

Unmasking Metaphors

Golden Shovel Poetry

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Grade Level	9th – 10th Grade	**Time Frame**	125 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	3 class periods

Essential Question

How do authors use metaphors and poetic forms to convey meaning?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore metaphors in poetry, learn about the Golden Shovel form of poetry, and use this knowledge to create their own Golden Shovel poem.

Snapshot

Engage

Students compare and connect images and concepts through a Magnetic Statements activity.

Explore

Students read a poem and consider what certain phrases might represent.

Explain

Students formalize their understanding of metaphors and the purpose of metaphors in writing.

Extend

Students analyze a Golden Shovel poem using their understanding of metaphors.

Evaluate

Students apply their understanding of metaphors to create their own Golden Shovel poem.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
WME302: Interpret basic figurative language as it is used in a passage

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.4: Evaluate how literary devices impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance)
- irony (i.e., verbal, situational, dramatic)

9.3.R.7: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.

Attachments

- Jabari Unmasked—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.docx
- Jabari Unmasked—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.pdf
- Jabari Unmasked—Unmasking Metaphors.docx
- Jabari Unmasked—Unmasking Metaphors.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Unmasking Metaphors.pptx
- Note Catcher—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.docx
- Note Catcher—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.pdf
- Note Catcher—Unmasking Metaphors.docx
- Note Catcher—Unmasking Metaphors.pdf
- Situation Signs—Unmasking Metaphors.docx
- Situation Signs—Unmasking Metaphors.pdf
- Vocabulary Cards—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.docx
- Vocabulary Cards—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.pdf
- Vocabulary Cards—Unmasking Metaphors.docx
- Vocabulary Cards—Unmasking Metaphors.pdf
- We Wear the Mask—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.docx
- We Wear the Mask—Unmasking Metaphors - Spanish.pdf
- We Wear the Mask—Unmasking Metaphors.docx
- We Wear the Mask—Unmasking Metaphors.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Situation Signs (attached; one set; print one-sided)
- We Wear the Mask handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Vocabulary Cards (attached; one set per group; print one-sided)
- Note Catcher handout (attached; one per student; print one-sided)
- Jabari Unmasked handout (attached; one per student; print two-sided)
- Highlighters (one per student)
- CommonLit account (optional; for teacher use)

Preparation

Explain Card Matching Preparation:

During the Explain phase of the lesson, small groups of 2–4 students will complete a card matching activity. Before you begin, print the attached **Vocabulary Cards** (one copy per small group of students in your class). Consider printing on cardstock paper, especially if you plan to reuse these cards.

Once printed, cut out the cards. All of these cards are the same size for easy cutting.

Handout Preparation:

This lesson has students read two poems. To conserve paper usage, the two poems have been slightly reformatted. These reformatted versions are available in the attached **We Wear the Mask** and **Jabari Unmasked** handouts. You may print the handouts or the originals to give to students or keep as a class set, or you may share these digitally with your students using your Learning Management System (LMS).

To access the original poems, visit CommonLit.org and log in or sign up for a free account. Then, click the following links to access each story:

- "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar
- "Jabari Unmasked" by Nikki Grimes

Select "Download PDF" and follow the directions to print each short story for your students.

For students whose first language is not English, CommonLit.org can provide translations. You must first create a CommonLit.org class in order for them to have access to a translated version of the poem. The CommonLit tech tool can assist you with this. Once you have created a class, you can make the class code available to students who wish to read it in Spanish.

10 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Prior to class, print the attached **Situation Signs** and post each sign around the classroom.

Introduce the lesson using the attached **Lesson Slides**. Share the lesson's essential question on **slide 3** and then the learning objectives on **slide 4**. Review each of these with your class to the extent you feel necessary.

Show **slide 5** and preview the Situation Signs activity with the class. Explain that they will be shown a picture and asked to use the Magnetic Statements strategy to select a poster that shows a situation that feels most like the image to them. To help them grasp the concept more easily, prompt students to think in these terms: "This [situation] makes me feel like this [image]."

Display **slide 6** and have students go to the poster that they feel best represents the image on the slide (someone wearing a Venetian carnival mask) or to the poster that represents how that image makes them feel.

Teacher's Note: Guiding the Activity

During this activity, students are shown photographs of a Venetian mask, birds flying, a skull, a bird in a cage, a new plant, and clocks. They are to make a connection with one of the concepts on the signs: hearing your favorite song, finishing a big project, going to a new school, making someone else happy, getting a low grade on a test, and being angry at a friend.

