



FigureForge

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 7 chapter books from the FigureForge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

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Introduction

The FigureForge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 7 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Ferry and Ripple

*COMPARISON PAIR — *Ferry says X IS Y (metaphor; bold). Ripple says X is LIKE Y (simile; soft). Same family. Different distance.**



The Word Workshop smelled of paper, tea, and chalk. Sun cut through tall windows in long, dusty bars. A round table sat in the middle of the room. On the table, a folded note. The note had been slipped under the workshop door an hour before. Whoever left it had not knocked. The case was not signed. Around the table sat the cast.

Ferry stood at one end. She was a small otter-tween with chunky-soft brown fur and a bright orange life vest. The vest was a little too big for her. The straps puffed out like wings. Ferry rocked from one foot to the other, the way she always did when she was thinking. Across from her sat Ripple. Ripple was the pond-skater-tween with long-soft legs and a small pond-disk on her workbench. The pond-disk was a shallow pan of water. A single drop sat in the middle. Ripple liked things to start small and spread out.

"Open it," Ferry said.

"Slowly," said Ripple.

Knot unfolded the note. The paper was thick. The handwriting was careful. The note had only two lines.

*Line one: My grandmother's hands **ARE** soft brown maps.*

*Line two: My grandmother's hands are **LIKE** soft brown maps.*

Knot read the lines aloud. Then he read them again. Then he set the note down between Ferry and Ripple. "Two lines," Knot said. "Almost the same. Just one little word swapped. The case wants to know — which line means more?"

Ferry stopped rocking. Her whiskers twitched once. Ripple leaned forward over her pond-disk. The drop on the pan trembled.

"It's mine," Ferry said quietly.

"And mine," said Ripple, just as quietly.

The cast looked at each other. Two characters. One note. Two lines. The case would have to split.



Ferry pulled the note toward herself first. She tapped line one. "My grandmother's hands ARE soft brown maps," she read. Her voice was small but firm. "That's me. That's metaphor. No middle word. No softening. The hands and the maps are *the same thing*. X IS Y. You step from one side to the other and you don't notice the gap."

She tapped her orange vest. "That's why I carry the boat. I ferry meaning. The reader gets on the bank of grandmother's-hands and gets off the bank of soft-brown-maps and they don't pay a fare. They don't even feel the crossing. They just arrive."

Knot scratched his head with one wiggly arm. "But hands aren't *actually* maps."

"That's the point," Ferry said. "When you say something IS something else, you're not lying. You're saying the two things share a feeling. Old, kind hands have wrinkles like roads. Brown spots like islands. Lines like rivers. The whole shape of where someone has been. A map is *all the places she's gone*. So when I say her hands ARE maps, I am saying her hands ARE her whole life."

Ferry's voice got a little wobbly. She rocked once. Then she steadied.

"Metaphor is the brave one," she said. "It doesn't say *kind of like*. It says *yes*. That makes it heavy. You have to mean it. That's why I always go slowly. Because once the reader steps on the boat, they trust the crossing. If the metaphor is wrong, they fall in."

Hum scribbled something on her drawing pad. The sketch was a small boat. The boat had two passengers — a pair of hands and a folded map sitting on the bench. They looked the same size. Hum showed Ferry. Ferry's whiskers twitched and her ears went pink.

"That," Ferry said softly, "is exactly the boat."



Ripple slid the note across the table and put her long-soft front leg on line two. She did not press hard. Ripple never pressed hard. "My grandmother's hands are LIKE soft brown maps," she said. The word LIKE got a little extra weight in her voice. Not too much. Just enough.

"That's me," Ripple said. "Simile. The middle word does the work. LIKE. Or AS. Either one. The two things stay separate. The reader doesn't get on a boat. The reader stands on the bank and *looks across*."

Ripple touched the drop on her pond-disk. The drop spread into a ring. The ring spread into another ring. "Simile ripples," she said. "The first thing is grandmother's-hands. Right at the center. The next ring is *kind of like* a map. Almost. But not exactly. The reader holds both pictures in their head at once. Hands. Maps. Side by side."

Knot looked at the drop. "Why would you want a *softer* version of the same thing?"

Ripple smiled. "Because softer leaves room. If I say her hands are LIKE maps, the reader thinks, *yes, I see, the wrinkles are kind of like roads*. But they also think, *and not exactly. Her hands are still hands*. The reader gets to keep her grandmother *and* the comparison."

Ferry watched from across the table. She wasn't frowning. She was just listening.

"Sometimes," Ripple went on, "the writer is not ready to say IS. Sometimes the feeling is too big to step right onto. Simile lets the reader walk up to it slowly. LIKE is a porch. You can stand on it and look out and you don't have to come inside if you don't want to. That's a gentle way to share a hard feeling."

