

Chapters 1-7

Literature Focus: Using Imagery and Figurative Language



Mood is the emotional landscape of a piece of writing. It is how the reader is expected to feel when reading the words of the author. Just as you experience happy or sad moods, writing can evoke happy or sad moods, and many others in between. Writers often use techniques such as imagery and figurative language to create moods for the reader. This might be humor, gloom, excitement, or any other emotion.

Imagery is the process of creating a mental picture for the reader. Just as a painter uses colors and shapes, a writer uses words to make the reader see what he or she wants him to see. Imagery uses any of the five senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.



Part I

In Chapter 1, Pip describes his “first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of the country” as a child. © 2014 by Simple Novel - simplynovel.com

At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; ... and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip. Ch. 1

In this passage, we see several examples of description. Careful word choice creates a mood of desolation and loss. Words like “bleak,” “dark,” “leaden,” and “shivers” make us feel like we are there, suffering alongside the young narrator. There is also extensive description of the setting that tells us what the place looks like and what is there. We learn about the nettles, gravestones, cattle and marshes. This helps establish us in the setting of the story more completely.

Directions: In the table on the next page, underline or highlight the images given in the excerpt on the left. On the right, identify the senses used and describe the mood created by the excerpt. In the last box, add your own example.

| Excerpt from the Text | Sense(s) Used and Mood Created |
|--|---|
| <p><i>A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a <u>great iron on his leg</u>. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man <u>who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars: who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled: and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.</u> (Ch. 1)</i></p> | <p>Dickens uses imagery to give us a vivid picture of the man. Dickens uses indirect characterization to characterize the man as an escaped prisoner. With this amount of description, this character is probably going to play an important role. Dickens uses the imagery to create a very mysterious and threatening mood.</p> |
| <p><i>You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be <u>tore out, roasted, and ate.</u> (Ch. 1)</i></p> | <p>Dickens uses vivid descriptions to give us an idea of what the prisoner threatens to do, to be honest it's really gruesome. This sets a very sickening and somewhat serious mood.</p> |
| <p><i>A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. (Ch. 1)</i></p> | <p>With the actions Dickens' lists in the beginning, he sets a suspenseful mood. When Dickens mentions the young man creeping onto the boy, the mood becomes somewhat dark, threatening, and gloomy.</p> |
| <p><i>But presently I looked over my shoulder, and saw him going on again towards the river, still hugging himself in both arms, and picking his way with his sore feet among the great stones dropped into the marshes here and there, for stepping-places when the rains were heavy, or the tide was in. (Ch. 1)</i></p> | <p>Dickens uses the actions of the prisoner to build a somewhat mysterious scene. Dicken also mentions the heavy rain and tides, which adds a possibility of a danger. The mood Dickens' sets would be mysterious and dangerous.</p> |
| <p><i>The marshes were just a <u>long black horizontal line</u> then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another <u>horizontal line</u>, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of <u>long angry red lines</u> and dense black lines intermixed. (Ch. 1)</i></p> | <p>Dickens' uses the imagery to imply that the marshes and river were pretty far away and distant. He also uses personification to describe the lines on the sky, which builds somewhat of a tense or mysterious mood.</p> |
| <p><i>At this dismal intelligence, I twisted the only button on my waistcoat round and round, and looked in great depression at the fire. Tickler was a wax-ended piece of cane, <u>worn smooth by collision with my tickled frame.</u> (Ch. 2)</i></p> | <p>Dickens' uses his word choice and sets a depressing mood. He mentions the single button on the waistcoat, which adds more effect to the depressing mood.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><i>On this particular evening the urgency of my case demanded a pint of this mixture, which was poured down my throat, for my greater comfort, while Mrs. Joe held my head under her arm, <u>as a boot would be held in a boot-jack</u>. Joe got off with half a pint; but was made to swallow that (much to his disturbance, as he sat slowly munching and meditating before the fire), 'because he had had a turn.' (Ch. 2)</i></p> | <p>Dickens' doesn't mention the mixture's name, which gives a sense of mystery. Dickens' also describes the mixture as something that tastes extremely terrible, which sets a mysterious and tense mood</p> |
|--|---|

| Excerpt from the Text | Sense(s) Used and Mood Created |
|--|---|
| <p><i>My sister had a trenchant way of cutting our bread-and-butter for us that never varied. First, with her left hand <u>she jammed the loaf hard and fast</u> against her bib—where it sometimes got a pin into it, and sometimes a needle, which we afterwards got into our mouths. (Ch. 2)</i></p> | <p>With Dickens' word choice, we can tell that he is setting like a systematic mood, listing everything step by step, very systematically.</p> |
| <p><i>Some medical beast had revived Tar- water in those days as a fine medicine, and Mrs. Joe always kept a supply of it in the cupboard; having a belief in its virtues correspondent to its nastiness. <u>At the best of times, so much of this elixir was administered to me as a choice restorative that I was conscious of going about, smelling like a new fence.</u> (Ch. 2)</i></p> | <p>Dickens' uses the Tar water to give some sort of mysterious tone to the story - he doesn't give the reader an clear visualization of what Tar water actually is, just the fact that it tastes terrible and</p> |
| <p><i>I stole some bread, some rind of cheese, about half a jar of mincemeat <u>(which I tied up in my pocket-handkerchief with my last night's slice)</u>, some brandy from a stone bottle <u>(which I decanted into a glass bottle I had secretly used for making that intoxicating fluid</u></i></p> | <p>Dickens' uses Pip's action to set a very stealthy mood, he's basically acting like a thief.</p> |

