SMART™ Lesson

Understanding Literature: Interpreting Figurative Language

In literature, authors use **figurative language** to create a more vivid and meaningful image in the mind of the reader. Figurative language involves the use of words in a way that goes beyond their literal meaning, and instead provides deeper meaning and context for the reader.

Types of Figurative Language

There are many different types of figurative language. Here are a few of the most common:

- **Simile:** A comparison between two unlike things using the words "like" or "as". Example: "Her smile is like sunshine."
- **Metaphor:** A comparison between two unlike things without using the words "like" or "as". Example: "Life is a journey."
- **Personification:** Giving human qualities to non-human things. Example: "The sun smiled down on us."
- **Hyperbole:** Exaggerating for effect. Example: "I've told you a million times."
- **Onomatopoeia:** Words that sound like what they describe. Example: "Buzz, buzz went the bee."

Interpreting Figurative Language

Interpreting figurative language can be tricky, but it can also make the reading experience more enjoyable and rewarding. Here are some tips for interpreting figurative language:

1. **Read the context:** Look at the surrounding text to get a sense of the author's intended meaning.
2. **Consider the literary device:** Think about what type of figurative language the author is using, and what effect it has on the overall meaning.
3. **Use your imagination:** Let the author's words paint a picture in your mind, and try to visualize what is being described.

Worksheet

Answer the following questions to test your understanding of figurative language:

1. What is figurative language, and why do authors use it?

2. What are some common types of figurative language, and how are they used?
3. What are some tips for interpreting figurative language?
4. Identify the type of figurative language used in the following sentence: "The stars danced in the sky."
5. Identify the type of figurative language used in the following sentence: "His voice was a knife in the darkness."
6. Interpret the figurative language used in the following sentence: "Her eyes were like the ocean."
7. Interpret the figurative language used in the following sentence: "He had a heart of gold."