Literal or word picture? Answers

What your child practised: telling literal language (it means exactly what it says) from figurative language (a word picture that isn't really true), and explaining what a word picture really means.

Page 1 · Warm up

L cat on the mat · **F** bedroom is a pigsty · **F** hands were ice · **L** two slices of toast

Page 2 · Try it together

Drawings will vary. **Time flew by**: the party seemed to go really quickly. **Grandad's hands were sandpaper**: his skin felt rough and dry.

Page 2 · A. Ring the word pictures

Ring **1, 3 and 5**. 2, 4 and 6 are literal: they could really happen.

Page 3 · D. Make a word picture

Answers will vary, e.g. **The night was a thick black cloak. The dog was a firework, fizzing round the room.** It mustn't be literally true, but must still mean "very dark" or "very excited".

Page 3 · B. Match

Classroom was a zoo → **noisy and wild**
Ran like the wind → **ran very fast**
Lake was a mirror → **very still and flat**
A bouncing ball → **full of energy**

Page 3 · C. What it really means

1. Mum was **nearly out of patience**: like a thin thread, it could snap any moment.
2. The cheeks were **very soft and smooth**.

Page 3 · Challenge

No. The sun really was shining, but it can't **smile**: only people can. "Smiled" is a word picture (personification, Chapter 4) meaning the sun shone warmly and the day felt happy. One sentence can have a literal part and a figurative part.

Watch out for

- **Taking word pictures literally** ("Dad was a bear" means he grew fur). Ask, "Could that really happen? So what is the writer telling us?"
- **Calling plain sentences word pictures**, like "the cat slept on the mat". Ask, "Is anything here not really true?" If it could all happen, it's literal.
- **Explaining with the same words** ("the classroom was a zoo means it was a zoo"). Encourage "It means…" in everyday words.

Going further (5 minutes, no paper)

- **Spot them:** listen for word pictures in songs or chat ("I'm starving", "it's boiling") and say what they really mean.
- **Act it out:** take turns saying a word picture while the other acts it out as if it were literally true.
- **In the game:** Chapter 2, Similes: comparing two things with like or as.