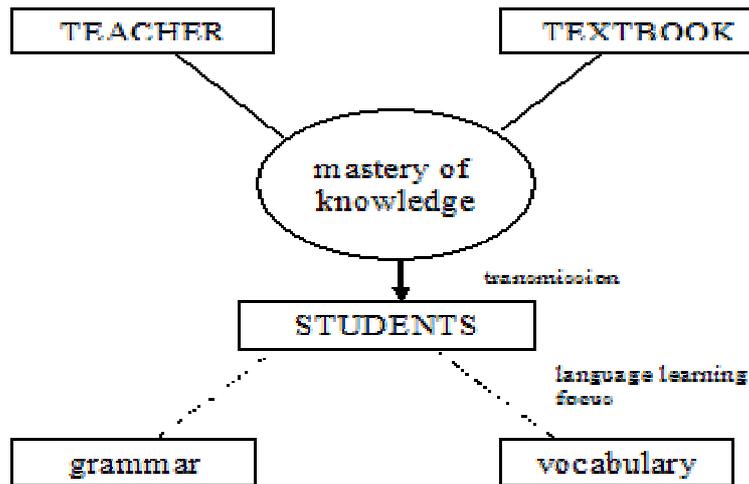
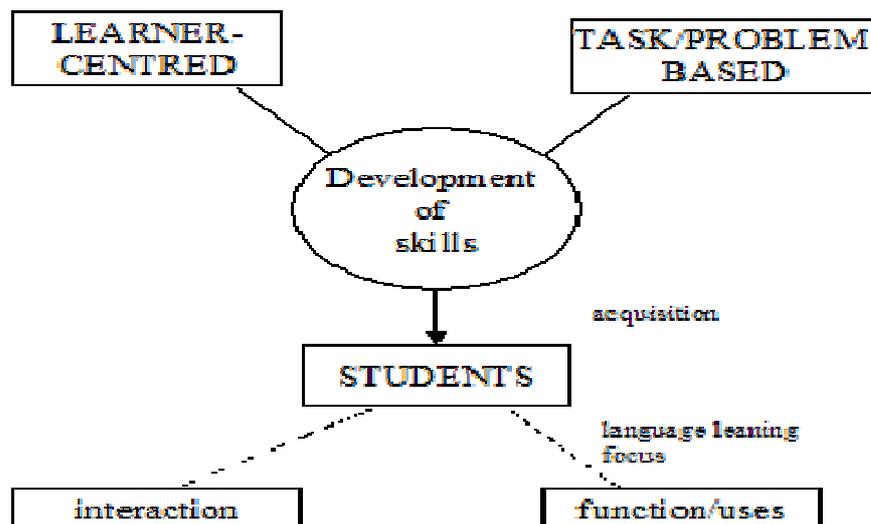


Figure 2 - A Western cultural model of foreign language learning  
Extracted from Jin and Cortazzi, 1998, pp102-103



Bearing in mind that average English class sizes range from 40-50 students in our senior high schools, it becomes immediately apparent that the implementation of communicative-style teaching methods is extremely challenging for Taiwanese teachers, whereas teacher-centered class is easier to control. In my own practice, I have tried to plan lessons starting off with the 'Transmission' model and gradually worked towards the 'Acquisition model'. This is not because one is superior to the other, but because both have their strengths and weakness.

Culturally, senior high students in Taiwan look to a good teacher to guide them towards successful models. Consequently, most students are open to suggestions on how they can improve their English writing performance, provided the strategies suggested are clearly linked to that goal. In order to assist teachers to use 'bridging strategies' between the two methods, I have designed several lesson plans. Once teachers understand the technique, they can replicate it in their own classes. Naturally, this approach is used in the initial period of instruction, and based on the level of the learners. It is intended to reassure and motivate students until they feel confident enough to cope with the transition from writing sentences to writing a short passage.

In addition to teaching difficulties, grading writing assignments can be very time consuming. Therefore, some teachers are reluctant to set writing assignments. Thus, it is critically important to use procedures which give students writing practice while saving time and not overburdening the teacher with grading. Try some of the following grading suggestions. I believe you will be successful in improving students' writing skills, through progressive practice and the use of evaluation rubrics, which can reduce your correction load and increase the objectivity of your grading.

Rubrics are basically a simplified way to grade a complicated assignment. For example, when you are grading an essay, how do you decide whether it gets an A or a B? What about if you are assigning number grades to the essay? What's the difference between a 94 and a 96? The times that I have graded without a rubric, I have typically relied on a subjective method of reading and ranking. I read each essay and rank them in order from best to worst. Usually when I'm knee deep in essays, I begin to wonder why I did this to myself. The easy answer, of course, is that it seems much easier to avoid the extra work required to create a rubric. However, the time saved up front is more than lost while grading.