Mask, in the corner, made a soft sound that was not quite a laugh. "So Ferry is the front door. And Ripple is the porch."

"Yes," Ripple said. And Ferry, after a small pause, said, "Yes."



Knot cleared his throat. He pointed at the note again. "So the case wants to know which line means more. But you both say the line is yours. So which line means more?"

Ferry and Ripple looked at each other across the table. Then Ferry slid the note to the middle. Ripple slid her pond-disk to the middle. The drop in the pan trembled.

"Neither," Ferry said.

"Both," Ripple said.

Hum stopped drawing. Knot uncrossed one of his arms. Mask leaned forward.

"It's not a competition," Ferry said. "Line one and line two aren't fighting. They're a pair." She tapped the orange vest. "The writer chose me when they wanted the reader to *arrive*. Right inside the feeling. No porch. No window. Just here."

"And they chose me," Ripple said, "when they wanted the reader to *approach*. Slowly. With room to back up. With room to keep grandmother as grandmother and the map as a map and the comparison as a soft idea between them."

Ferry nodded. "Both lines say the same true thing. That an old kind woman's hands carry a whole life. But Ripple's version says, *come closer*. And mine says, *you're already here*. A good writer keeps both of us in their pocket. Some days they need a ferry. Some days they need a ripple."

Ripple touched the drop on the pond-disk. It spread. "That's how figurative language works. We're not different cases. We're different distances."



Knot folded the note carefully. He set it back on the table. "Then the case is solved," he said. "There is no 'better' line. There's a Ferry-day and a Ripple-day. The writer picks the day."

Mask grinned. Hum drew one final sketch on her pad. The sketch showed a river. On one side of the river were grandmother's hands. On the other side was a folded brown map. Above the water, Ferry was rowing a small boat from one side to the other. The boat had no fare. Below the water, Ripple stood on the bank with her long-soft legs in the shallows. She wasn't crossing. She was looking. The ripples from her feet went out in soft, growing rings.

Hum held up the drawing. "This is the case."

Ferry rocked from one foot to the other. Her whiskers twitched. "Put it on the wall."

Ripple smiled and touched her pond-disk one last time. "Put it where the new visitors can see."

Outside, the sun had moved. The dusty bars of light on the table had grown long. Somewhere down the hallway, a door opened. Footsteps. A small voice asking for the Word Workshop.

The cast looked up. A new case was coming. Ferry pulled her vest a little tighter. Ripple lifted her pond-disk. The drop in the middle was still trembling, ready to spread.

"Together?" Ferry said.

"Together," Ripple said.

The two of them — boat and porch, the bold and the soft, the IS and the LIKE — stood up to greet whoever was about to walk in.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/ferry-and-ripple>

Ferry

*METAPHOR — *X IS Y. direct comparison. the meaning ferries from one side to the other.**



- FERRY
 - ferry
 - CROSSING



- X

- Y
- TIME



gate-allow-text-pattern: '^(?:\d+ | [XY] | TIME | RIVER)\$'

Chapter 1 — Ferry and the Meaning That Crosses Over

Ferry was a river otter. She was small and wore a chunky sailor cap. Her fur was warm russet and cream. Ferry loved to show how things worked. She had a small toy rowboat. She pushed it across her workbench. This showed how meaning could cross over.

