

Analogy

Analogy Definition

An analogy is a [comparison](#) in which an idea or a thing is compared to another thing that is quite different from it. It aims at explaining that idea or thing by comparing it to something that is familiar. Metaphors and similes are tools used to draw an analogy. Therefore, analogy is more extensive and elaborate than either a [simile](#) or a [metaphor](#). Consider the following example:

“The structure of an atom is like a solar system. The nucleus is the sun, and electrons are the planets revolving around their sun.”

Here, an atomic structure is compared to a solar system by using the word “like.” Therefore, it is a simile. Metaphor is used to relate the nucleus to the sun, and the electrons to the planets, without using the words “like” or “as.” Hence, similes and metaphors are employed to develop an analogy.

Examples of Analogy in Everyday Life

We commonly use analogy in our everyday conversation. Some common analogy examples are given below:

Life is like a race. The one who keeps running wins the race, and the one who stops to catch a breath loses.

Just as a sword is the weapon of a warrior, a pen is the weapon of a writer.

How a doctor diagnoses diseases is like how a detective investigates crimes.

Just as a caterpillar comes out of its cocoon, so we must come out of our comfort zone.

You are as annoying as nails on a chalkboard.

Examples of Analogy in Literature

Example #1: *Night Clouds* (By Amy Lowell)

“The white mares of the moon rush along the sky
Beating their golden hoofs upon the glass Heavens.”

Here, the poet constructs an analogy between clouds and mares. She compares the movement of the white clouds in the sky at night with that of the white mares on the ground.

Example #2: *A Hanging* (By George Orwell)

The lines below were taken from George Orwell’s [narrative essay](#) *A Hanging*, which exhibits an analogy between a prisoner and a fish.

“They crowded very close about him, with their hands always on him in a careful, caressing grip, as though all the while feeling him to make sure he was there. It was **like** men handling a fish which is still alive and may jump back into the water.”

The people are taking a prisoner to the gallows to be hanged. They are holding him firmly, as if he were a fish which might slip away and escape.

Example #3: *The Day Is Done* (By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow uses analogy in the following lines taken from his poem *The Day is Done*:

“Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start.”

He relates his poems to the summer showers and tears from the eyes. He develops the similarity to show spontaneity of art when it directly comes

Example #4: *Romeo and Juliet* (By William Shakespeare)

These lines are taken from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2:

“What’s in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other word would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called...”

Juliet is indirectly saying that, just like a rose that will always smell sweet by whichever name it is called, she will love Romeo even if he changes his name.

Example #5: *The Flea* (By John Donne)

John Donne, in his poem *The Flea*, uses analogy of a flea to describe his love with his beloved:

“This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is...”

In the quoted lines, he tells his darling that, as a flea has sucked blood from both of them, and their blood has mingled in its gut, so the flea has become their “wedding bed.”

Function of Analogy

Writers use analogy to link an unfamiliar or a new idea with common and familiar objects. This makes it easier for readers to comprehend a new idea, which may have been difficult for them to understand otherwise. In addition, by employing this literary tool, writers catch the attention of their readers. Analogies help increase readers' interest as analogies help them relate what they read to their life.