Here are three reasons why I find rubrics truly effective. First, rubrics save me time, because I can simply look at a rubric and mark off points. Second, rubrics keep the grader (me) honest, even when I've had a horrible day and my pet won't leave me



### 2.1.1 Generators of Figurative Language

In the beginning, the teacher asked the students to brainstorm four one-syllable English words. Then they randomly arranged these words to create a group-poem. This activity helps them get an idea of what a poem is, and introduces them to the notion of rhyme. In addition, the whole class conferenced to check the wording and structure of the poems they created. Later, the instructor introduced them to the idea of figurative language; this was then put into practice by doing Exercises 2 & 3. In addition, students were introduced to the rubrics that the teacher would use in evaluation. Finally, after they finished analyzing the poems in Task 3 and completed Task 1 and 2, the students were required to write a poem individually. With the exception of Task 3 & 4, all of the exercises designed for the lesson come from the teacher-guide. What the instructor has to do is pack them in an appropriate way – concise and clear, but not random. In other words, the instructor plays the role of guide, helping students to learn at their own pace.

### 2.1.2 Exercises and Tasks

#### Exercise 1: Some elements of poetry

*Exercises and Tasks*  
-- Some elements of poetry--

**title** *The Whole Duty of a Poem*  
by Arthur Guiterman

**line** *A poem should be, as our best ever are,*  
*Golden of heart like a rose or a star.*

**imagery**

*A poem should be, like the brook that you hear*  
*Sing down the mountainside, lovely and clear.*

**rhyme**

**stanza** *Yet in its music a poem should hold*  
*That which is felt but never be told.*

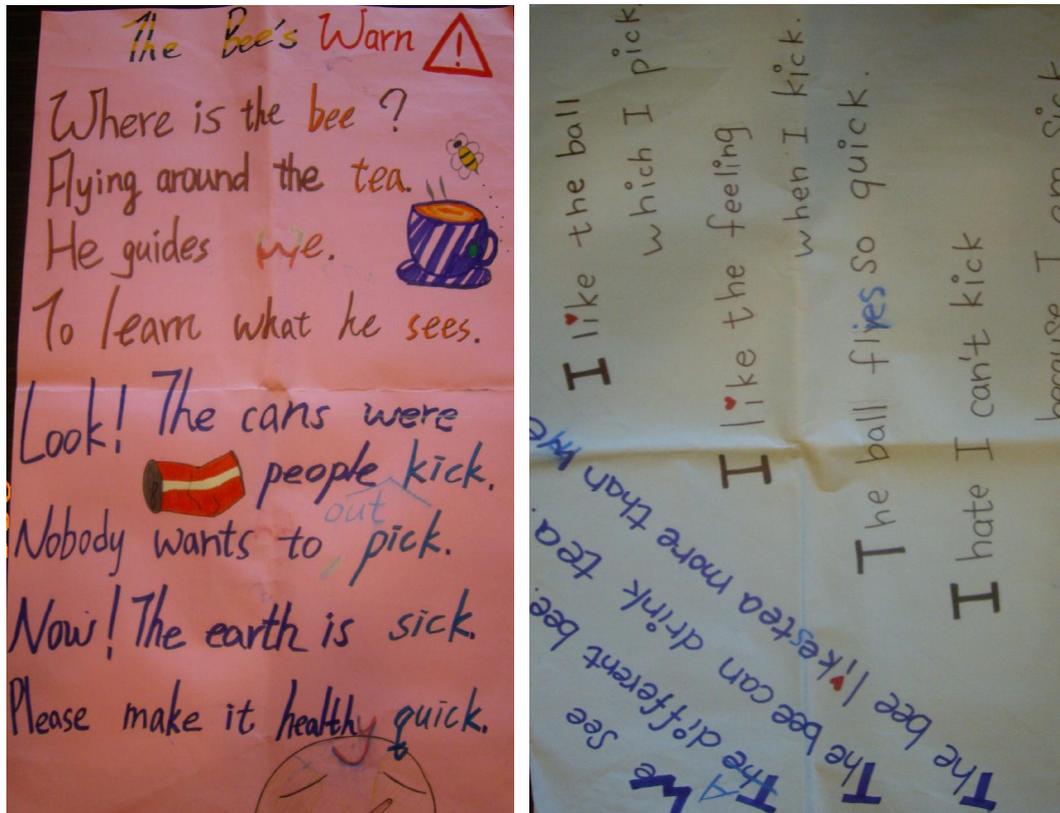
#### Exercise 2: Imagery of the poetry

Directions: The use of similes (明喻) or metaphors (暗喻) is very common in poetry writing, because it helps readers create a mental picture that makes a poem interesting to read. A simile often includes words or phrases like “as,” “like,” “as... as,” etc., while a metaphor doesn't.

