Figurative Language in *The Hunger Games*  
Name: ____________________________

Author Suzanne Collins uses **figurative language** in her novel *The Hunger Games*. Figurative language is writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally. These “figures of speech” include similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole. They add interest and color and make the language more exciting and interesting.

**simile**: A comparison of two things (that may or not be alike) using the words like or as. *She is as quick as a fox.*

**metaphor**: A comparison of two unlike things without using like or as. *The sun was a furnace.*

**personification**: A type of metaphor in which non-human things or ideas possess human qualities or actions. *The wind whistled throughout the night.*

**hyperbole**: An obvious and deliberate exaggeration (to emphasize something or for humorous purposes). *I ate a million pieces of cake today.*

**Example:**

A (p. 3) “Prim’s face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named.” **A - simile; there are two similes: Prim’s face as fresh as a raindrop and Prim’s face as lovely as primrose.**

1. (p. 5) “…I always take a moment to listen carefully for the hum that means the fence is live. Right now, it’s silent as a stone.”

2. (p. 6) “So I learned to hold my tongue…” (this quote continued in #3)

3. (p. 6) “…and turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts.”

4. (p. 6) “A thicket of berry bushes protects it from unwanted eyes.”

5. (p. 16) “Attendance is mandatory unless you are on death’s door.”

6. (p. 16) “The camera crews, perched like buzzards on rooftops, only add to the effect.”

**_assignment:** Read the examples of figurative language from chapters 1-4 below. For each one:

- **Identify** whether it is an example of:
  - A. simile
  - B. metaphor
  - C. personification
  - D. hyperbole

- **Underline** the words that identify it as such. (For simile and metaphor, underline the two things being compared. For personification, underline the non-human thing and its human quality or action. For hyperbole, underline the word or words which identify the exaggeration.)

- **Example:**

  A (p. 3) “Prim’s face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named.” **A - simile; there are two similes: Prim’s face as fresh as a raindrop and Prim’s face as lovely as primrose.**

1. (p. 5) “…I always take a moment to listen carefully for the hum that means the fence is live. Right now, it’s silent as a stone.”

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5. (p. 16) “Attendance is mandatory unless you are on death’s door.”

6. (p. 16) “The camera crews, perched like buzzards on rooftops, only add to the effect.”
7. (p. 18) “He tells the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America.”

8. (p. 18) “He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so much of the land....”

9. (p. 19) “...right now District 12 is the laughingstock of Panem, and he knows it.”

10. (p. 21) “That’s how I feel now...totally stunned as the name bounces around the inside of my skull.”

11. (p. 27) “The community home would crush her like a bug.”

12. (p. 27) “But the money ran out and we were slowly starving to death.”

**Digging Deeper: Finding Meaning in Similes & Metaphors**

Identify the simile or metaphor in each of these examples by underlining it. Then write its meaning. Remember that figurative language is not meant to be taken literally.

**Example:** (p. 37) “We always wait to trade with him when his witch of a wife isn’t around because he’s so much nicer.”

*The baker’s wife is not actually a witch, but she is not very nice.*

13. (p. 44) “‘At least you two have decent manners,’ says Effie as we’re finishing the main course. ‘The pair last year ate everything with their hands like a couple of savages.’”

14. (p. 46) “You know your mentor is your lifeline to the world in these Games.”

15. (p. 51) “The woods became our savior, and each day I went a bit farther into its arms.”

16. (p. 52) “...I was washing up in a pond when I noticed the plants growing around me. Tall with leaves like arrowheads.”
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**More Practice:** Circle whether you think the underlined example is a simile (S) or a metaphor (M).

1. “My legs, arms, torso, underarms, and parts of my eyebrows have been stripped of the stuff, leaving me like a plucked bird, ready for roasting.” (p. 61)
   - **S**

2. “I’m glad now I have Peeta to clutch for balance, he is so steady, solid as a rock.” (p. 70)
   - **M**

3. “He is luring you in to make you easy prey.” (p. 72)
   - **M**

4. “But that’s a dark and creaky thing that moves like a snail....” (p. 73)
   - **S**

5. “The walls of this elevator are made of crystal so that you can watch people on the ground floor shrink to ants as you shoot up into the air.” (p. 73)
   - **M**

**Irony:** Suzanne Collins uses irony (in the form of hypocrisy) so the reader can reflect upon Katniss’s predicament and the treatment of her situation by the Capitol citizens. The use of irony in chapter 6 also reinforces the theme of desensitization.

- **Irony:** the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal meaning.
- **Hypocrisy:** claiming to have moral standards or beliefs, but not practicing those beliefs or standards.
- **Desensitization:** to become less sensitive or insensitive due to repeated exposure.
Read the passage from chapter 6 (p. 74) and reflect upon its meaning (in writing) in terms of irony and desensitization. Effie Trinket is speaking in the quotation to Peeta and Katniss about their potential for sponsors:

“...I've done my best with what I have to work with. How Katniss sacrificed herself for her sister. How you've both successfully struggled to overcome the barbarism of your district.’ Barbarism? That's ironic coming from a woman helping to prepare us for slaughter.”

What makes Effie’s statement “ironic” or hypocritical? Discuss how the Capitol citizens have become desensitized regarding the tributes and the Games.