

### Worksheet 3. Literal and Figurative Language (teacher version)

Writers use words for different purposes and meanings, especially poets!

**Literal language** is used to mean *exactly what is written*. For example:

“It was raining a lot, so I rode the bus.”

In this example of literal language, the writer means to explain exactly what is written: that he or she chose to ride the bus because of the heavy rain.

**Figurative language** is used to mean something *other than what is written*, something symbolic, suggested, or implied. For example:

It was raining cats and dogs, so I rode the bus.

In this example of figurative language, there were not actually cats and dogs falling from rain clouds, instead, the rain felt so heavy and large that it was almost as if small animals were falling from the sky!

In the examples below, **identify** the phrases as literal or figurative. If phrases are figurative, **underline** the figurative language and **explain** what the author is suggesting, implying, or meaning.

Phrase	Literal or figurative language
I'm so hungry, I could eat a horse.	Figurative: the writer is so hungry they could eat a large amount of food.
She is as fast as a cheetah!	Figurative: the girl is very, very fast—so fast that the speed she runs is similar to that of a cheetah.
That dog is a clown; it makes us laugh all the time.	Figurative: the dog does things the writer thinks are funny; this goofiness is similar to the antics of a clown.
He was late to dinner.	Literal: It just means what it says.

**Language of Place: Hopi Place Names, Poetry, Traditional Dance and Song**

I stayed up late last night, I'm so tired!	Literal: it means what it says.
Time is money.	Figurative: time is valuable and similar to money; it is hard to get and so should not be wasted.
They are as busy as bees.	Figurative: they are very, very busy, similar to the activity of bees.
The sky is pale blue with few clouds.	Literal: it means what it says.
The sky is full of dancing stars.	Figurative: the sky seems to have very many twinkling stars in it, so many that they look like they are moving around using dance motions.
The field is calm and quiet.	Literal: it means what it says
The dawn crept across the sky in pink clothing.	Figurative: as the sun rises, it creates the visual experience of the dark sky gradually changing to a pink, glowing color; this is similar to how something moves along slowly
The darkness surrounded them with a cold embrace.	Figurative: it was dark and cold where they were; this felt similar to being held in someone's cold arms.