Step 1: Work in groups of 3 to 5. Mark “M” if it is a metaphor, “S” if it is a simile, and “N” if it is neither of the two.

- 1. Our friendship is as deep as the ocean.
- 2. He eats like a horse.
- 3. The eyes are the window to the soul.
- 4. His arms are as strong as giant trees.
- 5. Let the light of hope shine in the moment of misery.

Step 2: Work in groups of 3 to 5 and complete the following poems. Read them to the class afterward.



Exercise 3: Make a list of four words that rhyme

If two words (each at the end of a line) share the same “accented vowel sound”(發重音的母音) and all following sounds, they rhyme with each other. The use of rhyme often makes a poem more musical, interesting, and easier to remember. This activity is intended to reinforce the concept of rhyming because students need a spiral approach to allow new concepts to enter into their long-term memory.

1. [     ]	badly	madly	sadly	gladly
2. [     ]				
3. [     ]				
4. [     ]				

Exercise 4: A Poem in Rhyme

Listen to the speaker reading the poem below and fill in the blanks with the missing words.

**Poetry**  
*by Eleanor Farjeon*

What is poetry? Who knows?  
Not a rose, but the scent (香味) of the <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_;  
Not the <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, but the light in the <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_;  
Not the fly (魚鈎), but the gleam (閃光) of the fly;  
Not the <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, but the sound of the <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_;  
Not myself, but what makes me  
See, hear, and feel something that prose  
Cannot: and what it is, who <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_?



Task 1: Stem/frame poems: The instructor give students sentences or phrases as stems or frames for them to complete. These, when completed, make something that is almost a poem.

Task 1: *Complete the following poem with similes ONLY.*

O, my love is **as** \_\_\_\_\_ **as** \_\_\_\_\_.  
It \_\_\_\_\_.  
O, my love is **like** \_\_\_\_\_.  
It \_\_\_\_\_.  
Please \_\_\_\_\_,  
So \_\_\_\_\_.

Task 2: *Complete the following poem with metaphors ONLY.*

Life is \_\_\_\_\_,  
And it \_\_\_\_\_;  
Life is \_\_\_\_\_,  
So it \_\_\_\_\_.  
How much do you love it and what can you do  
To keep it sweet, lovely, and fun for you?

### Task 3: Analysis of the Poetry

Directions: Based on the example given above, analyze the poetry in Lesson 12. In this organizer, the students will get a whole picture of the poetry of the text by analyzing descriptions from different poets.

Title	Author	Rhyme	Word for Imagery	Main Idea/Theme
I Slept, and Dreamed That Life Was Beauty				
Surplus Commodity				
The Sea-Gull				
Janus				

### Task 4: Writing Practice

On Your Own: A Poem for Christmas or Chinese New Year

Directions: Poem writing is a good vehicle for comprehensive evaluation of what the learners have learned. Their performance in this task will reveal the effectiveness of the learning and teaching in this unit.

#### 2.1.3 Rubrics for Grading

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE THROUGH POETRY	Scores: 95 Advanced	Scores: 85 Proficient	Scores: 75 Approaching	Scores: 65 Needs Improvement
Imagery Poem	Includes detailed imagery and appropriate use of similes and metaphors and rhyming words with no grammar mistakes	Includes appropriate use of similes and metaphors but rhyming words are not complete	Includes some appropriate use of similes and metaphors	Includes little to no appropriate use of similes and metaphors

O, my love is **as tough as a rock**.  
 It **makes me shock**.  
 O, my love is **like a rose**.  
 It is **beautiful but dangerous**.  
 Please **love me forever**,  
 So we can keep our love longer.

Comments and Grades: 95 Advanced

Includes detailed imagery and appropriate use of similes and metaphors and rhyming words with no grammar mistakes

O, my love is **as** *sweet* **as** *honey*.  
It *makes me happy*.  
O, my love is **like** *a blind*.  
It is a *one-of-the-kind (risk)*.  
Please *change your mind*,  
So *we don't need the finish line*.