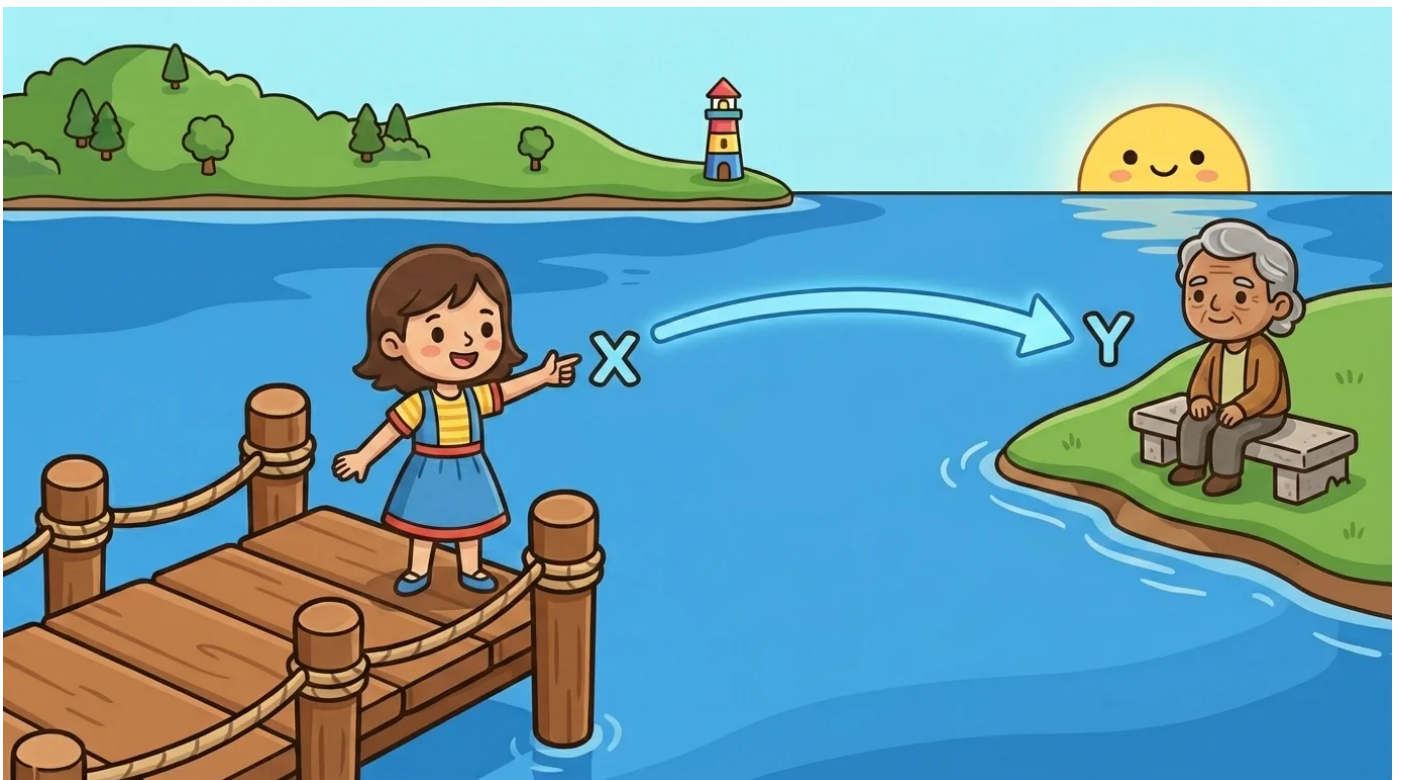
Ferry was always curious. She loved to compare things directly. Her favorite saying was, "X IS Y. The meaning ferries across." That toy rowboat was her special tool. It was made of wood. She used it to show what a **metaphor** was. She put a label, 'TIME,' on one side of her bench. Another label, 'RIVER,' went on the other side. Then she put a little pebble in the boat. She pushed the boat across the bench. The pebble moved from 'RIVER' to 'TIME'. She smiled. "Time IS a river," she said. "The meaning ferried."

This was Ferry's whole job. She taught about **metaphor**. A **metaphor** is a direct comparison. It says X IS Y. It never uses 'like' or 'as'. Lots of new students got mixed up. They thought **metaphor** was the same as simile. But they were very different. A **metaphor** says X IS Y. It says they are the same thing. A simile says X is LIKE Y. It's a softer way to compare. A **metaphor** makes a stronger claim. It treats X and Y as if they are truly one. "Time is a river" is not "Time is like a river." Both are word pictures. But **metaphor** is much bolder. Ferry helped kids spot these bold claims. It was like solving a word puzzle.



Ferry made it very clear. "X IS Y,' she would say. 'It's a direct comparison. The meaning ferries from one side to the other. Time IS a river. Life IS a journey. Hope IS a feathered thing. No "like." No "as." Just the bold claim of sameness."

Ferry had special ways to teach about **metaphor**.



Next, the *Tell*. Remember, no 'like' or 'as'! Those words belong to similes. A **metaphor** means it.

Then, the *Function*. It moves ideas from something you know. It takes them to something new. Like 'Time is a river.' It tells us time acts like a river. It flows, it has a current, you can't go back.

She also taught about *Common types*. Some **metaphors** are 'dead'. They are so common we don't even notice them. Think of a 'table leg'. Or the 'mouth' of a river. Other **metaphors** are 'live'. These are fresh and exciting. Writers use these on purpose. Some can even go on for many sentences.

Ferry called this the *Detective approach*. If you see X IS Y, and Y isn't really X.....then you've found a **metaphor**! Finally, she taught *Anti-perfectionism*. Spotting **metaphors** takes practice. It's okay to miss them at first. That's totally normal.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/ferry>

Hum

*PERSONIFICATION — *non-human things take on human qualities. the wind whispers. the sea is angry. that's hum.**



Hum is a small bumblebee. She has chunky, soft stripes. They are warm gold and black. She does not have a sharp stinger. Hum carries a tiny drawing pad. On it, she sketches things that aren't human. But she gives them human faces and feelings.



