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Ten examples of conceptual metaphor.

- From “Whose Line is it Anyway?”: “You’re going to sing snippets of the songs.”

You can’t really snip a song, so there can’t be a snippet of a song. “You’re going to read snippets of paper” is a literal utterance of the same form.

- From “South park”: “Go to your homes and arm yourselves with whatever you can.”

This concerns the form “arm” meaning to prepare the use of a weapon. Its etymology probably has to do with putting the weapon on your arm. It may not be a metaphor, because the word “arm” as a verb has no other meaning in common use.

- From “Family Guy”: “We miss you.”

This is a derivative of “we missed you”, which is itself a metaphor. It compares sight or meeting to throwing something or firing a weapon. “We threw the rock, and we missed you” is an example of a literal use.

- From “Slashdot”: “After the notorious JPEG patent which has made many big and small names pay huge amounts...”

Neither names nor amounts can be literally huge, big, or small. “...which has made many big and small people give huge gifts” is an example of a literal use (it probably would not be interpreted literally, but it can be).

- From “Slashdot”: “Oracle plans to cut 2,000 jobs across the Siebel and Oracle work forces...”

This treats a job as, for example, hanging by a string. To cut the job means to cut the string on which it hangs. “Oracle plans to cut 2,000 papers into small pieces” is a literal use.

- From “Slashdot”: “As a thank-you, we are giving MacBook Pro computers to twelve of our top contributors.”

Here, “top” is using the common “up is good, down is bad” metaphor.

- From “Slashdot”: “...warning that a bad 2006 could force the former high-flyer into bankruptcy.”

This is another example of “up is good, down is bad”. The high-flyer is a company that is doing well. A literal use: “...warning that a bad storm could force the former high-flyer onto the ground” (speaking about a pilot).

- From “Slashdot”: “Turns out popularity bred popularity...”

Popularity cannot literally breed. “Turns out the farmer bred a seedless grape” is a literal use.

- From the Pugs development blog pugs.blogs.com: “Lexical imports and rich module interface information in `%*INC`”

“Rich information” does not literally have a lot of money. “Rich” is being used as “much.” “Rich businessman” is an example of literal use.

- From Dan Sugalski’s blog www.sidhe.org/~dan/blog: “...since thinking about APL tends to make me think of Unicode, and when I do that I need a good lie-down until it passes”

This is talking about an implicit illness or woosiness “passing”, from the same metaphor used in “there is a cold going around”. A literal use: “I need a good lie-down until the supersonic jet passes.”