Comments and Grades: 85

Includes some imagery and appropriate use of similes and metaphors but rhyming words are not complete

O, my love is **as** *sweet* **as** *honey*.  
It *makes me happy*.  
O, my love is **like** *a world*.  
It is *can help everyone*.  
Please *tell me your hope*.  
So *I can help you*.

Comments and Grades: 70

Includes some appropriate use of similes and metaphors

O, my love is **as** *cold* **as** *winter*.  
It *makes me happy*.  
O, my love is **like** *a river*.  
It *disappear (runs) faster and faster*.  
Please *let me go everywhere*.  
So *that I can live better*.

Comments and Grades: 90

Includes detailed imagery and appropriate use of similes and metaphors and rhyming words are complete; only one mistake in word usage

## 2.2 Image of Animals--Generating of Figurative Language in Non-fiction

*Image of Animals* is a non-fiction article. The writer presents a variety of animal images to show how they give color to language in different cultures, and especially how English becomes more vivid through the use of these images in figurative language. For 10th graders, it is a good time to learn how to apply this concept in their writing. First, the instructor starts in an easily acceptable way to guide students to comprehend how these terms are used by English speakers, as in Exercises 1-3. Matching should be very easy for the students, and is an easy way to show students how to use figurative language properly. Later, in Task 4, an organizer with different pictures of animals listed in the text is presented. This is very beneficial for teaching reading strategies, and can be combined with sentence practice to review the usage of similes and metaphors. .

### 2.2.1 Exercises and Tasks

Exercise 1: Similes used to describe people

Direction: Complete the following sentences with the animals given in the box.

monkey lamb horse church mouse mule peacock tiger snail

1. Jessica speaks softly. She is as gentle as a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jack is as proud as a \_\_\_\_\_. He thinks he is more capable than others.
3. When fighting, Henry was as brave as a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jimmy is such a naughty boy. He is like a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Bob is as stubborn as a \_\_\_\_\_. He won't change his mind.
6. Alan has been out of work for months. Now he is as poor as a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Lucia works like a \_\_\_\_\_. She really works hard.
8. Maria walks slowly. She is as slow as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Exercise 2: Metaphors used to describe people

Direction: Complete the following sentences with the animals given in the box.

horse black sheep donkey fox chicken white elephant wolf snake
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1. Peter can eat a \_\_\_\_\_. He is very hungry.
2. The camera is a \_\_\_\_\_. It doesn't work at all.
3. Sam is a \_\_\_\_\_. He is a coward.
4. Don't be a \_\_\_\_\_. Don't be silly.
5. Everybody thinks that Joe is an old \_\_\_\_\_. He is cunning.
6. John is a \_\_\_\_\_ in our class. He always brings shame to our class.
7. Judy is said to be a \_\_\_\_\_ in the grass. She can't be trusted.
8. Frank is a \_\_\_\_\_ in sheep's clothing. He seems friendly, but in fact, he is dangerous.

Exercise 3: Matching

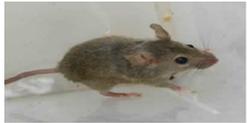
Direction: Match the English idioms with the Chinese idioms according to their meanings.

- |  |
|--|
| <p>A. 勿以一概全 B. 本末倒置 C. 洩露秘密 D. 混水摸魚<br/>         E. 物以類聚 F. 美中不足 G. 本性難移 H. 稍安勿躁</p> <p>_____ 1. Birds of a feather flock together.<br/>         _____ 2. Hold your horses.<br/>         _____ 3. Put the cart before the horse.<br/>         _____ 4. Let the cat out of the bag.<br/>         _____ 5. Fish in troubled waters.<br/>         _____ 6. A leopard can't change its spots.<br/>         _____ 7. One swallow doesn't make a summer.<br/>         _____ 8. It's a fly in the ointment.</p> |
|--|

Answer Key:

- |   |
|---|
| <p>Exercise 1: 1. lamb 2. peacock 3. tiger 4. monkey 5. mule 6. church mouse<br/>         7. horse 8. snail</p> <p>Exercise 2: 1. horse 2. white elephant 3. chicken 4. donkey 5. fox 6. black sheep<br/>         7. snake 8. wolf</p> <p>Exercise 3: 1. E 2. H 3. B 4. C 5. D 6. G 7. A 8. F</p> |
|---|