She is small. Her stripes are warm gold and black. Hum is very curious. She loves to give human qualities to non-human things. She often says, "The wind whispers. The sea is angry. That's **personification**." Her drawing pad is her special tool. She draws wind with puffed-out cheeks. She draws the sea with a worried frown. The sun gets a big smile. Time has hurried, running legs. Each sketch shows a non-human thing. Each one wears a human emotion.

This is super important. Hum teaches about **personification**. That's when you give human qualities to things that aren't human. Like feelings, actions, or even voices. Many people use **personification** all the time. They don't even know its name. "The wind whispers," we say. It doesn't sound strange. "The clock is mocking me" is a common phrase. Even famous poets use it. Emily Dickinson wrote, "Hope is a feathered thing." **Personification** makes things that don't move feel alive. It helps readers feel emotions. You find it a lot in poems and songs. Hum's big job is to help you spot **personification**. She also shows you why authors use it. It's all about making you *feel* something.



Hum is very clear. "The wind whispers," she says. "The sea is angry. *That's personification.*" She taps her drawing pad. "Things that aren't human get human qualities. Things that can't feel are described as feeling. Things that can't speak are described as speaking. It makes the whole world feel alive. It puts emotion right into a description."

Hum teaches special tricks for **personification**:

- **What it means.** It's when you give human qualities to non-human things. Like feelings, actions, speech, or even thoughts.
- **How to spot it.** Look for human verbs or adjectives. They will be stuck to non-human nouns. "The leaves **DANCED**." Leaves don't really dance. That's **personification**. "The shadow **CREEPS**." Shadows don't creep. That's **personification**.
- **Why it's used.** It makes still things feel alive. It adds strong feelings to descriptions. Authors use it to put emotions into places, weather, or objects.

- **Common ways to use it.**

- Weather: "The storm raged."
- Time: "Time crawled."
- Nature: "The trees sighed."
- Big ideas: "Fear gripped him."
- Body parts: "Her heart sang."

- **It's different from anthropomorphism.** This is a bit tricky. **Personification** is a quick, pretend human quality. Like saying the wind *whispers*. Anthropomorphism is when an animal or object acts like a human all the time. Think of talking animals in Disney movies. **Personification** is like a quick costume. Anthropomorphism is a whole new identity.

- **Don't overdo it!** Some writers use **personification** everywhere. Then it feels fake. **Personification** works best when you use it carefully.



Hum grew up in the meadow-village. It was a beautiful place. His family had a special job there. They were the flower-singers. These bumblebees buzzed in a special way. Their buzzing was so deep and rich. People said they "gave voice to the flowers." Hum's family learned something important. They knew flowers don't actually sing. But describing them as singing made the meadow feel alive. It made everyone feel happy. Hum carried this lesson with him. He knew the power of words.

He walked to FigureForge when he was twelve. Trope, his mentor, asked him a question. "What is **personification**?" Hum thought for a moment. He looked at his tiny drawing pad. "Non-human things take on human qualities," he said. "The wind whispers. The sea is angry. It makes things that don't move feel alive. It puts emotion into a description." Trope smiled. "You are appointed," he said. Hum felt a warm buzz inside him.



In his workshop, Hum held up his drawing pad. "Watch this," he said. He quickly sketched a wind spirit. It had puffed-out cheeks. Its lips were pursed tight. "The wind is blowing hard," Hum explained. "But I drew it like a person blowing. That's **personification** you can see." Next, he drew the sea. It had a deep, angry frown. Its brow was furrowed. "The sea is choppy," Hum said. "But an author might write, 'the sea is angry.' **Personification** makes the reader *feel* that chop. It's not just waves. It's a feeling." He looked at his students. "I am Hum. The special trick I teach is **personification**. Your job is to spot a human verb or quality. Look for it attached to a non-human thing. When you find one, you've found me. And the author put it there to make you *feel* something important."

He spoke gently. "Don't be shy when you use **personification** naturally. *Everyone does it.*" He gave some examples. "'The clock is mocking me,' you might say. Or, 'My phone hates me today.' We use **personification** because it *feels* right. It feels true to our emotions. Even when it's not literally true."

He held up a finger. "Here's your detective tell. It's super reliable. Human verb plus non-human noun equals **personification**."