What is the overall mood in Chapters 1-7? Why do you think Dickens begins the book with this mood? _____

I think the overall mood of the story is just gloomy, dark, and tense. Dickens' probably begins the book with this mood because he wants the reader to see Pip as a character that has gone through a lot of rough moments

There are several examples of humor in Chapters 1-7. Find one and describe it below. Why does Dickens

include moments of humor? _____
In Chapter 5, when the policeman comes into Pip's house, Pip completely freaks out as he thought they were here to
_____ arrest him for helping a prisoner. However, they only wanted to fix their handcuffs, which I think is kind of funny as I
_____ also have been through moments like these. Dickens' includes this to probably show that Pip is a person who jumps to
_____ conclusions quickly

Part II

Dickens often uses **figurative language**, or non-literal descriptive language, to describe places, people, and events. This helps the reader see what he sees, and feel what he feels. Consider the image created with figurative language when Dickens describes the convict.

As I saw him go, picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in. Ch.

1



The convict is not really walking through “the hands of the dead people.” This is a form of figurative language called a simile. A simile is an indirect comparison that usually uses “like” or “as.” Dickens was particularly fond of similes, because he could use them to create an image and reinforce mood. In this simile, the brambles are compared to the hands of dead people, which is a spooky and saddening image.

As you read *Great Expectations*, keep an eye out for images and similes to create the mood of the section.

Directions: In the chart below, there are several examples of similes. Describe what is being compared, and mood the comparison creates. In the last box, find your own example.

| Simile | What is Compared? | Mood Created |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>I had seen the damp lying on the outside of my little window, as if some goblin had been crying there all night, and using the window for a pocket-handkerchief. (Ch. 3)</i> | The damp to a goblin crying all night | The crying sets some sort of sad mood in my opinion, but it also gets my curious on why the narrator is thinking about crying goblins |
| <i>Now I saw the damp lying on the bare hedges and spare grass, like a coarser sort of spiders' webs; hanging itself from twig to twig and blade to blade. (Ch. 3)</i> | The damp to a spider web | It somewhat sets a solitary/isolated mood, since he mentions twig to twig, and blade to blade, which are all like individual |
| Simile | What is Compared? | Mood Created |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Then, as I looked up at it, while it dripped, it seemed to my oppressed conscience like a phantom devoting me to the Hulks. (Ch. 3)</i> | His conscience to a phantom | It sort of sets some mysterious mood with the word choice, such as phantom and hulks |
| <i>Something clicked in his throat as if he had works in him like a clock, and was going to strike. And he smeared his ragged rough sleeve over his eyes. (Ch. 3)</i> | The click in his throat to a clock striking | The click can represent some suspenseful thing happening, thus setting a suspenseful mood |
| <i>The man took strong sharp sudden bites, just like the dog. (Ch. 3)</i> | Strong sharp bites to a dog bit | This sets some sort of threatening and dangerous mood as dog bites probably hurt a lot |
| <i>He was already handing mincemeat down his throat in the most curious manner - more like a man who was putting it away somewhere in a violent hurry, than a man who was eating it - but he left off to take some of the liquor.</i> | The prisoner eating to a man putting something quickly away | This sets a sort of suspenseful and rushed mood |

Why do you think Dickens chooses to use similes so often? _____
 Dickens probably uses a lot of similes just to show what Pip is thinking, basically he

 let's us see what Pip is actually thinking about, giving us as a reader a better understanding of his personality

What other figurative language does Dickens use? Find two different examples of metaphors or personification and record them here. _____

The most common example of figurative language that Dickens uses is personification. He uses personification when he says "The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long angry red lines and dense black lines intermixed. (Ch.1)"; the lines can't actually be angry, and he uses metaphors

Chapters 1-7

Writing Focus: Character Sketch

A character sketch is a detailed description of a person. Dickens takes care to describe his characters, including what they look like and how they behave. Consider the descriptions of Mrs. Joe and Joe in Chapter 2.

Mrs. Joe:

She was not a good-looking woman, my sister; and I had a general impression that she must have made Joe Gargery marry her by hand.



Part I

1. What does Mrs. Joe's physical description tell you about her? _____

Well by "not a good-looking woman" we can see that she is chubby. The chubby stereotype may include some grumpiness and stubbornness.

2. What words does Dickens use to describe Mrs. Joe's personality? _____

When Dickens mentions "she must have made Joe Gargery marry her by hand", Dickens probably suggests that she is extremely stubborn, as mentioned in the previous question

Joe:

Joe was a fair man, with curls of flaxen hair on each side of his smooth face, and with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites. He was a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow—a sort of Hercules in strength, and also in weakness.

3. What does Joe's physical description tell you about him? _____

He has blue eyes, so he's good looking. Dickens also mentions "a sort of Hercules in strength", so he's probably buff

4. What words does Dickens use to describe Joe's personality? _____
Most good looking people in stories tend to have good personalities, and this theory

is proven when Dickens mentions his good qualities such as, mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, and easy-going.