**Similes and metaphors** can be used to convey ideas as well as [offer striking images](http://grammar.about.com/od/words/a/similemetaphor1.htm). Consider the simile in the first sentence below and the [extended metaphor](http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/thesis.htm) in the second:

*We walk through volumes of the unexpressed and like snails leave behind a faint thread excreted out of ourselves.*(John Updike, "The Blessed Man of Boston")

*I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair. Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed."*(Christopher Isherwood, *The Berlin Stories*)

Here is an exercise that will give you some practice in creating figurative comparisons. For each of the statements below, make up a simile or a metaphor that helps to explain each statement and make it more vivid. If several ideas come to you, jot them all down. When you're done, compare your response to the first sentence with the sample comparisons.

George has been working at the same automobile factory six days a week, ten hours a day, for the past twelve years.
(*Use a simile or a metaphor to show how worn out George was feeling.*)

Sample Responses to Sentence #1
a. George felt as worn out as the elbows on his work shirt.
b. George felt as worn out as an old phonograph record.
c. George felt worn out, like an old punching bag.
d. George felt as worn out as the rusted Impala that carried him to work every day.
e. George felt as worn out as an old joke that was never very funny in the first place.
f. George felt worn out and useless--just another broken fan belt, a burst radiator hose, a stripped wing nut, a discharged battery.

2. Katie had been working all day in the summer sun.
(*Use a simile or a metaphor to show how hot and tired Katie was feeling.*)

3. This is Kim Su's first day at college, and she is in the middle of a chaotic morning registration session.
(*Use a simile or a metaphor to show either how confused Kim feels or how chaotic the entire session is.*)

4. Victor spent his entire summer vacation watching quiz shows and soap operas on television.
(*Use a simile or a metaphor to describe the state of Victor's mind by the end of his vacation.*)

5. After all the troubles of the past few weeks, Sandy felt peaceful at last.
(*Use a simile or a metaphor to describe how peaceful or relieved Sandy was feeling.*)

Finish each phrase with whatever metaphor or simile comes immediately to mind.

To really get the most of the exercise, don't worry about coming up with something good, just write. The whole idea is to get your subconscious to make connections in a new, more creative way.

Blue paint spilled on the road like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Canceled checks in the abandoned subway car seemed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

A spider under the rug is like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Graffiti on the abandoned building like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Nothing was the same, now that it was\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The dice rolled out of the cup toward Veronica like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is like muscles stretched taut over bone.

The fog plumed through gunshot holes in the car windows like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

She held her life in her own hands as if it were\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Lacey poured coffee down her throat as if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If I should wake before I die,\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The security guard walks the lobby as if\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The library books left in the rain like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Music in the hallway like\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Share your metaphors and similes with someone next to you.

Read the excerpt from Zora Neale Hurston, paying attention to language, expectations, themes, and the final metaphor. See directions for blog posting.