

Figures of speech

HOMEWORK

Submit all homework assignments on Canvas as a Word (.doc or .docx) file. So that I can grade anonymously, **please do not include your name** or any other identifying information.

In addition, some exercises include a word limit or word range. For these exercises, strive for concision and simplicity (while still using complete sentences), and **include a word count** for each of your answers.

Exercise 1. Consider the paragraph in 2A6 starting with “The reason why I say ...” and ending with “... the sound of the child’s cries.” Diagram Mengzi’s argument using *exactly two claims*. This will require some thoughtful rephrasing on your part! Remember to include both a numbered list of claims and a picture with an arrow. (Range for both claims together: 20-35 words.)

Exercise 2. Return to the argument from Mengzi that you diagrammed above. Explain whether you agree or disagree with argument. Focus especially on supporting your claims with interpersonal evidence. To help you do this, underline each piece of interpersonal evidence that you are using. (Range: 60-120 words.)

Exercise 3. In 4B24, Mengzi tells a story that illustrates how one ought to deal with conflicting duties.

- (a) What are the two conflicting duties that Si of Yugong faces? (Range: 18-28 words.)
- (b) What advice is Mengzi implicitly giving about how to act when one’s duties are in conflict? (Range: 25-35 words. Note that this question is especially challenging!)

READING

Part 1. Metaphors and similes

To truly understand the texts for this seminar, we will need to interpret *figures of speech*, such as metaphors and similes, in an especially detailed and explicit way.

Metaphors are intended to express truths despite being literally false (“love is a battlefield”). By contrast, *similes* are intended to be literally true (“love is *like* a battlefield”). Finally, an *analogy* is an especially extended metaphor or simile. With any of these figures of speech, however, the point is to express similarities between two things that are superficially very different. As interpreters, one of our central tasks will be to articulate the precise similarities between these two things. We will do this by listing elements in the metaphorical domain, linking these with elements in the target domain, and finally identifying similarities between these elements.

For a simple example, consider the following claim:

1. Love is a battlefield.

This is not the literal truth. Love is an emotion, not a combat site. But claim 1 is intended to express certain *similarities* between love and battlefields. To understand what these might be, it is useful to start by making a list of elements in the *metaphorical domain* – in this case, battlefields:

Metaphorical domain	Target domain	Similarity
Physical pain		
Soldiers		
War		
Ruthless behavior		

Our next step is to identify corresponding elements in the target domain. Now, love can literally involve pain and ruthless behavior, so we can simply list those elements again. But what about the remaining elements in the metaphorical domain? Love has no particular literal connection to destruction, to soldiers, or to warfare. Thus, for each of these elements, we must identify elements in the domain of love that are interestingly similar:

Metaphorical domain	Target domain	Similarity
Physical pain	Emotional pain	
Soldiers	Lovers	
War	Love	
Ruthless behavior	Ruthless behavior	

Finally, we can complete our table by identifying the precise respect in which each pair of elements is similar:

Metaphorical domain	Target domain	Similarity
Physical pain	Emotional pain	Forms of pain
Soldiers	Lovers	Two parties at odds
War	Love	Relationship between the parties
Ruthless behavior	Ruthless behavior	(Identity)

And now we have a much deeper understanding of what claim 1 means. In the end, however, we will need to express our interpretation in prose. This can be done concisely, like so:

Pat Benatar tells us that love is a battlefield. Her idea is this. A battlefield involves warring soldiers who behave ruthlessly to each other, thereby causing great physical pain. Similarly, lovers behave ruthlessly towards each other, thereby causing great emotional pain.

Note the underlined expressions! These are *signposts* – devices that indicate relationships among ideas – and in this case they make it clear that the writer is interpreting Pat Benatar rather than stating the writer’s own ideas. Students often make the mistake of leaving out these crucial signposts.

WARM-UP EXERCISES

First complete all but the last of these exercises on your own. Then check your answers against the answer key that is included at the end of this handout, and use what you have learned to complete the last exercise. Finally, submit all of your answers on Canvas as a Word (.doc or .docx) file.

Some exercises include a word limit or word range. On these exercises, strive for concision and simplicity (while still using complete sentences), and **include a word count**. So that I can grade anonymously, **please do not include your name** or any other identifying information.

Warm-up 1. In 6A8, Mengzi compares human beings to Ox Mountain.

- (a) Create a table that identifies three elements in the metaphorical domain, three corresponding elements in the target domain, and the similarities between these elements.
- (b) Using this table as your guide, explain the analogy of Ox Mountain in a paragraph. (Range: 50-65 words.)

Warm-up 2. The skills that we learn in the seminar are meant to be used in all parts of your life. Thus, this exercise is meant to help you practice applying your interpretive skills in a non-academic context.

- (a) Find a figure of speech anywhere in popular culture – perhaps in a magazine or song lyric – and quote it here. (Limit: 20 words.)
- (b) Create a table that identifies at least three elements in the metaphorical domain, the corresponding elements in the target domain, and the similarities between these elements.
- (c) Using your table as a guide, express your interpretation in a short paragraph. Remember to use signposts as appropriate. (Range: 50-80 words.)

Warm-up 3. Carefully review the answer key for the warm-up exercises. Then answer the following questions.

- (a) What are the most important mistakes that you made? If you did not make any mistakes, then instead reflect on the most important mistakes that you recently made in seminar. (Range: 30-60 words.)
- (b) What specific strategies can you use to avoid these mistakes in the future? (Range: 30-60 words.)

ANSWERS TO WARM-UP EXERCISES

Warm-up 1. In 6A8, Mengzi compares human beings to Ox Mountain.

- (c) Create a table that identifies three elements in the metaphorical domain, three corresponding elements in the target domain, and the similarities between these elements.

Metaphorical domain (Ox Mountain)	Target domain (human beings)	Similarity
Barren due to clearing and grazing	Not virtuous due to poverty, hunger, etc.	Caused to be bad because of external factors
Naturally verdant	Naturally good	Has a positive natural state
Capable of regrowth	Capable of becoming good again	Capable of returning to its positive natural state

- (d) Using this table as your guide, explain the analogy of Ox Mountain in a paragraph. (Range: 50-65 words.)

Mengzi compares human beings to Ox Mountain. Due to clearing and grazing, the mountain is barren. But it is naturally verdant and keeps growing new shoots. Similarly, Mengzi suggests, some people behave badly due to adverse conditions such as poverty. But people are naturally good, and they continue to have incipient good tendencies. (53 words)