

SMART™ Lesson

Determining the Meaning of Words and Phrases in Early Literature

In early literature, authors often used words and phrases that are no longer commonly used or have different meanings today. It is important to understand the context of the word or phrase in order to determine its meaning. Here are a few tips that can help:

- Look for context clues: Is the word used in a sentence that gives you an idea of what it means?
- Check the original meaning: Look up the word in a dictionary to see what it meant during the time period the literature was written.
- Check for literary devices: Sometimes authors use literary devices, like metaphors and similes, to convey meaning. Understanding these devices can help you understand the meaning of a word or phrase.

Let's try putting these tips into practice! Read the following excerpt from a piece of early literature and answer the questions below:

The sun was setting over the horizon, casting a golden glow over the hills. The trees stood like stoic guards, watching as the peaceful valley below was bathed in the warm light.

1. In this excerpt, what does the word "stoic" mean?
2. What literary device is being used to describe the sun?
3. What time of day is it?

Answers:

1. The word "stoic" means unemotional or calm.
2. A metaphor is being used to describe the sun, as it is compared to a glowing orb.
3. The sun is setting, so it is evening or sunset.