Essential Skill: Similes

Sea Monster

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, writers. It's Margaret. I had a friend who went fishing once. She noticed something shiny in the water, and it was really big. For a minute, she thought she might have just seen a mermaid. Turns out, it was just a big fish.

That reminds me of this exhibit at the aquarium—it's called Secrets of the Sea. It was all about different people who sailed the ocean in search of unknown sea creatures and even sea monsters. Most of these were from a long time ago, so there weren't any videos or photos to capture what they saw. Instead, a lot of this exhibit is filled with journal entries from sailors telling their stories about creatures they think they saw, like this one. It's from the journal of a sailor named Sid Squidly. - "Dear Journal, Today the sun was setting when a giant creature appeared from the water. The Kraken, a creature from sailors' tales past, rose up slowly... Its tentacles were like giant snakes, moving gently through the waves, each one as thick as a tree trunk. The creature's eyes were as large as dinner plates, glowing softly in the dark sea like lanterns. The Kraken's body was huge, as big as an island. If this journal is found, let it be known that the Kraken is a magnificent creature that should be known to all!"

What an adventure! The Kraken is an imaginary mythical creature and no one's sure what Sid Squidly actually saw. But Kraken sightings are a fun story sailors like to tell. The Kraken even shows up as a character in books and movies.

The Secrets of the Sea exhibit is looking to add more fun stories about new mythical sea creatures that have never been seen. That means they need your help. You get to use your imagination and pretend to be sailors in search of new creatures lurking in the mysterious waters. Your journal entry will get added to the exhibit so that others can also enjoy the sea creature from your imagination.

Before you start writing, think about what your sea creature looks like. Maybe it has shiny scales, a dorsal fin, claws, or maybe it has bioluminescence like this jellyfish or this anglerfish. If a creature is bioluminescent, that means they can make their own light.

Imagine you're a sailor in the middle of the ocean and all of a sudden a mysterious creature appears.

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: What does your sea creature look like?

HOOK 2

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> *"Dear Journal,*

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The creature's eyes were as large as dinner plates, glowing softly in the dark sea like lanterns. The Kraken's body was huge, as big as an island.

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DISCUSSION 2

Discuss: What parts of Sid's description help you picture what the Kraken looked like?

HOOK 3

Maybe this part helped you picture the tentacles because he said they were "like giant snakes." Or maybe the part where he compared the Kraken's eyes to being "as large as dinner plates." I especially liked how he said that the Kraken's body was "as big as an island." That's bigger than I could have ever imagined.

He compared the Kraken to a lot of things. Instead of just saying "The Kraken's eyes glowed," he said, "They glowed softly in the dark sea like lanterns." So now instead of wondering how the Kraken's eyes looked, I can imagine eyes that sort of look like glowing lanterns.

When writers compare one thing to something else that's familiar, it's a lot easier to picture or imagine it. Like comparing the Kraken's tentacles to snakes, comparing its body to an island, or comparing its eyes to lanterns. Writers call a comparison like this a *simile*.

First, writers decide what they want to describe. Then they use the word *like* or *as*. And then they pick something to compare it to, like this: "The sea creature's fins moved like gentle waves in the ocean." Or "The sea creature could swim as fast as a race car."

I could use your help describing the sea creature that I imagined. My creature has tentacles, and I imagine that the tentacles could move like this, or move like this.

DISCUSSION 3

Discuss: Look at how both of these tentacles move. What would you compare them to?

HOOK 4

I'm not sure how you answered, but I thought these tentacles were as energetic as a bunch of soccer fans celebrating their team scoring a goal. And I thought these tentacles were like scarves dancing in the wind. Notice how if I describe it like this, it makes my sea creatures seem a little more chaotic. But when I described it like this, you probably pictured a more peaceful creature. Similes have the power to help the reader picture what you're comparing.

Now it's your turn to journal about a sea creature that you imagined. But remember, no one else will have seen this creature, so it's up to you to use similes in your description to help your reader picture it.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

Get your supplies.

