ACTIVITY 3: What Did You Say?

Sometimes when we humans communicate, we use figurative language to get our point across. That means using words more imaginatively than usual.

For example, I could say, “I’m bored” and people could understand that literal language. But if I really wanted to get my point across, I might say, “I’m as bored as a sailor in the desert.” You aren’t really a sailor in the desert, but you are using **simile** (using “like” or “as”) to get your point across.

You could also use **metaphor**, where you drop the “like” or “as” and say, “I’m a sailor in the desert.” Using metaphors, one thing becomes a symbol for something else.

**Thar’s nothin’ for me to do here, matey!**
Look at each of the following examples of literal language. Then write a simile and metaphor for each.

**He can run fast.**

Simile: He can run like a racehorse.

Metaphor: He’s a jackrabbit.

**It’s hot outside.**

Simile: _________________________________

Metaphor: _______________________________

**Hot dogs taste good.**

Simile: _________________________________

Metaphor: _______________________________

**We have a lot of ants out here!**

Simile: _________________________________

Metaphor: _______________________________

**The sunset is beautiful.**

Simile: _________________________________

Metaphor: _______________________________

Another use of figurative language is **hyperbole**. That’s when you exaggerate. So instead of saying, “I’m bored,” you would say, “I’m DYING of boredom!” You’re not really dying of boredom, you know. It can’t kill you. And besides, who can be bored with all these similes and metaphors to invent?
Read this poem by Shel Silverstein. Underline the similes and metaphors. Circle the hyperbole.

Sick
By Shel Silverstein

“I cannot go to school today,”
Said little Peggy Ann McKay.
“I have the measles and the mumps,
A gash, a rash and purple bumps.
My mouth is wet, my throat is dry,
I’m going blind in my right eye.
My tonsils are as big as rocks,
I’ve counted sixteen chicken pox
And there’s one more—that’s seventeen,
And don’t you think my face looks green?
My leg is cut—my eyes are blue—
It might be instamatic flu.
I cough and sneeze and gasp and choke,
I’m sure that my left leg is broke—
My hip hurts when I move my chin,  
My belly button’s caving in,  
My back is wrenched, my ankle’s sprained,  
My ‘pendix pains each time it rains.  
My nose is cold, my toes are numb.  
I have a sliver in my thumb.  
My neck is stiff, my voice is weak,  
I hardly whisper when I speak.  
My tongue is filling up my mouth,  
I think my hair is falling out.  
My elbow’s bent, my spine ain’t straight,  
My temperature is one-o-eight.  
My brain is shrunk, I cannot hear,  
There is a hole inside my ear.  
I have a hangnail, and my heart is—what?  
What’s that? What’s that you say?  
You say today is... Saturday?  
G’bye, I’m going out to play!”

Follow your dreams, y’all!