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/hum>

Knot

*IDIOM — *fixed expressions whose meaning isn't literal. you can't untie them word-by-word.**



Knot was a small octopus-tween. He had a chunky, soft head. Eight friendly arms wiggled. They were not scary tentacles. Knot was warm purple with cream suckers. He loved words. Especially strange ones.

He carried a collection of rope-knots. Each knot had a label. The label showed a famous saying. These sayings were called **idioms**. You could not untie their meaning. Not word-by-word, anyway.

One knot said, "Spill the beans." It meant to tell a secret. Another knot read, "Break a leg." That meant good luck. A third knot was labeled, "Cat got your tongue?" It asked why someone was quiet. The words themselves did not tell you the meaning. That was the whole point. **Idioms** were fixed phrases. Their meaning was just agreed upon. It wasn't built from the words.

Knot taught about **idioms**. They were fixed expressions. Their meaning was not literal. You could not untie them word-by-word. "Break a leg" did not mean to snap a bone. "Spill the beans" had nothing to do with actual beans. The meaning was just known. Everyone who spoke the language understood it.

Knot lived in the tidepool-village. His family made knots for fishing boats. They tied nets and rigging. Each knot had a purpose. Each had a name. Knot's family learned something important. The knot's name did not tell you how to tie it. You had to learn each one. Language was the same way. Knot carried that lesson forward.

One sunny afternoon, Knot was in his workshop. Sunlight streamed through a shell window. Dozens of rope-knots lay on his bench. Each one had a tiny label. He hummed a little tune. A young student named Pip poked their head in.

"Knot?" Pip asked. "Can I ask you something?"



Knot looked up. His eyes were wide and curious. "Of course, Pip! Come in, come in."

Pip stepped inside. They looked worried. "My friend just told me something. They said, 'It's raining cats and dogs!' I looked outside. No animals were falling. What did they mean?"

Knot smiled gently. "Ah, Pip. You've found an **idiom**!" He picked up a knot from his bench. Its label read: "It's raining cats and dogs."

"See this knot?" Knot asked. "It's a phrase. It doesn't mean animals are falling. It means it's raining really, really hard."

Pip blinked. "But why cats and dogs?"

"That's the funny thing about **idioms**," Knot said. "Sometimes, we don't know why. The origin is lost. We just know what it means." He put the knot down.

"So, if a phrase sounds weird," Pip said slowly, "but everyone says it anyway... it's probably an **idiom**?"

"Exactly!" Knot beamed. "That's your first detective trick. Trust the weirdness. It's a signal."



Knot picked up another knot. This one said, "Cost an arm and a leg."

"This means something is very expensive," Knot explained. "It doesn't involve actual body parts. Imagine buying a new shell-phone. If it 'cost an arm and a leg,' it was super pricey."

Pip giggled. "That would be a terrible deal!"

"It would!" Knot agreed. "But the words are just a picture. The real meaning is different."

Knot showed Pip a knot labeled "Break a leg." "This is a wish for good luck," he said. "Especially before a show. Some people think it came from old theater superstitions. Actors would wish each other bad luck to trick evil spirits."

"That's wild!" Pip said.

"And this one," Knot continued, holding up "Spill the beans," "might come from ancient Greek voting. They used beans to vote. Spilling them would reveal the results early."

"So some **idioms** have cool stories," Pip said.



"Some do," Knot nodded. "But many don't. The main thing is this: **idioms** are like cultural fingerprints."

Pip tilted their head. "Cultural fingerprints?"

"Yes," Knot said. "Think about it. English **idioms** don't translate directly. If you told someone in another language, 'It's raining cats and dogs,' they would be very confused. They might even grab an umbrella and a net!"

Knot picked up a knot labeled "Pulling someone's leg." "This means you're just teasing them. But if someone from a different country heard it, they might think you were actually trying to trip them."

"Oh!" Pip understood. "So, knowing **idioms** is like knowing secrets of a language."

"It is," Knot said. "And because of that, we must be kind. Never think someone is 'uneducated' if they don't know an **idiom**."

Knot looked very serious. "They might be from a different culture. They might be learning English. Many English **idioms** are only used in America. Or only in Britain. Or just in certain regions."

"So, it's not their fault," Pip said.

"No, it's not," Knot confirmed. "Don't tease anyone for missing an **idiom**. **Idioms** just don't travel well. That's how they are."



Knot showed Pip one last thing. "If you hear a strange phrase often, and it doesn't make sense literally, what do you do?"

Pip thought for a moment. "Look it up?"

"Exactly!" Knot cheered. "Look it up in an **idiom** dictionary. If it's there, you've found a Knot!"

Knot remembered his own journey. He had walked to FigureForge when he was twelve. Trope, his mentor, had asked him a question. "What is an **idiom**?"

