Name _____ Date _____

Literal or word picture?

Some words mean exactly what they say. Others paint a picture in your mind.

1 Learn



Literal language means exactly what it says. **Figurative** language paints a **word picture**: it isn't really true, but it helps you see and feel something.

"Dad was a bear this morning."



What the words say (literal)

Dad turned into a real bear. No!

→



What it really means (figurative)

Dad was grumpy and growly, like a bear.

Worked example: "The snow was a white blanket over the town."

1. **Could it really happen?** Is the snow truly a blanket? No. So it's **figurative**: a word picture.
2. **What two things are joined?** The **snow** and a **blanket**.
3. **What does it really mean?** The snow covered the whole town, thick and smooth, the way a blanket covers a bed.

Flip's tip: ask, "Could this **really, truly** happen?" If yes, it's probably **literal**. If no, it's a **word picture**, so ask what it **really means**.

Warm up: write **L** for literal or **F** for figurative.

- ☐ The cat slept on the mat.
- ☐ My bedroom is a pigsty.
- ☐ Mia's hands were ice.
- ☐ Leo ate two slices of toast.

Grown-ups: enjoy the silly literal picture, then ask, "So what does it really mean?" The skill is noticing the words aren't really true and explaining the meaning in plain words.

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2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Silly picture, real meaning

You need: this sheet and a pencil each.

1. The grown-up reads out a word picture from the table.
2. The child draws the **silly literal picture**, as if the words really happened. Quick sketches are fine!
3. Together, say what it **really means**, and write it in the last box.
4. For row 3, swap jobs: the child makes up a word picture for the grown-up to draw.

Word picture	Silly literal drawing	What it really means
"Time flew by at the party."		
"Grandad's hands were sandpaper."		
_____		

Grown-ups: keep it light and silly. The funnier the literal drawing, the clearer it becomes that the words can't be true. When you explain the real meaning, use "it means…" ("Time flew by means the party seemed to go really quickly").

3 Practise

A. Draw a ring round each sentence that is **figurative** (a word picture).

1. The wind was a wolf, howling at the door.
2. Sam put his coat on the hook.
3. The stars were diamonds in the sky.
4. It rained all afternoon in the park.
5. Ava's brain was on fire in the maths test.
6. The bus was ten minutes late.

Literal or word picture?

Scan to play this chapter in the game

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B. Draw a line from each word picture to what it **really means**.

The classroom was a zoo.	He ran very fast.
Leo ran like the wind.	The water was very still and flat.
The lake was a mirror.	She was full of energy and kept moving.
Mia was a bouncing ball.	It was noisy and wild.

C. Explain what each word picture **really means**.

1. "Mum's patience was a thin thread."

2. "The baby's cheeks were as soft as peaches."

D. Turn each **literal** sentence into a **word picture**.

1. The night was very dark.

2. The dog was very excited.

Challenge

Sam says, "'The sun smiled down on the beach' is literal, because the sun really was shining." Is he right? Explain.

I can... Tick when you can.

- [ ] tell when words mean exactly what they say
- [ ] spot a word picture that isn't really true
- [ ] explain what a word picture really means