If students are unsure of the task, consider giving them an example. Ask them to imagine a cloudy sky, then suggest that "grief" could be the concept that they are drawn to, since a lack of sunshine could make one think of sadness, like losing someone.

Once students are at their selected posters, have them discuss among themselves why this comparison makes the most sense to them. After a couple of minutes, once groups have had time to discuss, ask one or two from each group to share their thinking with the class.

Repeat this process using **slides 7–11**.

20 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 12** and give each student a copy of the attached **We Wear the Mask** handout. Have students individually read through the poem silently. Ask students to underline any words or phrases that they do not understand, as they read.

After a couple of minutes, ask for a volunteer to read the poem aloud. You can read the poem if there are not any volunteers. Poetry is generally meant to be read aloud.

Ask students to share what they underlined; clarify as much as you can.

Teacher's Note: "We Wear the Mask" Summary

We all wear a mask that makes it look like we're happy, but this is a lie. The mask covers our cheeks and casts a shadow over our eyes. This mask is the price we pay for the fact that people are capable of such deceit. We smile despite feeling as though our hearts have been broken and battered, and we make thousands of careful little tweaks as we speak to others so as not to reveal our true selves.

What use would it be for the rest of society to pay close attention to all the details of our suffering? Society will only see us while our faces are hidden behind the mask.

But even as we smile, on the inside we're crying out to God from the depths of our tortured souls. We sing, but the mud we must walk through is disgusting, and the mile through which we must walk feels so long. Despite all this, let the rest of society pretend that we're not suffering. Meanwhile, we'll keep wearing the mask!

Form students into groups of 2–4. Show **slide 13** and give each student a highlighter. Direct students to highlight the following phrases in the poem:

- "the mask" of line 1
- "torn and bleeding hearts" of line 4
- "let the world dream" of line 14

Introduce the Without Words instructional strategy and direct students to select one of the highlighted phrases to illustrate. Have students draw what they think the phrase is trying to get them to imagine. Transition to **slide 14** to give students an example of the task.

Once students are done with their nonlinguistic representation, display **slide 15**. Below their illustration, have students write what idea they think the author is trying to get them to understand from that highlighted phrase.

Teacher's Note: Possible Interpretations

- "The mask" compares the way that people have to hide their true feelings to wearing an actual mask over their face.
- "Torn and bleeding hearts" compare people experiencing negative emotions to having their actual hearts being physically ripped and torn.
- "Let the world dream" compares the people of the world with a single person who sleeps and dreams.

Move to **slide 16** and have groups create a theme statement for the poem using the guidelines on the slide. They can write this on one of their group member's poem handouts. Then, begin the 3-minute timer.

After the timer has expired and students have finished, direct groups to discuss how one of the comparisons they highlighted helps to support their theme statement and write their reasoning down as at least one complete sentence.

20 minutes

Explain

Show **slide 17** and introduce the Card Matching instructional strategy. Give each group a set of the attached **Vocabulary Cards**.

Once students begin the Card Matching activity, give each student a copy of the attached **Note Catcher** handout. Transition through **slides 18–19** for students to check their work. Direct students to write the definitions on their handout.

Display **slide 20**. Explain to students that they are going to watch a video about metaphors. Tell them that they are expected to write examples of each vocabulary word on their Note Catcher handout while they watch the video.

Move to **slide 21** and play *The Art of the Metaphor* video. Once the video has ended, ask for volunteers to share examples from the video for each vocabulary word.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=A0edKgL9EgM

Teacher's Note: Examples from the Video

There are multiple examples of these vocabulary words in the video. Most of them are plain metaphors.

- **Metaphor:** William Shakespeare's famous metaphor, "All the world's a stage."
- **Simile:** "Sweet as honey, strong as a tree"
- **Direct Metaphor:** "It's raining cats and dogs."
- **Implied Metaphor:** "The fog comes on little cat feet," this is a good example, but there is no explicit mention of "implied metaphors" in the video.
- **Extended Metaphor:** "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes, which compares life to a house in many different ways.

30 minutes

Extend

Have students work individually for the remainder of the lesson. Display **slide 22** and play the *Teen Tuesday: Golden Shovel Poetry* video, which introduces the Golden Shovel form of poetry. In this poetic form, the poet takes a meaningful line from a poem and uses words from that line or stanza in a new poem. The line then appears, word for word, at the end of the lines in the new poem.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=bBvLj5reRmI

Give each student a copy of the attached Jabari Unmasked handout and a highlighter, if they do not still have one from before. Show **slide 23**. Inform students that this poem is an example of a Golden Shovel poem that was built around the lines of the first stanza of "We Wear the Mask."

