

# Simile

## Definition of Simile

A simile is a [figure of speech](#) that makes a [comparison](#), showing similarities between two different things. Unlike a [metaphor](#), a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words “like” or “as.” Therefore, it is a direct comparison.

We can find simile examples in our daily speech. We often hear comments like, “John is as slow as a snail.” Snails are notorious for their slow pace, and here the slowness of John is compared to that of a snail. The use of “as” in the example helps to draw the resemblance. Some more examples of common similes are given below.

## Common Examples of Simile

Our soldiers are as brave as lions.  
Her cheeks are red like a rose.  
He is as funny as a monkey.  
The water well was as dry as a bone.  
He is as cunning as a fox.

Simile introduces vividness into what we say. Authors and poets utilize simile to convey their sentiments and thoughts through vivid word pictures.

## Short Examples of Simile in Sentences

The glow of the tube-light was as bright as sunshine.  
In winter, when it rained he climbed into bed, and felt as snug as a bug in a rug.  
At exam time, the high school student was as busy as a bee.  
The beggar on the road looked as blind as a bat.  
When the examination finished, the candidate felt as light as a feather.

When the teacher entered the class, the 6th-grade students were fighting like cats and dogs.

The diplomat said the friendship of the two countries was as deep as an ocean.

The desert traveler's hopes were dashed, as when at last he reached a well, it was as dry as a bone.

His opponent was trying to infuriate him, but he remained as cool as cucumber.

The laborer remained busy at work all day long, and slept like a log that night.

The [audience](#) listened to his spellbinding speech as quietly as mice.

The young athlete looked as strong as an ox.

The student moved as fast as lightning after getting permission from the teacher for an early release.

The history paper was as tricky as a labyrinth.

The boys in the playing field were feeling as happy as dogs with two tails.

## Examples of Simile in Literature

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### Example #1: *Lord Jim* (By Joseph Conrad)

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“I would have given anything for the power to soothe her frail soul, tormenting itself in its invincible ignorance like a small bird beating about the cruel wires of a cage.”

In these lines from *Lord Jim*, the helplessness of the soul is being compared with a bird in a cage, beating itself against the merciless wires to be free.

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### Example #2: *To the Lighthouse* (By Virginia Woolf)

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“... impressions poured in upon her of those two men, and to follow her thought was like following a [voice](#) which speaks too quickly to be taken down by one's pencil...”

Here, Ms. Woolf makes the point that her thoughts are difficult to follow, and cannot be written quickly enough.

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**Example #3: *Lolita* (By Vladimir Nabokov)**

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“Elderly American ladies leaning on their canes listed toward me  
like towers of Pisa.”

This simile produces a humorous effect by comparing old women leaning on walking sticks with the ancient leaning tower of Pisa.

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**Example #4: *A Red, Red Rose* (By Robert Burns)**

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“O my Luve’s like a red, red rose  
That’s newly sprung in June;  
O my Luve’s like the melodie  
That’s sweetly played in tune.”

Here, Robert Burns uses a simile to describe the beauty of his beloved. He says that his love is a fresh red rose that blossoms in the spring.

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**Example #5: *the Daffodils* (By William Wordsworth)**

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“I wandered lonely as a cloud  
that floats on high o’er vales and hills.”

The poet envisions himself as a free cloud that floats alone in a blue sky above valleys and the mountains. By choosing this simile, Wordsworth describes his loneliness.

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**Example #6: *Sonnet 18* (By William Shakespeare)**

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A significant thing to consider here is that, at times simile is drawn without using the words “as” or “like.” Consider the following example:

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

And summer's lease hath all too short a date.  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines"

In the very first line, Shakespeare poses a question if he should compare his beloved to a summer's day. But then he himself rejects this idea and says that his beloved is better than that. This This is an example of an extended simile. is an example of an extended simile.

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#### Example #7: *Will There Really Be a Morning?* (By Emily Dickinson)

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"Will there really be a morning?  
Is there such a thing as day?  
Could I see it from the mountains  
If I were as tall as they?  
Has it feet like water-lilies?  
Has it feathers like a bird?  
Is it brought from famous countries."

In this poem, the [speaker](#) is feeling dejected, wondering if there could be hope and morning again. The poet has used trochees, giving a strong [rhythm](#) to the poem. Notice in this first [stanza](#), the accented syllables are emphasized. See that word "I" is unaccented or unstressed with a different feet.

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#### Example #8: *To Be Taken with a Grain of Salt* (By Charles Dickens)

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"... when I laid down the paper, I was aware of a flash — rush — flow — I do not know what to call it — no word I can find is satisfactorily descriptive — in which I seemed to see that bedroom passing through my room, **like a picture impossibly painted on a running river.**

Charles Dickens, in this excerpt, uses a simile in the last line, indicated in

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### Example #9: *Othello* (By William Shakespeare)

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“It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul, —  
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars!  
It is the cause. Yet I’ll not shed her blood;  
Nor scar that whiter skin of hers than snow,  
And **smooth as monumental alabaster.**”

The last line here exhibits a beautiful use of simile by Shakespeare, where Othello compares Desdemona’s smooth skin to alabaster.

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### Example #10: *Othello* (By William Shakespeare)

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Othello: **She was false as water.**

Emilia: **Thou are rash as fire,**

To say that she was false: O she was heavenly true.

Othello compares Desdemona’s infidelity to water, but Emilia calls him as rash as fire, and testifies to her fidelity. In both cases, these are very good similes to reflect the [character](#) of a person.

## Function of Rhythm

From the above discussion, we can infer the function of similes, both in everyday life, and in literature. Using similes attracts attention, and appeals directly to the senses of listeners or readers, encouraging their imaginations to understand what is being communicated. In addition, it rhythm life-like quality in our daily speech, and in the characters of [fiction](#) or poetry.

Simile allows readers to relate the feelings of a writer or a poet to their personal experiences. Therefore, the use of similes makes it easier for readers to understand the subject matter of a literary text, which may have been otherwise too demanding to be comprehended. Like metaphors, similes also offer variety in our ways of thinking and offer new perspectives

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