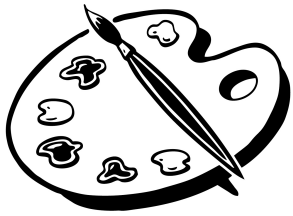


# Exploring Imagery in Music and Language Arts



Artists create pictures with lines, shapes and colors; musicians create pictures with sounds; and writers create pictures with words. We will explore the similarities in the creative process so that we can learn to write with deeper visual meaning.



## In Music



## In Writing

Different Instruments create musical colors and images which remind us of objects in the world around us.

Comparisons create images in our mind.

- Similes use “like” or “as”
- Metaphors compare seemingly unrelated objects (without “like” or “as”)
- Personification gives human qualities to non human objects

Rhythms (long or short) and articulations (smooth or choppy) convey pictures of actions that may be taking place.

Word choice can make the reader imagine different characteristics through

- Alliteration (words start with the same sound)
- Rhyme (words end with the same sound)
- Onomatopoeia (words sound like what they describe)

Grouping different sounds together at the same time in twos, threes, fours, or more creates harmonies which add emotions and depth to the music.

Creative writing uses adjectives and lots of details to develop a full picture.

- Answer who, what, when, why, and how.
- Use lots of adjectives

## Let's Practice with our book “Can You Hear It?”

For each example, listen to the music and try to find the imagery in the music and in the picture. Then there will be an exercise to create an image with words using some of the tools above. Finally, listen to your favorite piece of music again and write a paragraph telling a story about what you imagine as the music is performed.

Clarinet



## Track One: Onomatopoeia

In “*Flight of the Bumblebee*” by Rimsky-Korsakov (p.12), the many short, quick notes make us think about the buzzing of a bee. In writing we have words that sound like the meaning of the word itself. The term for this kind of word is called “**Onomatopoeia**”. These words bring writing to life as the reader can really imagine the sounds that would be heard in the scene. Some examples include: cuckoo, sizzle, achoo, beep, buzz, hum, squish, whizz.

**Write a sentence about a bee using at least one example of onomatopoeia.**

## Track Two: Rhymes

In “*Winter*” by Vivaldi (p.14), the repetition of pattern in the rhythm feels like the gliding of skates. In writing we can use rhyme to create a feeling of pattern and rhythm. Read the following poem about skating and notice the use of rhyme.

Ice Skating (by daresha)

Spills and chills out on the ice  
Slipping once, tripping twice  
Gliding, sliding, and colliding  
Jumping, whirling, spinning

**Create your own poem about winter.**



Violin

## Track Three: Similes

In “*An American in Paris*” by George Gershwin (p.16) actual car horns make the sounds of the crowded street and woodblocks make sounds like horses’ hoofs. When we compare objects using “like” or “as” we call it a “**simile**”.

**Complete the sentences about a busy street scene using a simile.**

The honking of horns was as loud as.....



Wood Blocks

## Track Four: Alliteration

Flute



In “*The Aquarium*” by Saint-Saens (p.18), the short little repeated clusters of similar notes in the piano is contrasted with the smooth long notes in the flutes and violins. This repetition of sounds creates the image of rippling water surrounding swimming fish. When words begin with the same sound, we call it “**alliteration**”.

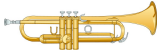
“Tumbling towards the treacherous tide” is an example of alliteration.

Here are some examples of synonyms of the word swim: dive, float, glide, slip, wade

Here are some examples of types of fish: dorado, devil ray, flounder, goldfish, grouper, sailback scorpionfish, salmon, sleeper shark, white shark, wolf-eel.

**Combine a fish with a verb and add an adjective to create a sentence using alliteration.**

Trumpet



## Track Five: Adjectives

In *"Dance of the Knights"* by Prokofiev (p.20), the composer uses combinations of notes to create rich harmonies which make the listener feel that something horrible is about to happen (remember they both die at the end of this story!). In writing, **adjectives** can create the mood and give a more complete picture.

