

Literary Analysis: Figurative Language and Theme

Figurative language is writing or speech not meant to be interpreted literally. It creates vivid impressions by connecting an abstract idea to a concrete thing. Figurative language is often used by writers to emphasize the theme of their works. The **theme** of a work, or its central message about life, can be stated directly or implied. When the theme is not stated directly, you have to read between the lines to discover it.

DIRECTIONS: Read each example of figurative language in the chart. Then, explain what ideas or concepts are being compared and how this comparison relates to the theme of the selection. Finally, answer the question that follows.

	Passage	Comparison	Theme
1	Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference —“The Road Not Taken”	The writer is comparing choosing two roads to travel on to choosing two paths in life.	The theme of the poem is that choosing a “safe” path in life is not always the most rewarding.
2	“I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn’t satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path.” —“New Directions”		
3	. . . if the future road looms ominous or unpromising, and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction. —“New Directions”		
4	I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience . . . —“To be of use”		

5. What similar ideas about life do these three works share?