

L.O. Use figurative language to help build suspense

## Box 2:

Tension built – setting used to increase discomfort; unknown threat introduced – MC shows emotions & reacts.

Threat revealed but easily dismissed – tension falls

In this part of your story, your main character is showing how frightened he or she is, with the setting playing a major part in this. The environment seems to be alive and even a small, harmless animal causes a spike in tension.

A good way to develop suspense is to use powerful **figurative language** to help the reader see (and feel) what the character does. For this, we need our old friends, simile, metaphor and personification. Can you tell your partner what each of these are?

**simile:** the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, using *as* or *like*.

E.g. as fast as a cheetah / like a bolt of lightning

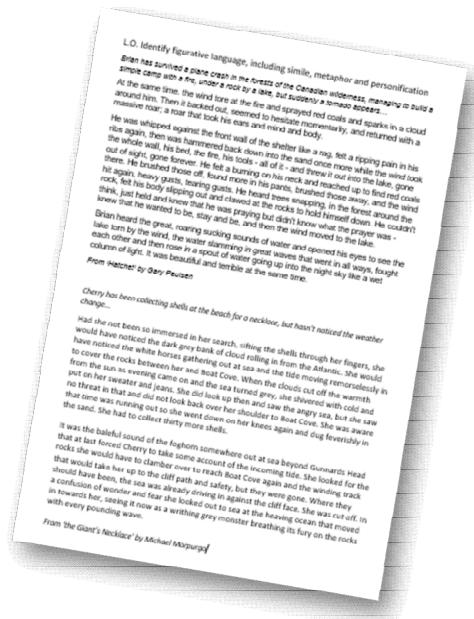
**metaphor:** a direct comparison, that states one thing *is* another

E.g. its teeth were daggers / night blanketed the forest

**personification:** the technique of giving plants or non-living things animal or human qualities

E.g. mournful pines whispered of death / an angry storm

Work with your partner to find examples of simile, metaphor and personification



*Brian has survived a plane crash in the forests of the Canadian wilderness, managing to build a simple camp with a fire, under a rock by a lake, but suddenly a tornado appears...*

At the same time, the wind tore at the fire and sprayed red coals and sparks in a cloud around him. Then it backed out, seemed to hesitate momentarily, and returned with a massive roar; a roar that took his ears and mind and body.

He was whipped against the front wall of the shelter like a rag, felt a ripping pain in his ribs again, then was hammered back down into the sand once more while the wind took the whole wall, his bed, the fire, his tools - all of it - and threw it out into the lake, gone out of sight, gone forever. He felt a burning on his neck and reached up to find red coals there. He brushed those off, found more in his pants, brushed those away, and the wind hit again, heavy gusts, tearing gusts. He heard trees snapping, in the forest around the rock, felt his body slipping out and clawed at the rocks to hold himself down. He couldn't think, just held and knew that he was praying but didn't know what the prayer was - knew that he wanted to be, stay and be, and then the wind moved to the lake.

Brian heard the great, roaring sucking sounds of water and opened his eyes to see the lake torn by the wind, the water slamming in great waves that went in all ways, fought each other and then rose in a spout of water going up into the night sky like a wet column of light. It was beautiful and terrible at the same time.

*From 'Hatchet' by Gary Paulsen*

*Cherry has been collecting shells at the beach for a necklace, but hasn't noticed the weather change...*

Had she not been so immersed in her search, sifting the shells through her fingers, she would have noticed the dark grey bank of cloud rolling in from the Atlantic. She would have noticed the white horses gathering out at sea and the tide moving remorselessly in to cover the rocks between her and Boat Cove. When the clouds cut off the warmth from the sun as evening came on and the sea turned grey, she shivered with cold and put on her sweater and jeans. She did look up then and saw the angry sea, but she saw no threat in that and did not look back over her shoulder to Boat Cove. She was aware that time was running out so she went down on her knees again and dug feverishly in the sand. She had to collect thirty more shells.

It was the baleful sound of the foghorn somewhere out at sea beyond Gunnards Head that at last forced Cherry to take some account of the incoming tide. She looked for the rocks she would have to clamber over to reach Boat Cove again and the winding track that would take her up to the cliff path and safety, but they were gone. Where they should have been, the sea was already driving in against the cliff face. She was cut off. In a confusion of wonder and fear she looked out to sea at the heaving ocean that moved in towards her, seeing it now as a writhing grey monster breathing its fury on the rocks with every pounding wave.

*From 'the Giant's Necklace' by Michael Morpurgo*

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