

Of course. Here is a student-centered, inquiry-based 5E lesson plan on figurative language designed to maximize true engagement.

Figurative Language: Painting with Words

Grade Level: 9th Grade

Subject: English Language Arts

Time Available: 40 minutes

Technology Access: Teacher projector, 1:1 student devices (e.g., Chromebooks) with internet access.

Standards:

- (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5) Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D) Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Learning Outcome:

- Students will be able to write a paragraph that contains at least three distinct elements of figurative language to create a vivid and purposeful effect.
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1. 5E Lesson Plan

Phase 1: Engage (5 minutes) — *Sparking Curiosity*

Activity: "The Lyric Detectives"

1. **The Hook:** The teacher projects the lyrics to a short, vivid, and popular song clip (e.g., Taylor Swift's "All Too Well," Kendrick Lamar's "Money Trees," or Olivia Rodrigo's "drivers license") that is rich with figurative language. The teacher plays the 30-45 second clip.
2. **Inquiry Prompt:** In small groups (3-4 students) using a collaborative tool like a Google

Doc or Jamboard, students have one task: Identify and list the 2-3 "weirdest" or most powerful lines. They should discuss and answer: *"Why didn't the artist just say it simply? What does this line make you see, feel, or think?"*

3. **Teacher's Role:** The teacher circulates, listens to discussions, and prompts with questions like, "What picture does that line paint in your head?" but provides no answers or definitions. The goal is to prime their brains for non-literal thinking and build curiosity. This aligns with the "Engage" phase of the 5E model, designed to hook students and get them interested.¹

Phase 2: Explore (10 minutes) — *Discovering the Patterns*

Activity: "Sort & Label Challenge"

1. **The Challenge:** Each student group is given access to a single, shared Google Slides or Jamboard. The slide is populated with 12-15 text boxes, each containing a different example of figurative language (a mix of similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole), with no labels.
2. **The Task:** The groups' mission is to work together to sort the examples into categories that make sense to them. They must drag and drop the text boxes into clusters based on patterns they identify.
3. **The Cognitive Lift:** Once sorted, they must create a "Rule" for each category. For example, for the simile pile, they might write, "Compares two different things using the words 'like' or 'as'." This is a classic "Sorting for Critical Thinking" strategy where students identify similarities and differences to construct their own understanding.² They are doing the heavy cognitive work of analysis and synthesis.
4. **Teacher's Role:** The teacher facilitates by moving between groups (physically or digitally) and asking clarifying questions: *"What do all the examples in this pile have in common? How is that different from this other pile? I see you grouped these two together, what was your reasoning?"*

Phase 3: Explain (7 minutes) — *Co-Constructing Meaning*

Activity: "Giving It a Name"

1. **Student-Led Explanation:** The teacher calls on groups to share one of their created categories and the "Rule" they wrote for it. For example, a student might say, "We put

these three together because they all give human qualities to things that aren't human."

2. **Formalizing the Concept:** The teacher validates their discovery and provides the formal term. "Excellent! You've discovered a literary device that writers use all the time. It's called **personification**."
3. **Co-Created Anchor Chart:** The teacher creates a digital or physical anchor chart, writing the formal term and then adding the students' *own words* for the "rule" or definition next to it. This process repeats for simile, metaphor, and hyperbole, ensuring the explanation is grounded in the students' own exploration and discovery. This process ensures students are explaining the concepts before the teacher provides direct instruction.³

Phase 4: Elaborate (10 minutes) — *Creative Application*

Activity: "From Mundane to Magical"

1. **The Creative Constraint:** In their same groups, students open a new collaborative document. The teacher provides a simple, "boring" sentence, such as:
 - *The student was tired.*
 - *The school hallway was crowded.*
 - *The silence was noticeable.*
2. **The Task:** The group's challenge is to rewrite this sentence as many times as possible in five minutes, using each of the new figurative language tools on the anchor chart. They should aim for creativity and impact.
 - *Example for "The student was tired":*
 - (Simile) The student was like a phone on 1% battery.
 - (Metaphor) The student was a drooping flower at the end of a long day.
 - (Personification) The final bell screamed, but the student's energy only whispered back.
 - (Hyperbole) The student was so tired she could have slept for a thousand years.
3. **Teacher's Role:** The teacher encourages experimentation and celebrates clever or powerful examples, reinforcing that this is a low-risk opportunity to play with language.⁴

Phase 5: Evaluate (8 minutes) — *Showing What You Know*

Activity: "Paragraph Paintbrush"