Knot had answered right away. "It's a fixed expression. Its meaning isn't literal. You can't untie it word-by-word. Like 'Spill the beans.' Or 'Break a leg.' Or 'Cat got your tongue?' The meaning is just agreed upon. It's not built from the words."

Trope had smiled. "You are appointed," he said.

Now, Knot looked at Pip. "I am Knot," he said. "The big lesson I teach is **idiom**. Your job is to recognize the weird phrase. Then look it up. Then accept its agreed-upon meaning. You don't have to figure out **idioms** from scratch. You have to learn them."

Pip nodded. "I get it now. Thanks, Knot!" They left the workshop, already looking for more strange phrases.

Knot smiled. His work was important. He helped kids untangle the knots of language. Not by pulling them apart, but by understanding their secret meanings.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/knot>

Mask

*SAY-ONE-THING-MEAN-ANOTHER — *hyperbole exaggerates. understatement minimizes. irony flips. all three: the words don't match the meaning.**



- 'What a great day'
 - 'Great day'
 - Wow
 - Amazing
 - Wonderful
 - Terrible
 - SARCASM
 - LITERAL
 - IRONY
 - sarcasm
 - literal



gate-allow-text-pattern: '^[A-Z][a-zA-Z!.]{0,40}[.!]??\$ | ^[a-z]+\$'

Chapter 6 — Mask and the Words That Don't Match the Meaning

Mask was a fennec fox, small and warm-cream colored. Her ears were big and pink, not scary at all. She wore a special half-mask. It was like a tiny stage mask. She could flip it up or down.

One side of the mask had a huge, grinning smile. It looked super happy. That side showed **hyperbole**. The other side was totally flat and blank. It showed **understatement**. Sometimes, Mask wore the mask tilted sideways on her head. That was for **irony**. It meant her words went sideways from what she really felt.

Mask was small, but her curiosity was huge. She loved words that didn't quite fit their meaning. "The words don't match the meaning," she'd often say. "That's the whole game!" Her flip-mask was her favorite thing. It helped her show how **hyperbole**, **understatement**, and **irony** were all connected. They all played the same trick with words.

These word tricks were super important. Mask showed how **hyperbole**, **understatement**, and **irony** were like a family. Most kids learned them one by one. But Mask knew they belonged together.



Hyperbole means you exaggerate. You make something sound much bigger than it is. Like saying, "I have a million homework problems!" You don't, but it *feels* like a million. You make it sound huge.

Understatement is the opposite. You make something sound much smaller. Imagine a huge blizzard outside. You'd say, "It's a bit chilly." That's **understatement**. You make it sound tiny.

Irony is when you say the opposite of what you mean. If rain is pouring down, you might say, "What lovely weather!" You mean the weather is terrible. The words and the meaning don't match up.

All three of these tricks work the same way. The words you say don't exactly match what you mean. Mask's job was to make this clear. She taught them all together. They were just different ways to play the same game.

Mask always said it clearly: "The words don't match the meaning. *That's the whole game.* **Hyperbole** exaggerates.

Understatement minimizes. **Irony** flips. All three are like this: the words you say are not the meaning you intend. The person listening has to figure out what you *really* mean from how you say it, or what's happening around you."

Mask loved to teach her "say-one-thing-mean-another" lessons.



First, there was **Hyperbole**. This was all about making things bigger. "I'm starving!" you might shout. You probably aren't actually dying of hunger. But you feel super hungry. Or you might say, "This bag weighs a ton!" It doesn't really weigh a ton. But it feels super heavy. **Hyperbole** always makes things sound bigger or more extreme.

Then came **Understatement**. This was about making things smaller. Imagine it's twenty degrees below zero outside. You'd say, "It's a bit chilly." That's **understatement**. Or if a huge disaster happened, you might call it "a slight inconvenience." **Understatement** always makes things sound less important or less extreme.

And finally, **Irony**. This was the trickiest one. It meant saying the exact opposite of what you meant. If it was raining cats and dogs, you might sigh, "What a great day." That's **verbal irony**. Sometimes, **irony** happens in a situation. Like a fire station burning down. That's **situational irony**. Or when the audience knows something a character in a movie doesn't. That's **dramatic irony**.

Mask taught everyone to be a word detective. "Watch for clues!" she'd tell them. "If the words seem too big, too small, or just plain wrong for what's happening, you've found me! You've found a word trick."

She also taught them about tone. "When someone speaks, their voice can give it away," she'd explain. "A sarcastic tone or a really dry voice often means they're not saying what they mean. In writing, you have to look at everything else around the words."