STEP 2

In today's lesson, you'll need someone to share ideas with. This could be a partner or someone you sit near. When everyone knows who their talk partner is, move on to the next step.

STEP 3

Imagine what your sea creature looks like. If you want, you can close your eyes and picture it.

When you're ready to move on, click the arrow.

STEP 4

Here's how I drew my creature. Then I labeled four parts of my creature here: dorsal fin, bioluminescence, claws, and tentacles.

Now get your Journal Entry page.

Draw a quick sketch in the box and label four parts of your creature in the numbered boxes. If you don't have four parts, you can always add something new onto your creature. You can use this part of your Word Bank to help.

STEP 5

I need to sign my drawing with my sailor name, Admiral Squeakyfish.

Here's a fun way to come up with a sailor name of your own. First, start with captain, or admiral. Then, think of a funny adjective, like wobbly, goofy, or squeaky. Finally, think of a sea creature.

Under your sketch, write your name or your sailor name.

STEP 6

Write the date of your journal entry next to your sailor name. Maybe it's from today. Maybe it's from a long time ago. Maybe it's even from the future.

STEP 7

The first part I labeled is a dorsal fin. I drew it small in my journal so that it would fit on the page. But I want my reader to know that my creature's dorsal fin is big. Woah! Like the size of a bike. No, bigger—like the size of a car! Actually, no, even bigger. I want my

creature's dorsal fin to be as big as a ship! I'll write my simile under the part I labeled, like this: "dorsal fin as big as a ship."

Think about how you would use a simile to describe one of the parts you labeled on your creature.

Discuss with a partner: How would you use a simile to describe one of the parts you labeled?

STEP 8

Write your simile under your creatures labeled part.

STEP 9

Think about how you would use a simile to describe another part you labeled on your creature.

Discuss with a partner: How would you use a simile to describe another part you labeled?

STEP 10

Now go through the rest of the parts you labelled and describe what they look like using similes.

You can write your ideas under your creatures labeled parts.

STEP 11

Now I need to write how I first noticed that the creature was near. This is before actually seeing the whole creature. Here's what I wrote: "It was a dark and calm night at sea. I noticed the glow just under the surface of the ocean. It started to creep closer."

First, imagine what the day was like. Then think about how you first noticed that the creature was near. Remember, you haven't seen the whole creature yet. When you have your idea, write it down as the first line in your journal entry. If you need help, you can use one of the ideas below.

STEP 12

Now I need to come face to face with my creature. This is the first time I'm seeing my creature. Here's what I wrote. "The creature crept out of the water as slowly as a sloth."

Think about how your creature came out of the water when you first saw it. Describe it using a simile. Once you have your idea, start writing where you left off. If you're not sure what to write, you can use one of the ideas below.

STEP 13

It's time to get into how my sea creature looked. I can use what I already came up with here, and turn them into sentences, like this: "Its dorsal fin was as big as a ship."

Write two sentences using the parts you labeled and the similes you use to describe them. You can write more if you want. If you're not sure how to write your sentences, you can use one of these to help.

STEP 14

I want to describe how my creature moved in the water. Here's what I wrote: "It drifted gracefully like a skater gliding across the ice."

Think about how your sea creature moved in the water. Describe it using a simile. When you have your idea, start writing where you left off. You can use this part of your Word Bank to help.

STEP 15

Think about how your creature went back into the water. Then think about how it made you feel. Maybe you felt more than one thing.

Finish your journal entry by telling your reader how the creature went back into the water and how it made you feel. If you're not sure what to write, you can use one of the examples below.

STEP 16

Take turns sharing your creature and journal entry with your partner.

WRAP UP

Amazing! You just finished creating a journal entry of an unknown sea creature with your imagination, and the similes you use to describe your creature will be so helpful when your readers are imagining it.

The next time you describe something new, try to help your reader picture what you're describing by using similes.

See you next time, writers.