### Task 1: Getting Information

Animals	Used in Figurative Language and the Meaning
	<p>He is as slow as a tortoise; he is already eighty years old. Tortoises symbolize long life.</p>
	<p>Everyone wished Grandma (<i>grandma's</i>) life (<i>had been</i>) as long as a crane. (A) crane represents long life (<i>in</i>) Chinese and is a common wish for elder people.</p>
	<p>She has a great talent for playing the piano; because of this, she is always as proud as a peacock. It is an impression (<i>that</i>) people give to pride (<i>proud</i>) persons.</p>
	<p>Those kids in the playground are like a herd of elephant(s); they are noisy. A herd of elephant(s) means people who make too much noise. Sometimes people use “white elephant” to describe things that are useless. Also, ‘elephant’ is related to the word ‘jumbo’ because of the size of the elephant.</p>
	<p>Duke was (<i>as</i>) quiet as a mouse when he walked through the hall because his father was in a bad mood. ‘<i>Mouses</i>’ (<i>Mice</i>) are used to describe someone who is quiet.</p>
	<p>Margret is as busy as a bee. She is always working. Therefore, ‘a busy bee’ is a description for people who are always working.</p>
	<p>‘Don’t count your chickens before they’re hatched.’ Gran(<i>d</i>)ma used to tell us all the time. It is a proverb people commonly use and it tell(s) us not to make plans based on (<i>the</i>) things you can’t control. (A chicken also means a coward.)</p>

### 2.2.3 Rubrics for Grading

#### #Example 1

He is as slow as a tortoise; he is already eighty years old. Tortoises symbolize long life.

Checklist Items	Good	Average	Wrong	Grades	Total
Subject+ Verb Agreement	v			1	5
as...as	v			1	
Right Form in Nouns	v			1	
Meaningful and understandable	v			2	

## #Example 2

Duke was quiet as a mouse when he walked through the hall because his father was in a bad mood. 'Mouse' is used to describe someone who is quiet.

Checklist Items	Good	Average	Wrong	Grades	Total
Subject+ Verb Agreement	v			1	4.5
as...as	v			1	
Right Form in Nouns		v		1	
Meaningful and understandable	v			2	

### 2.3. *Hey, Thanks*--Visual Aids in Short Passage Writing

*Hey, Thanks* is a narrative, telling a story about friendship. To avoid being trapped in clichés, the film *The Kite Runner* was used as a pre-reading activity for raising awareness of students' thinking about friendship. To start with, a ten-minute extract from the film was shown, with the instructor guiding students to understand the tournament that the two boys – Hassan and Amir – are participating in. Before showing the film, the instructor also raises some questions that need to be answered with some supporting facts. The students are also asked to interpret some dialogues between the two boys. Afterwards, students move on to the text part by using some organizers to figure out the plot in the reading and get the idea of the narration.

#### 2.3.1 Exercises and Tasks

##### Task 1: **What is a Good Friend?**

After seeing the movie: *The Kite Runner*, what do you think are the qualities of a good friend?

Directions: What makes a good friend? Put the following items in your own order of importance (1-6).

**My priorities for a good friend are as follows:**

\_\_\_\_\_.

- ( ) has the same hobbies as you do      ( ) helps you when you're in need  
( ) knows you well      ( ) gives you good advice  
( ) gives you a birthday present      ( ) encourages you when you feel down

Directions: Check the personality traits you think a good friend should have. Write down other personality traits if you wish. Then, share your answers with your classmates.

- friendly       popular       happy       funny  
 wise       honest       forgiving       hard-working  
 kind       energetic       determined  
 communicative       polite       other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

## A good friend should

The following are several questions for checking your understanding of the plot of scenes 3-4 in *The Kite Runner*.

- What did Amir do for Hassan's birthday?
- What did Amir's father do for Hassan's birthday?
- Did Hassan and Amir win the tournament? How? Could they win the tournament individually? Why/not?
- How did Hassan encourage Amir to win the kite competition? (What did he say to him?)
- What did Hassan say when getting the kite for Amir? What does it mean for their friendship?

### 2.3.3 Rubrics for Grading

Scores: 95 Advanced	Scores: 85 Proficient	Scores: 75 Approaching	Scores: 65 Needs Improvement
Accurate in expressing the ideas and perfect in grammar use and word usage	Being able to express the ideas with few errors in grammar use and word usage, while being understandable	Giving general descriptions for the ideas; with errors in grammar use and word usage; not comprehensively understandable	Offering few ideas for the guided questions; not able to express the thoughts to the point; making errors in grammar use and word usage and hard to understand

Amir gave a catapult to Hussan (at him) (*for his*) birthday and Amir's father bought a kite for him. And they won the tournament by teamwork. But if they joined the (game) (contest) individually, they couldn't win because two hands (*heads*) are better than one. Before the game, Hussan encouraged Amir to win the kite competition and said, "I know you are going to win." In the end, when Hussan getting winner (*became the winner*), he said, "For you, a thousand times over." It means that they had a close friendship.

