Figurative language is a type of descriptive language that an author uses to communicate and convey vivid images, sights, sounds, and other sensory detail to the reader. It is intended to encourage the reader to use his/her imagination and to make the story more emotionally intense, exciting and realistic.

There are many types of figurative language. I will present five of the most common kinds here, using examples from, “The Outsiders,” by SE Hinton and Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.

**SIMILE**- A simile compares one thing to another using the words “like” or “as”.

For Example: I told you he *(Soda)* *looks like a movie star*, and he kind of radiates.

But most (Soc’s) looked at us *as if we were dirt*.

*Soda* attracted girls *like honey attracted flies*

**METAPHOR**- A metaphor compares two things without using the words like or as. A metaphor states that something IS something else and often uses the verb to be.

For Example: *Johnny* still reminded me of a *lost puppy*

*Tim* had the tense, hungry look of *an alley cat*

**PERSONIFICATION**- Personification gives human characteristics or abilities to something that is not human, such as animals, plants, or inanimate objects.

(Remembering this term is easy because when we describe an object as if it were a person we are using personification.)
For example: There was a silent moment when everything held its breath!

    Love enfolded us in her arms.

The wind whispered your name.

And even as the policemen's guns spit fire into the night,

    Dally raised his gun.

**HYPERBOLE** - Hyperbole expresses an obvious exaggeration.

For Example: I couldn’t have gotten up to save my life

    Two bit’s mom let him get away with murder

    Dally handed me a shirt about sixty-million sizes too big.

**SYNECDOCHE**: The part represents the whole.

For Example: Your new car is a nice set of wheels (Are only the wheels nice?)

    All hands on deck (Not only the hands, but the whole body comes on deck)

**OXYMORON**: A literary device of two words which seems to contradict itself because it expresses opposite concepts. It usually makes sense if you think about it. If a phrase like this is more than two consecutive words it becomes a **PARADOX**

For Example: His eyes were blue, **blazing ice**

    “Oh Happy Dagger!” (When Juliet is about to commit suicide to join Romeo)

    “Parting is such sweet sorrow” (When Romeo leaves Juliet after the famous Act II balcony scene).
Please identify the following phrases as Simile (S), Metaphor (M), Personification (P), Hyperbole (H), or Synecdoche (SYN).

1) _____ "Oh, what an evil day in an evil year," cried the Mandarin.
2) _____ _____ Death swam in the wetness of an eye, the turn of a gull's wing meant rain, a fan held so, the tilt of a roof, and, yes, even a city wall was of immense importance.
3) _____ Death rattled his cane in the outer courtyard.
4) _____ _____ Poverty made a sound like a wet cough in the shadows of the room.
5) _____ _____ (2) The whisper whispered. The Mandarin went on: "And you will change our walls into a club which may beat the pig and drive it off!"
6) _____ The news spread through the city; the Mandarin was acclaimed.
7) _____ Everyone carried stone to the walls. Fireworks were set off and the demons of death and poverty did not linger, as all worked together.
8) _____ At the end of the month the wall had been changed. It was now a mighty bludgeon with which to drive pigs, boars, even lions, far away.
9) _____ The Mandarin slept like a happy fox every night.
10) _____ "I would like to see the Mandarin of Kwan-Si when the news is learned. Such pandemonium and hysteria; he will likely throw himself from a mountain!"
11) _____ A little more of that wine, oh Daughter-who-thinks-like-a-son."
12) _____ _____ But the pleasure was like a winter flower; it died swiftly.
13) _____ _____ "The town of Kwan-Si," said the messenger, "which was built like a pig (S) and which animal we drove away by changing our walls to a mighty stick, has now turned triumph to winter ashes.
14) _____ _____ They have built their city's walls like a great bonfire to burn our stick!"
15) _____ _____ The Mandarin's heart sickened within him, like an autumn fruit upon an ancient tree.
16) _____ “Oh, gods! Travelers will spurn us. Tradesmen, reading the symbols, will turn the stick, so easily destroyed, to the fire, which conquers all!"
"No," said a whisper like a snowflake from behind the silken screen. "No," said the startled Mandarin.

"Tell my stone-masons," said the whisper that was a falling drop of rain, "to build our walls in the shape of a shining lake."

The Mandarin said this aloud, his heart warmed.

"And with this lake of water," said the whisper and the old man, "we will quench the fire and put it out forever!"

The city turned out in joy to learn that once again they had been saved by the magnificent Emperor of ideas. (M)

There then followed a succession of horrible and wonderful days, one in another like a nest of frightening boxes.

"Oh, Emperor," cried the messenger, "Kwan-Si has rebuilt their walls to resemble a mouth with which to drink all our lake!"

"Then," said the Emperor, standing very close to his silken screen, "build our walls like a needle to sew up that mouth!"

"Emperor!" screamed the messenger. "They make their walls like a sword to break your needle!"

The Emperor held, trembling, to the silken screen. "Then shift the stones to form a scabbard to sheathe that sword!"

"Mercy," wept the messenger the following morn, "they have worked all night and shaped their walls like lightning which will explode and destroy that sheath!"

Sickness spread in the city like a pack of evil dogs.

Shops closed. The population, working now steadily for endless months upon the changing of the walls.

The walls resembled Death himself, clattering his white bones like musical instruments in the wind.

The voice behind the screen was weak now, too, and faint, like the wind in the eaves.

"Kwan-Si is an eagle. Then our walls must be a net for that eagle."

They are a sun to burn our net.
34) _____ _____ Then we build a moon to eclipse their sun!
35)_____ Like a rusted machine, the city ground to a halt.
36) _____ At last the whisper behind the screen cried out: "In the name of the gods, send for Kwan-Si!"
37)_____ _____ Their breaths fluttered like winter winds in their mouths. A voice said: "Let us put an end to this."
38) _____ _____ And harvestings were harvested and business tended again, and the flesh returned, and disease ran off like a frightened jackal.
39) _____ _____ And those in the Town of the Wind could hear the kite singing, whispering, rising, and beautifying them.
40) _____ “And the kite will break the sameness of the wind's existence and give it purpose and meaning. One without the other is nothing. Together, all will be beauty and co-operation and a long and enduring life.”