As before, have students read through the poem silently and underline any words or phrases that they have a hard time understanding. After a couple of minutes, ask for a volunteer to read the poem aloud. Ask students to share what they underlined and guide the class in decoding any parts that are difficult to understand.

Teacher's Note: "Jabari Unmasked" Summary

The speaker describes high school kids who wear a "mask," hiding their insecurities, tender hearts, curious minds, and wits by acting tough. The speaker describes how many judgments are made based on their appearance despite others not knowing anything about them, failing to see their brilliance. The speaker encourages the children to let the masks go, to speak and live their truth.

Move to **slide 24** and have students use the Why-Lighting strategy to identify metaphors. Direct students to highlight five different metaphors in the poem. For each metaphor they highlight, have students write in the margin what is being compared.

Sample Student Responses:

- "Insecurities that pockmark our skin like acne," meaning that insecurities are like physical blemishes that show up on their faces.
- The metaphor of the "Masquerade" implies that having to act tough and hide their true thoughts is like a masquerade party where people wear costumes to disguise themselves.
- "The wit that sits behind our cheeks" compares peoples' wit/cleverness to a physical thing that sits hidden from the outside world.
- "Thoughtfully unfurl the scrolls of human history" compares learning about the past is compared to physically unrolling ancient scrolls.
- "Spirits ripped and torn" characterizes spirit as a physical thing that can be attacked and hurt.
- "Leave those dreams bleeding on the road" compares dreams to a human or animal that has been severely injured and left behind.
- "Freshen your mouth with ferocious lines of potent poetry," meaning that poetry is comparable to something you can put in your mouth to make it taste better.

Display **slide 25** and have students respond to the prompts on the back of their handout:

- Choose one metaphor from “Jabari Unmasked” that you think is especially effective. In multiple complete sentences, explain what is being compared in this metaphor and how the comparison helps you understand the poem better.
- Golden Shovel poems often respond to the ideas of the original poem they use. What is an idea from “We Wear the Mask” that “Jabari Unmasked” deals with? What does the speaker of “Jabari Unmasked” have to say about that idea?

Move to **slide 26** and have students create a theme statement for the poem using the guidelines on the slide. Then, begin the 3-minute timer.

Collect students’ handouts to use as a formative assessment.

45 minutes

Evaluate

Move to **slide 27** and explain to students that they will now create their own Golden Shovel poem using what they have learned about metaphors and the Golden Shovel format. Students can complete their poems either on notebook paper or digitally. Review the following expectations with your students:

- Their poems should be at least ten lines long and include at least two metaphors.
- Have students bold the last word of each line. If students write their poems on paper, they should go over the letters of the last word with a darker pen or marker but make sure the words are still legible. Alternatively, they could underline the word.
- Have students circle their metaphors.

Display **slide 28** and guide students through the process by having them find a poem or song lyric then choose the section from it that they want to use in their poem. Remind students that each word from that selection will become the end of each of their lines of poetry. Also, remind students that the end of the line of poetry does not have to be an end to a sentence. If students are not sure of a poem or song, you can offer the following as options:

- "The Rose that Grew from Concrete" by Tupac Shakur
- "Dreams" by Langston Hughes
- "Underface" by Shel Silverstein
- "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks

Show **slide 29** and share with students how to title their poem: "Poem Title," after "Original Poem or Song Title by Original Author," by "Your Name." The example from the previous video is "Trust," after "Perfect" by Bo Burnham, by Asta Geil.

Display **slide 30** while students work. Give students approximately 35 minutes to create their Golden Shovel poem.

As students are finishing their poems, transition to **slide 31**. On the back of their poems (or on the second page of a digital version), have students answer the following questions for each of two metaphors from their poems:

- What type of metaphor is it?
- What two things is it comparing?
- What do you want your reader to understand from this metaphor?

If time allows, invite students to share what they wrote with the class. Have students submit their poems.

Resources

- Brooks, G. (1960). *We real cool*. CommonLit. https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/we-real-cool
- Dunbar, P. L. (1896). *We wear the mask.* CommonLit. https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/we-wear-the-mask
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- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card matching. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1837
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- K20 Center. (2021, September 21). K20 Center 3-minute timer. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iISP02KPau0
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- Shakur, T. (1989). *The rose that grew from concrete*. CommonLit. https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/the-rose-that-grew-from-concrete
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- TED-Ed. (2012, September 24). *The art of the metaphor* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0edKgL9EgM