Words: 88

Grades: 85

Comments: Giving general descriptions for the ideas; with few errors in grammar use and word usage; comprehensively understandable

Amir gave a box of catapult(s) to Hussan in (*for*) his birthday. Also, Amir's father bought a kite for Hussan that (*so*) they can (could) go to join the tournament. In the tournament, they helped each other so that they won the tournament. I think they couldn't win the tournament individual (*individually*) because "Two heads are better than one." Before the tournament, Hussan said to Amir, "I know you are going to win." And "You have to (*too*) much faith to (*in*) me." to encourage Amir. And they won the tournament, Hussan said to Amir;" I'm going to ran (*run*) that blue kite for you." That's (*That*) mean (*means*) their friendship was strong and can't (*couldn't*) move forever.

Words: 117

Grades: 82

Comments: Being able to express the ideas fluently; with a few errors in grammar use and word usage, but is quite understandable

## 2.4 Colors at Play

Colors have an impact on languages, too. For instance, in English, if someone is very angry, we say that this person "sees red" or "turns red with anger." If we are depressed, we could say that we have the "blues." In addition, "blue Monday" is a common expression for the reluctance and tiredness that we may experience on Mondays, especially after a weekend of relaxation and fun.

The lesson *Color at Play* offers a good review of figurative language. However, its emphasis is the use of color in language. The instructor used this material by having students go back to the previous readings and linking the concepts with those in *Poetry*, and *Images of Animals*. The teacher always has to remember that learning is not a linear process, but a spiral in which old experiences and new information are linked together to form good database of the target language in the brain. So, later in Lesson Ten – All Started by a Mouse – a graphic organizer helps students to get a basic understanding of the text, while also providing a focus for sentence practice.

### 2.4.1 Exercises and Tasks

Exercise 1: *Fill in each of the following blanks with one of the colors below. Make changes if necessary.*

pink	white	red	orange
green	black	blue	violet

1. People who are trying to settle an argument might want to wear \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In English, the expression "see \_\_\_\_\_" is used to describe someone who is very angry.

3. The Japanese give out \_\_\_\_\_ envelopes for the Japanese New Year.
4. Frank Sinatra once said, " \_\_\_\_\_ is the happiest color."
5. For English speakers, " \_\_\_\_\_ Monday" is a common expression for the reluctance and tiredness that one may experience on Mondays.

#### 2.4.3. A Model of Writing

The following example serves as a stepping stone for students towards being able to incorporate elements of the reading into their own personal practice.

Who is the king of the jungle? The answer to that is the 'lion'. Lions must make you feel frightened. Well, that's exactly how Ms. Pearl behaves when she is really angry. Boys in our class often forget to do their homework and can be very irresponsible at times, and "ROAR", what's that? Ms. Pearl's way of showing her anger is very similar to a lion's. She sees red.

#### 2.5 All Started by a Mouse

The first paragraph of Lesson Ten is very useful for training students to write a description, and in fact, there is a wonderful writing exercise in the teacher's manual. A graphic organizer such as the one below helps students to get a basic understanding of the text, while also providing a focus for sentence practice.

He has a potbelly and a squeaky voice. His arms and legs are as thin as sticks. He wears funny-looking red shorts with big white buttons, and his ears are black. He is also one of the world's most famous movie stars. For a mouse, he has done pretty well – having starred in more than 130 movies and enjoyed worldwide fame as a superstar. However, few people know that he is the mouse that helped his creator rise above the toughest time of his life.

#### 2.5.1 Exercises and Tasks

##### Task 1

Directions: The first thing you have to do is find three things – names of animals and humans, names of places, and adjectives for describing humans and animals. Second, try to connect those you found with related information by forming complete sentences.

## Reading skills: Scanning

Item	Element	Related Impressive Information
Names of People or Animals	1. _____	➤ _____
	2. _____	➤ _____
	3. _____	➤ _____
	4. _____	➤ _____
Names of Places	1. _____	➤ _____
	2. _____	➤ _____
	3. _____	➤ _____
Adjectives for Describing People or Animals	1. _____	➤ _____
	2. _____	➤ _____
	3. _____	➤ _____
	4. _____	➤ _____
	5. _____	➤ _____
	6. _____	➤ _____
	7. _____	➤ _____
	8. _____	➤ _____



*When things go wrong  
as they usually will,  
And your daily road  
seems all uphill,  
When machines are down  
and tempers high,  
When you try to smile  
but you can only cry,  
And you really feel  
you'd like to quit ...  
Don't run to me  
I don't give a shit !*

Exercise1: Read the first paragraph of the reading to find out how Mickey Mouse is described. Then complete the following sentences.