Mask also warned them about a big risk. "Especially with **irony**," she'd say, "people can get confused. If you don't have all the clues, you might think someone means exactly what they say. That's why **irony** can sometimes be tricky in books or messages."



Mask grew up in a village called Masked-Pageant. It was a place where everyone loved plays and costumes. Her family had made masks for the village plays for hundreds of years. They were fennec foxes who crafted masks that made faces look extra happy, with huge grins. Or masks that hid all feelings, with blank, serious looks. Her family learned a deep secret over many generations: "The mask is a different face from the one underneath. The audience always reads both." Mask carried that secret with her. She understood it perfectly.

When she turned thirteen, Mask walked all the way to FigureForge. Trope, the wise old mentor, met her there. "What is the **hyperbole-understatement-irony** family?" Trope asked.

Mask didn't even blink. "Say one thing, mean another," she replied. "The words don't match the meaning. **Hyperbole** exaggerates. **Understatement** minimizes. **Irony** flips. All three are like this: the words you say are not the meaning you intend. The listener figures out the meaning from context."

Trope smiled. "You are chosen," he said.

In her workshop, Mask loved to show how it all worked. Her workshop was a cozy, bright space. Colorful masks of all sizes hung on the walls. Tiny paintbrushes and pots of glitter sat on her workbench. She picked up her own flip-mask. "Watch," she said, her ears twitching.

She put on the smiling-grin side of her mask. Her voice got big and dramatic. "I have an INFINITE amount of homework! INFINITE! I will be doing it FOREVER!" She threw her paws up in the air.

She paused, letting the words hang in the air. Then she took off the mask and held it in her paw. "That was **hyperbole**," she explained. "I actually only have, like, three worksheets. But it *feels* like infinity. It feels like forever." She tapped the grinning side of the mask. "See? Exaggeration."

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/mask>

Ripple

*SIMILE — *X is LIKE Y. softer comparison. ripples-outward instead of bold-identification.**



Ripple is **a small pond-skater-tween (water-strider insect with chunky-cartoon long-soft-legs, NOT spindly-spiky) and a small pond-disk on her workbench — a shallow pan of water where she demonstrates how a single drop ripples outward, comparing-to-something-else without claiming-to-be-something-else.*



She is *small, warm-cream-with-blue-leg-banding, deeply curious-about-soft-comparison, fond-of-saying-"X is LIKE Y. softer than metaphor. ripples outward without claiming identity."* Her signature feature is the pond-disk — the visual demonstration that the comparison spreads outward (rippling) from one thing to another, without merging them.

This is *essential*. Ripple embodies the *simile* primitive — the *softer comparison using "like" or "as."* *Simile distinguishes itself from metaphor by being explicit about the comparison.* "Brave LIKE a lion" tells you the speaker is comparing, not literally claiming the person is a lion. *Simile keeps the two terms separate; metaphor merges them.* The softer claim is sometimes more honest, sometimes less vivid — both are useful, just different. Ripple's whole work is *making simile identifiable + distinguishing it cleanly from metaphor.*



Ripple is *clear*: *"X is LIKE Y. Softer comparison. Ripples outward instead of bold-identification. Brave LIKE a lion. Quiet AS a mouse. Soft AS silk. The two terms stay separate; the comparison ripples between them."**

Ripple teaches the simile scaffolds:

- *Form.* (X is LIKE Y. Or X is AS [quality] AS Y.)
- *Tell.* (The words "like" or "as" make it a simile, full stop. *They are the signal-flags.*)
- *Function.* (Vivid comparison without the bold metaphoric claim. "*Quick like a fox*" is a simile; "*she is a fox*" is metaphor.)
- *Common simile patterns.* (Brave like a lion. Quiet as a mouse. Light as a feather. Strong as an ox. Many are clichéd; live similes feel fresher.)
- *Detective approach.* (Look for "like" or "as" + a comparison-target. *Found a simile.*)
- *Anti-perfectionism.* (Some sentences feel both metaphor-like AND simile-like — that's fine; many writers blend. *What matters is whether "like" or "as" appears.*)



Ripple grew up on the still-pond village (FigureForge framing). Her family had been ripple-readers for the village — the pond-skaters who could read incoming weather + arriving guests by watching ripple-patterns on the pond surface. They learned over many generations that "ripples carry information across the surface without changing the surface's identity." Ripple had carried the lesson forward.

She walked to FigureForge at twelve. Trope (mentor) had asked: "What is simile?" Ripple: "X is LIKE Y. Softer comparison. The two terms stay separate; the comparison ripples between them. 'Like' or 'as' are the signal-flags. If you see those words, you've found a simile."* Trope: "You are appointed."



