

Lesson 2: Literary Elements & Techniques Part 2

(approximately one hour)

Educator Note: Exercise 6 uses an article, questions, and answers from newsela.com. The website writes the articles at different reading levels (lexicons) and translates many articles into Spanish. This Regents Prep module provides one sample article from the newsela website, about texting. There are six choices for Lesson 2, demonstrating how one article can be accessed at multiple reading levels and often in two languages. Each article has questions for students to answer. Download the level(s) and language(s) that will best fit your students.

Today, you'll be working on a number of short exercises designed to reinforce your ability to recognize literary techniques and explain how an author uses those techniques to communicate the central idea.

Educator Note: Use your knowledge of the student when determining the level of detail and analysis you expect for each question. For instance, you can push a student who has demonstrated a strong grasp on the different literary techniques to specify that the figurative language in Exercise 1, Question 1 is an example of metaphor. With a student who is struggling, it may be sufficient to recognize that it is figurative language.

Exercise 1

Read the song lyrics below.

You are the thunder and I am the lightning,

And I love the way you know who you are,

And to me it's exciting when you

Know it's meant to be.

5 *Everything comes naturally, it comes naturally*

When you're with me, baby.

Everything comes naturally.

“Naturally”, Selena Gomez & The Scene

1. Underline the figurative language that appears in the lyrics.

Answer: Students should underline the metaphor in the first line.

2. What is the central idea of these lyrics?

Answer: The relationship between the narrator and the person she is addressing “comes naturally” (line 5).

3. Explain how the author uses this figurative language to communicate their central idea.

Answer: The relationship between the narrator and the person she is addressing “comes naturally” (line 5).

Exercise 2

Read the song lyrics below.

*Looking back on the memory of
The dance we shared beneath the stars above,
For a moment, all the world was right.
How could I have known you'd ever say goodbye?*

5 *And now I'm glad I didn't know
The way it all would end, the way it all would go.
Our lives are better left to chance. I could have missed the pain,
But I'd have had to miss the dance.*

10 *Holding you, I held everything.
For a moment, wasn't I the king?
But if I'd only known how the king would fall...
Hey, who's to say? You know, I might have changed it all.*

15 *And now I'm glad I didn't know
The way it all would end, the way it all would go.
Our lives are better left to chance. I could have missed the pain,
But I'd have had to miss the dance.
Yes, my life is better left to chance.
I could have missed the pain, but I'd have had to miss the dance.*

“The Dance”, Garth Brooks

1. In line 10, what is the figurative meaning of the narrator’s language?

Answer: When the narrator says, “wasn’t I the king”, he doesn’t actually mean he was a reigning monarch; rather, he means to say that he felt like he was ‘on top of the world’ when he was with his dance partner.

2. What does “the dance” symbolize in this song?

Answer: The dance symbolizes a relationship the narrator had in the past that has since ended.

3. What is the central idea of this song?

Answer: The central idea of this song is that even if an experience, such as a relationship, ends badly, the experience is still worthwhile. In other words, the pain of heartbreak is worth the joy of love—as Tennyson wrote, “better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all”.

4. How does the lyricist use figurative language to convey his central idea?

Answer: The lyricist uses a dance to symbolize the failed love affair he had with the person the song is addressing. He communicates his central idea by stating that even if he could have somehow avoided the heartbreak that accompanied the end of the relationship, it would not have been worth missing “the dance”, a single moment that he uses to symbolize all the good memories and experiences of the relationship.

Exercise 3

Take a look at the political cartoon below.



1. What is the central idea of this cartoon?

Answer: The central idea of this cartoon is that nature is behaving in out-of-the-ordinary and chaotic ways.

2. How does the cartoonist use symbolism to convey his central idea? Make specific reference to at least two symbols used in the cartoon.

Answer: The cartoonist uses two symbols: the woman, who is labeled Mother Nature, is a personification of the forces of nature. The remote control she holds symbolizes the different elements of climate and weather. The central idea of the cartoon, that nature is losing control, is communicated by Mother Nature’s remote control malfunctioning.