1. **Authentic Assessment Task:** Students will now work individually. The teacher provides a choice of three evocative prompts on the board:
 - Describe the atmosphere in the moments before a big game, concert, or performance begins.
 - Describe a room immediately after a huge argument has taken place.
 - Describe the feeling of relief after a difficult task is finally over.
 2. **Demonstration of Learning:** Each student chooses **one** prompt and writes a single, vivid paragraph (3-5 sentences). The paragraph **must** include at least three different types of figurative language they learned today. They can refer to the co-created anchor chart.
 3. **Submission:** Students submit their paragraph via a simple Google Form or a shared Google Doc. This task moves beyond simple identification and requires students to apply their knowledge creatively to achieve a specific effect.
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2. Authentic Assessment

The evaluation activity, "**Paragraph Paintbrush**," serves as the authentic assessment. It aligns perfectly with the learning outcome.

- **Student Voice and Choice:** Students choose the prompt that resonates most with them, increasing their connection and investment in the task. ⁵Offering choice is a key strategy for moving students from compliance to interest. ⁶
 - **Creation, Not Recall:** It assesses their ability to *use* figurative language as a tool for effect, rather than just defining terms. This is a DOK 3 (Strategic Thinking) task, as they must justify their choices to create a specific mood. ⁷
 - **Meaningful Application:** The task requires them to think like a writer, making conscious choices about language to impact a reader, which is the real-world application of this skill.
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3. Feedback-Centered Rubric

Assessment Task: Write a paragraph containing at least 3 elements of figurative language.

Category	Meets Expectations	Approaches	Below Expectations
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	(100%)	Expectations (85%)	(70%)
Creative & Effective Application (50%)	The paragraph skillfully weaves in at least three distinct types of figurative language. The language is original, clear, and serves as the primary driver of the paragraph's imagery and meaning.	The paragraph includes three types of figurative language, but they may feel slightly generic or one might be less clear than the others. The language supports the paragraph's meaning.	The paragraph includes two types of figurative language, or the examples used are confusing, unclear, or detract from the meaning.
Purposeful Effect (30%)	The chosen figurative language works together to create a consistent and powerful tone, mood, or central image. The author's intent is clear and effectively executed.	The figurative language creates an effect, but it may be inconsistent or less powerful. The author's intent is generally clear.	The use of figurative language does not create a clear mood or tone. The effect is confusing or absent.
Clarity & Conventions (20%)	The paragraph is well-structured and easy to read. It is free of distracting errors in grammar and mechanics.	The paragraph is mostly clear. Minor errors in grammar and mechanics are present but do not interfere with the overall meaning.	The paragraph is difficult to understand due to significant errors in sentence structure, grammar, or mechanics.

Note: A submission that does not attempt the task would be marked "Not Yet."

4. Engagement Strategies

This lesson is designed to move students from

compliant ("I will learn the definitions you give me") to **interested** or **absorbed** ("Look what I can create with these tools!").⁸⁸⁸⁸ Here's how:

- **Students do the cognitive heavy lifting:** In the **Explore** phase, students are not given definitions. They must analyze examples and construct the categories themselves. This is a challenging problem that puts them in the active role of sense-making.⁹ Cognitively challenging work has been shown to be more engaging.¹⁰
- **Students are creating, not consuming:** The **Elaborate** ("Mundane to Magical") and **Evaluate** ("Paragraph Paintbrush") phases require students to produce original content, not just answer pre-made questions. This shifts the focus from passive reception to active creation.
- **Students are making choices:** The final assessment offers a choice of prompts, giving students agency and ownership over how they demonstrate their learning.¹¹ This is critical for fostering intrinsic motivation.
- **Students are working on meaningful, challenging problems:** The "Sort & Label" task is a genuine puzzle without an obvious answer. The "Paragraph Paintbrush" asks them to solve a writer's problem:
how do I make a reader feel something? This is more meaningful than simply filling in a worksheet.¹²
- **Students are talking more than the teacher:** Over half the lesson time (Engage, Explore, Elaborate) is dedicated to small-group discussion and collaboration. The "Explain" phase is a facilitated discussion, not a lecture. This prioritizes student-to-student interaction.¹³
- **Tasks build curiosity and connection:** The lesson begins with popular music to establish immediate relevance and connection.¹⁴ The inquiry-based nature of the tasks builds curiosity, making students

want to know the formal terms because they've already done the work of discovering the concepts.