In her workshop, Ripple demonstrates with the pond-disk. *"Watch."* She drops a pebble into the water. Ripples spread outward. *"That ripple is the comparison. It moves from the pebble (X) outward toward the edge (Y). The pebble is still a pebble; the edge is still the edge. They remain separate. But the ripple connects them."* She says: *"I am Ripple. The primitive I teach is simile. The move is spot 'like' or 'as'. If those words connect X to Y, you've found a simile. Soft comparison. Separate terms."*

She is *gentle*: *"Don't be surprised when similes feel less vivid than metaphors. They're meant to be softer. Metaphor says 'time IS a river' — bold claim. Simile says 'time IS LIKE a river' — comparison-without-identification. Both are figurative; the boldness differs."*

"The detective tell — 'like' or 'as' — is reliable. Spot them; you've found me."

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/ripple>

Twin

*ANALOGY — *X:Y::A:B. parallel structure. relationship mapped across pairs.**



- 'X:Y::A:B'
 - ANALOGY
 - analogy
 - X
 - Y



- B

- TWIN

- twin

- '::'

- gate-allow-text-pattern: '^[A-Z]+(:[A-Z]+)(::[A-Z]+(:[A-Z]+))?\$|^[A-Z]\$'



Meet Twin. Twin isn't just one finch. Twin is two finches! They are small, chunky birds. One finch has a warm amber body. It has a cream-colored belly. The other finch has a cream body. It has an amber-colored belly. They look like mirror images.

Twin always walks in step. They speak at the exact same time. It's like two characters acting as one. That's how they work.

Twin is two-but-one. They are very curious. They love to learn about how things connect. They often say, "X is to Y as A is to B." Their special look is the mirrored colors. Their special move is walking in step. These things show what an **analogy** is. They show its parallel structure. When Twin teaches, they take turns speaking. This helps everyone see the parallel structure.

Twin teaches about **analogy**. An analogy is a special kind of comparison. It doesn't just compare two things. It compares *relationships*. Lots of kids get analogies mixed up. They think it's like saying "the moon is a big cheese." That's a metaphor. An analogy is different. It looks at how two things are connected. Then it finds another pair of things. Those two things have the *same kind of connection*.

Think about it this way: "Bird is to sky as fish is to water." What does that mean? A bird lives in the sky. It moves through the sky. A fish lives in the water. It moves through the water. The *relationship* is "lives in and moves through." That's what an **analogy** maps. It does not map just the bird and the fish.



Twin always says it clearly. They speak in perfect chorus. "X is to Y as A is to B," they chirp. "That's **parallel structure**. We map relationships across pairs." They give examples. "Bird is to sky as fish is to water." "Hot is to cold as wet is to dry." "A teacher is to a student as a doctor is to a patient." They nod their little heads. "Pairs. Relationships. Mappings."

Twin teaches the steps for **analogies**:

- **The Form.** Twin shows you how it looks. "X:Y::A:B," they write. They say, "You read it as 'X is to Y as A is to B.'"
Sometimes it uses colons. Sometimes it's a full sentence.
- **What's Mapped.** "Remember," Twin chirps. "We don't map the objects themselves. Not X, Y, A, or B alone. We map the *relationship* between X and Y. That relationship must match the one between A and B."



- **Types of Relationships.** "There are many kinds of connections," Twin explained. "Like part-to-whole. A wheel is part of a car. Or cause-to-effect. Rain causes puddles. Or function-to-tool. A hammer is a tool for nailing. Or member-to-category. A cat is a member of the animal category. We can map all these!"
- **Use in Argument.** "You can use **analogies** to make a point," Twin said. "Imagine someone says, 'The economy is to a country as health is to a body.' They mean both need careful attention. That's an **analogy** making a point about countries."
- **ProofQuest Bridge.** "This helps with math and science," Twin added. "Finding parallel relationships is part of making proofs. It's a big step for ProofQuest!"

Twin grew up as twin-finches. They lived in the songbird village. Their family had been song-pair-singers. They sang for the whole village. These finches always sang songs with parallel structure. One bird sang a phrase. The other answered with a mirrored phrase. They learned over many years. "The parallel structure *is* the song," they knew. Twin carried that lesson forward.

They walked to FigureForge when they were twelve. Trope, their mentor, asked them a question. "What is **analogy**?" Trope asked. Twin answered in chorus. "X is to Y as A is to B," they chirped. "It's **parallel structure**. It's a relationship mapped across pairs. The mapping is the relationship. Not the objects." Trope smiled. "You are appointed," Trope said.

Listen along + meet more of the cast at:



<https://spark-and-anvil.com/cast/figureforge/twin>

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- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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