Exercise 4

Doree had to take three buses—one to Kincardine, where she waited for one to London, where she waited again, for the city bus out to the facility. She started the trip on a Sunday at nine in the morning. Because of the waiting times between buses, it took her until about two in the afternoon to travel the hundred-odd miles. All that sitting, either on buses or in the depots, was not a thing she should have minded. Her daily work was not of the sitting-down kind.

From “Dimension”, Alice Munro

How does the author characterize Doree? Cite specific evidence from the text.

Answer: The author characterizes Doree as somebody with a working-class job, telling us that she “had to take three buses” (line 1) to get to work. We also learn that her job is “not of the sitting-down kind” (line 6), which implies that she has a job that requires her to be on her feet.

Exercise 5

- He had plastic bags wrapped ‘round his shoes.
He was covered with the evening news.
Had a pair of old wool socks on his hands.
The bank sign was flashing ‘five below’.*
- 5 *It was freezing rain and spitting snow.
He was curled up behind some garbage cans.
I was afraid that he was dead.
I gave him a gentle shake.
When he opened up his eyes,*

10 *I said, "Old man, are you ok?"*

*He said, "I just climbed out of a cottonwood tree.
I was running from some honeybees.
Drip-drying in the summer breeze
After jumping into Calico Creek.*

15 *I was walking down an old dirt road
Past a field of hay that had just been mowed.
Man, I wish you'd just left me alone
'Cause I was almost home."*

20 *Then he said, "I was coming round the barn
'Bout the time he grabbed my arm.
When I heard Momma holler, 'Son, hurry up!'
I was close enough for my own nose
To smell fresh cobbler on the stove.*

25 *When I saw Daddy loading up the truck,
Cane poles on the tailgate,
Bobbers blowing in the wind,
Since July of '55,
That's as close as I've been."*

"Almost Home", Craig Morgan

1. How does the lyricist characterize the old man? Cite specific evidence from the lyrics.

Answer: The old man is characterized as likely homeless. We know this because he has "plastic bags wrapped 'round his shoes" (line 1) and he was "covered in the evening news" (line 2). The lyricist also suggests that he grew up on a farm in the 1940s & 1950s.

2. How does the lyricist characterize the narrator? Cite specific evidence from the lyrics.

Answer: The narrator is characterized as compassionate and concerned. We know this because in line 10, he asks "'Old man, are you ok?'".

3. This song makes use of imagery at several points. Identify at least three specific examples of imagery appealing to three **different** senses. Make sure you specify these senses.

Sample Answers:

Sight → Any of the visual descriptions is an example of imagery, such as "Cane poles on the tailgate" (line 25).

Touch → The old man remembers in his dream that he was “drip-drying in the summer breeze” (line 13).

Smell → “I was close enough for my own nose / To smell fresh cobbler on the stove” (lines 22-23)

Sound → “I heard Momma holler, ‘Son, hurry up!’” (line 21)

4. In this song, “home” has both a literal and a symbolic meaning. What is the literal meaning?

Answer: The literal meaning of “home” is the farm where the old man grew up; in his dream, he had almost reached “home” when he was woken up.

5. Depending on your interpretation, there are a few layers of symbolic meaning that “home” could have; what do you think it symbolizes?

Answer: Figuratively, “home” could symbolize a moment of happiness and peace that the old man was about to experience in his dream. It could also symbolize some type of peace or afterlife that the old man, in danger of freezing to death, was nearly arriving at.

Exercise 6

Read the Newsela article about texting and answer the attached questions.

<https://newsela.com/read/texting-instead-of-yelling/id/50826/>

Educator Note: The link above takes you to one reading level of this article.

The title of the article changes with the reading level. This Regents Prep module provides one sample article and quiz that is available in English and Spanish, and at three different reading levels/lexicons in each language. Thus, you will find six versions in the download files for Lesson 2. Select the ones that will work best with your students.

The Facilitator Guide has directions for subscribing to newsela, how to change the reading level, and how to find out if the article is also available in Spanish or not.