He has a 1 \_\_\_\_\_ and a 2 \_\_\_\_\_. His arms and legs are 3 \_\_\_\_\_.

He wears 4 \_\_\_\_\_ red shorts with 5 \_\_\_\_\_, and his ears are 6 \_\_\_\_\_.

He is also one of the world's most 7 \_\_\_\_\_.

## Exercise 2: Writing Practice

### Vocabulary for describing one's appearance

Height	short, tall, etc.
Build	fit, slim, skinny, fat, plump, chubby, overweight, strong, slender, etc.
Age	young, old, middle-aged, teenage, in one's 20s/30s, etc.
Face	round, long, square, pale, thin, white, etc.
Eyes	big, round, small, bright, lovely, large, etc.
Hair	straight, long, curly, wavy, short, golden, etc.

### Vocabulary for describing one's character

Positive	hard-working, careful, active, cheerful, humorous, gentle, reliable, smart, energetic, confident, caring, helpful, loyal, friendly, generous, brave, kind, cool, honest, etc.
Negative	stupid, careless, lazy, passive, moody, stubborn, ill-tempered, unfriendly, selfish, boring, irresponsible, impolite, sly, etc.
Neutral	shy, curious, tough, busy, lonely, etc.

*Describe one of your classmates by using the vocabulary listed above.*

I would like to describe \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2.5.2 Rubrics for Grading

Scores: 95 Advanced	Scores: 85 Proficient	Scores: 75 Approaching	Scores: 65 Needs Improvement
Accurately expresses the ideas and almost perfect in grammar use and word usage	Able to express the ideas; with a few errors in grammar use and word usage, but understandable	Giving general descriptions for the ideas; with errors in grammar use and word usage; not comprehensively understandable	Offering few ideas for the guided questions; not able to express the thoughts to the point; making errors in grammar use and word usage and hard to understand

*Describe one of your classmates by using the vocabulary listed above.*

I would like to describe **John**. He is as thin as bamboos. He wears a(~~x~~) big glasses and a big smile. He's hardworking and generous. He is also one of our class's star (*class stars*). He is called 'Smile Point.'

Words: 41

Grades: 85

Comments: Being able to express the ideas; with few errors in grammar use and word usage, but is understandable

*Describe one of your classmates by using the vocabulary listed above.*

I would like to describe **Black Tea**. He is tall and thin but he is strong. His eyes is (*are*) very small, his hair is short, he is as ant as hard working and active (*he is as busy as a bee, hardworking and active*), But, he is not shy. He has a round face with big eyes. His hair is short but good looking. He is 170 cm tall.

Words: 58

Grades: 88

Comments: Being able to express the ideas fluently; with one error in word usage; but quite understandable

*Describe one of your classmates by using the vocabulary listed above.*

I would like to describe **Avon**. A 16 year-old young lovely boy, tall and thin, he has (*wears*) short (black) hair (with black color). He is a friendly, hardworking student. His heart is as sensitive as a girl's. This is my classmate, Avon

Words: 41

Grades: 85

Comments: Being able to express the ideas fluently; with few errors in word usage and singular form of noun; but quite understandable

### III. Analysis

It is always very interesting to go back and overview what the instructor has taught and the students have learned. In the following section, we would like to offer some analysis of the errors that the students made and make some comments on their progress. First, here is a chart for the very early stages of learning sentence patterns related to figurative language.

Next, we want to say something about paragraph writing through guided questions. Generally speaking, the students' paragraphs showed that they could express their ideas quite confidently, although they still had some problems in grammar and word usage. One thing we are sure of is that they can make use of figurative language quite beautifully.

Finally, the research also notes that the students were able to write quickly, spending only about 10 minutes on one paragraph of 40-60 words using a model as a guide. Using the model required them to write in an English style.