**Add adjectives to the following sentences so that the reader can visualize the scene more clearly.**

The \_\_\_\_\_ knights marched down the \_\_\_\_\_ street to the \_\_\_\_\_ town square. (Here are some ideas to get you started: brave, chivalrous, dashing, fearless, strong, valiant, cobblestone, paved, brick, unpaved, gravel, spacious, grand, monumental, substantial.... )

## Track Six Metaphors

In *"Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy"* by Tchaikovsky (p.22), the celeste (a piano like instrument) is an instrument that conjures images of fairies dancing. A metaphor is a comparison made between things without using the words "like" or "as".

**Write a sentence using one of the following metaphors.**

Fairy dust of sleep, ghostly shadows, dreamy spell, fairy tale mood, dusting of magic



Bass Clarinet

## Track Seven: Synonyms

In *"Spring"* by Vivaldi (p.23), the bird-like sounds are called trills (two notes played back and forth very quickly). When they are high in pitch they can sound like birds. When they are low they can sound like thunder. Trills can also decorate the music to make the melody more interesting. When we are writing we need to be careful not to use the same words over and over again. Synonyms are words that mean almost the same thing but can add interesting details for the reader.

**Spruce up the following sentence with synonyms.**

The tree grew big.

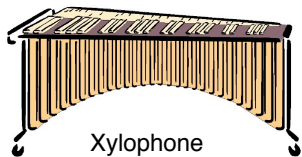
Here are some suggestions, or use your own.

(sapling, seedling, burst forth, matured, sprouted, sprung up, thrived, blossomed, full, massive)



Harpsichord

## Track Eight: Personification



Xylophone

In *"Fossils"* by Saint-Saens (p.24), the xylophone is a perfect instrument to create the sound of skeleton bones dancing. Can skeleton's dance? Of course not. When we give inanimate objects or animals human qualities we call it **"personification"**. What other human activities can you imagine for a skeleton? Would it dig, yawn, or weep? Imagining a skeleton as a human is fairly easy, but what about the wind? What might the wind do? Could it whisper, giggle, or howl?

**Create your own sentence about a scene in a graveyard and be sure to use personification.**

## Track Nine: Humor

In *“Comic Duet for Two Cats”* by Rossini (p.27), we are surprised to find sophisticated opera singers acting like cats. Humor is often found in the unexpected. First the writer must set up the situation. The punchline is when something different than expected actually happens.

“I gave my cat a bath the other day... . He sat there, he enjoyed it, it was fun for me. The fur would stick to my tongue, but other than that...” – Steve Martin

**Write your own unexpected ending.**

To a cat, “no” means....



Double Bass

## Track Ten: Hyperbole

In *“The Elephant”* by Saint-Saens (p.28), the double bass (which is a very large instrument) plays a delicate waltz. By exaggerating the difference between the double bass and gracefulness, the composer is making a joke for the listener. In writing, we can use exaggeration too. When exaggeration is used to emphasize a point we call it **“hyperbole”**. A writer should be carefully about using hyperbole in more serious writing such as an essay or article but it can be very effective in humorous writing.

**Write a hyperbole about an elephant.**

Hint: think of something that they are known for (large, wrinkly, huge ears, long trunk) and compare that to someone or something.

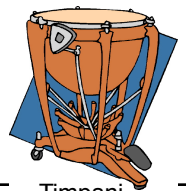


## Track Eleven: Details (who, what, where, why, & how)

In *“Billy the Kid”* by Copland (p.30), the composer tells the story of an infamous outlaw, Billy the Kid. Copland’s music sets the scene of a small frontier town on the prairie. There are lots of gun battles and lots of tragedy in this ballet. The composer is able to convey who, what, and where this music takes place by his use of instruments and melodies. In writing, it is important to tell your reader all the details of who, what, where, why, and how so that the reader can picture the scene as clearly as you do.

**Sketch out the details of your own gun battle. Be sure to use lots of adjectives.**

Who is fighting? Where are they fighting? What kind of weapons? What kind of transportation are they using? Why are they fighting? How will it all turn out?



Timpani

## Track Twelve: Putting it All Together

In *“Summer”* by Vivaldi (p.32), the composer tells us the story of a storm. Now is your chance to write your own description of a storm using the tools you have learned. First write a paragraph. Select several of the examples of imagery that we discussed and see if you can add them to your paragraph.

**Here are the topics we discussed: details (who, what, where, when, why, how), adjectives, personification, similes, metaphors, alliteration, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, and humor.**

