

NC Standards Connections Grades 6-8
Reading Comprehension Poetry

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LITERAL ME

Magical Metaphors

Stanza 1

A metaphor transforms a car.
Zap! It's a lightning flash.
I'd rather know how fast. How far.
Exact data on the dash.

Similar Similes

Stanza 2

Similes use like or as to describe that car.
Like a snail. As a jet. Exact speed? Who knows?
Numbers make it clearer just how fast how far.
Distance please. Mph. No more fancy prose.

Idiotic Idioms

Stanza 3

A poet writes:
Under my own steam if the time was ripe,
I'd be over the top—all fired up in a stew.
Wearing a brave face, not a single gripe.
I'd have good company—in knee deep with a few.

Literal Me reads:

Stanza 4

I'm cooking when my food is ripe.
Boiling over a veggie stew.
The hot steam's scary, but I don't gripe.
I'm cool in the pool with you.

Literal Me thinks:

Stanza 5

If poets used words in ways I know
Their poems would make sense to me.
I could imagine. Meaning would flow.
I might learn to like poetry.

By Bonnie J. Doerr

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1. What is the best description of the selection’s overall mood?

- A. suspenseful and mysterious
- B. confused and humorous
- C. angry and resentful
- D. ironic and frustrated

2. What is the poet’s main purpose for writing “Literal Me?”

- A. to entertain using humor
- B. to persuade readers to read poetry
- C. to compare and contrast figures of speech
- D. to inform and provide examples of figurative language

3. What best describes the speaker’s attitude toward poetry?

- A. enjoys reading poems
- B. confused about meaning of poems
- C. curious about poet’s techniques
- D. excited to learn about poetry

4. What is the relationship between these two lines in the poem:

stanza 3 Line 19 *I’d have good company—in knee deep with a few.*
stanza 4 Line 25 *I’m cool in the pool with you.*

- A. Line 19 contains two similes, Line 25 tells what the speaker thinks they mean.
- B. The lines are not related.
- C. The lines have the opposite meaning.
- D. The lines are both examples of similes.

5. Which experience is most similar to the speaker’s experience in the poem?

- A. watching a foreign film with subtitles
- B. jumping from a cliff into the sea without knowing how deep the water is
- C. attending a hockey game, knowing but not understanding the rules
- D. grocery shopping without a list

6. How does the form and structure of “Literal Me” contribute to its meaning?

- A. Each line uses concise language to exemplify how figures of speech clarify theme.
- B. Stanzas flow smoothly one to the other showing speaker’s ease with the subject.
- C. Each stanza begins a new topic as the speaker struggles with different ideas.
- D. Stanzas compare a poet’s words with the speaker’s interpretation to show confusion.

Answer Key: 1.B 2.D 3.B 4.A 5.C 6.C and D