Chart 1

Errors in <i>Images of Animals</i>	Comments
<p><b>as Adj. as N</b>            Many students made as <i>many</i> noise like an elephant.</p> <p>My little brother character as <i>cowardices</i> as ^ mouse.</p> <p>For example, the person who has no friend ^ ^ as quiet as ^ <i>mouse</i> in the class.</p> <p>I wish you could live as long as ^ crane.            My brother ^ <i>liked</i> a herd of elephants.</p> <p><b>be used to V</b>            The peacocks used to <i>described</i> who is proud.</p> <p>Chickens are used to <i>described</i> those who are <i>coward people</i>.</p> <p>Mice are used to <i>described</i> those who are <i>diligence</i>.</p> <p>Chickens are used to describe those who are <i>coward</i>.</p> <p>Peacock is used to ^ a proud person.            Cranes are the same with tortoises. It <i>was used to described</i> the person who <i>have</i> long life.</p> <p><b>be + p.p.</b>            The elephant is <i>characterize</i> by its giant body.</p> <p><b>^ --missing word</b>            I think they ^ busier than bees.</p> <p>For Example, the loser is a coward and doesn't have enough courage like ^ chicken.</p> <p><b>other mistakes</b>            It is common to say that mouse stands for <i>quiet</i>.</p>	<p>At the very beginning of sentence practice, we found students were less aware of N after <i>as or like</i> as well as <b>verb BE</b> when they used figurative language (similes). Happily, they made progress after a series of writing exercises and pair-checks.</p> <p>Also, students were able to demonstrate semantic usage in describing a person in their writing later. As for other errors, these were greatly reduced through constant writing. Basically, for the 10th graders (students in their first year of senior high), the instructor should focus on sentence practice and short, guided passage writing. On one hand, the students can get a good sense of the root structures of sentence patterns. On the other hand, we can also build up their awareness of the organization of a mini-paragraph – one with less than five sentences.</p>

Chart 2

Samples in All Started by a Mouse --Describing a Friend--	Samples in Guided Writing --The Kite Runner--
<p>I would like to describe John. He is as thin as bamboo. He wears a(x) big glasses and a big smile. He's hardworking and generous. He is also one of our class's star (<i>class stars</i>). He is called 'Smile Point.'</p>	<p>Amir gave a catapult to Hussan (at him) for his birthday and Amir's father bought a kite for him. And they won the tournament by teamwork. But if they joined the game(contest) individually, they couldn't win because two hands (<i>heads</i>) are better than one. Before the game (contest), Hussan encouraged Amir to win the kite competition and said, "I know you are going to win." In the end, when Hussan getting winner (<i>became the winner</i>), he said, "For you, a thousand times over." It means that they had a close friendship.</p>
<p>I would like to describe Black Tea. He is tall and thin but he is strong. His eyes is (<i>are</i>) very small, his hair is short, he is as ant as hard working and active (<i>he is as busy as a bee, hardworking and active</i>), he is not shy. He has a round face with big eyes. His hair is short but good looking. He is 170 cm tall.</p>	<p>Amir gave a box of catapults to Hussan in (<i>for</i>) his birthday. Also, Amir's father bought a kite for Hussan that (<i>so</i>) they could go to join the tournament. In the tournament, they helped each other so that they won the tournament. I think they couldn't win the tournament individual (<i>individually</i>) because "Two heads are better than one." Before the tournament, Hussan said to Amir, "I know you are going to win." And "You have to (<i>too</i>) much faith to (<i>in</i>) me." to encourage Amir. And they won the tournament, Hussan said to Amir;" I'm going to ran (<i>run</i>) that blue kite for you." That's (<i>That</i>) mean (<i>means</i>) their friendship was strong and can't (<i>couldn't</i>) move forever.</p>
<p>I would like to describe Avon. A 16 year-old young lovely boy, tall and thin, he has (<i>wears</i>) short hair with black color. He is friendly, a hardworking student. His heart is as sensitive as a girl's. This is my classmate, Avon</p>	

#### IV. Reflections and Suggestions

The rubric for grading the short paragraph is adapted from the grading guidelines of Basic Level writing of the GEPT. The reason for that is that for those low-intermediate learners, we would like to focus on building up their confidence in writing, rather than criticizing the mistakes they make. Therefore, we chose soft rubrics to evaluate their work.

Rome is not built in a day. This research project shows that students who receive appropriate training in writing can develop more skills in expressing their ideas in the target language. We also found some significant support from the 11th graders who had been disciplined by the approach used in the previous year. In addition, guided-question writing is very beneficial to low-intermediate level learners, because

they lead the learners to think, and open a window for them to say something. Afterwards, they can step into writing from a model with certain required elements. This exercise polishes their performance and helps them to review what they have learned previously.

Last, but not the least, we do believe a good curriculum design is a key to successful learning and teaching. Although the Teacher's Manual for each version of the text books offers some useful exercises, activities and tasks, instructors still have to stand up on their own feet to create an appropriate syllabus that is suitable to the level and needs of their pupils. Teaching is an art. Only do artists know how to shape their work with marvelous perspectives and methods.