



Life Is Like...



Is life really like a box of chocolates? How about a bowl full of cherries? There are many metaphors and similes for life, but some of them are overused. It's time to stretch our minds and our imaginations and find new comparisons for life.

- 1) You will be **RANDOMLY** selecting **three words** from the dictionary or thesaurus. No peeking, no selecting is allowed. It has to be random! To do this, close your eyes, open the dictionary, take your finger and point at a word. It doesn't have to be the defined word; it could be a word within the definition or even a partial word.
- 2) Once you have those three words, then you will pick one and decide how life can be like that item. We're just making a list at this point so write down everything you can think of, in no particular order.
- 3) For instance, if my words were scales, pop and buyers (I followed my own directions), I think I can really work with the word "scales." Now, I could define scales as fish scales or the scales that weigh and balance things. Here's an example of my brainstormed list:

Life is like a scale

How? Well,

- Up and down
- Sometimes you can be cheated
- Sometimes things can be heavy/light
- Sometime things are balanced
- Scales measure all types of things
- Sometimes you are happy with the results/Sometimes you are not
- The statue of Justice is holding a scale

- 4) What happens if you get three words that you can't possibly work with? No problem. Try, try again!
- 5) Spend some time brainstorming. Really stretch your imagination and try to work with the word you've selected. Write down everything you can about this word. But if you find yourself stuck, try another word.

Life is...

Getting started.

1. Now you should have one word and a list of comparisons completed. Let's take it another step.
2. We are going to go from a simile to a metaphor by dropping the "like" and making life BE that item. So in my earlier example, Life is a like a scale becomes Life is a scale.
3. Find your handout that you were given earlier in the unit, "Making poetry more poetic" and keep this out as you work.
4. To create a poem, you are going to need to take the very best of your brainstormed list and add to it. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Writing Checklist

- Don't ask how long the poem needs to be! Good poets write until they've said everything that can be said. Line length is subjective. A powerful poem can have one word on many lines, thus giving it the appearance that it is long; while a cruddy poem can have many lines and many words and not say anything worth remembering. You've got to include poetic devices to make a poem powerful.
- Use powerful vocabulary. Make sure you replace simple words like good, bad and ugly with more mature and descriptive selections. They should become words like excellent, appalling, and hideous.
- Make vivid images. Link together descriptive words to create vivid images. When I write, "Life is a scale," the first question you should say is, "Well, what kind of scale are you talking about?" I could say, "Life is a silver plated scale that measures the decisions of my life." More descriptive isn't it?
- Add figurative language. Try to figure out how you can add a metaphor, simile, sensory language, or personification in your poem. Remember we said that a poet adds many of these qualities in order to make his/her poem more powerful.
- Play with line length, punctuation, and spacing. Use the handout, Making a poem more poetic. If it will make a word more powerful to be on a line by itself, then put it there!

5. Let's get started! Spend some quality time writing your poem. Don't rush and don't hurry. Take your time working on this. This is your first chance to show your stuff, so be thorough.

Peer Conference

Peer Conference

Peer conferencing is an important part of writing. A peer can help spot weak areas, show your strengths and help create a better writing piece, but there are some ground rules to peer conferencing.

Ground Rules

- No gossiping. No talking about stuff other than the poems.
- Peer conferencing should take no more than **10 minutes. 15 at the maximum.**
- Both authors must be finished with their writing. You should use the Writing Checklist located on the Life Is handout before you Peer Conference.
- Both authors will need a rubric, Peer Conferencing handout and a neatly written copy of the poem.
- Authors will find a quiet place to work and exchange poems.
- Poems will be carefully read at least twice. Don't mark anything; don't say anything, just read the poems carefully!
- If you see spelling errors, come back to them last. Focus on the message and meaning in the poem first.
- Use the Peer Conference Checklist to ensure that you look for all the necessary items.
- Once the poem has been read, the Peer Conference Checklist checked and done, the conference is complete! Go back to your desk and begin your rewrite.

Peer Conference Checklist

Author _____

Title of poem _____

Peer Conferencer _____

Time began _____ Time-ended _____

Check items off. If an item cannot be checked off, then the author and peer conferencer should talk about how the item can be done and brainstorm ideas. Then the item can be checked off.

- Poem has been read at least twice by the author and the peer editor.
- Vocabulary check** The author uses mature vocabulary and has replaced simple words with more descriptive ones.
- Vivid images** The author has created vivid images through use of descriptive words and phrases.
- Figurative Language** The author has included metaphor, simile, personification or sensory language. The figurative language included is well written and very descriptive.
- Making it more poetic** The author has played with line length, spacing or any of the ideas listed on the handout, Making it more poetic.
- Spelling errors** have been noted.
- Peer Conference** The author has been given ideas to make the poem better. These ideas include:

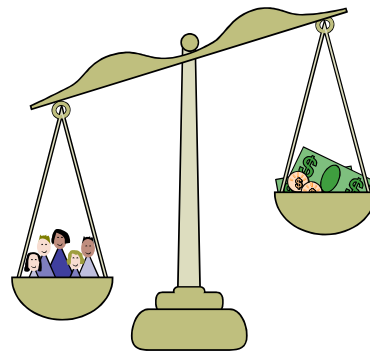
Life is a Scale

Dawn Capes

Life is a silver plated scale
Measuring the decisions of
My life

Down Down
Up Up

Sometimes
I feel
Cheated
As if an invisible hand
Has placed a thumb on one side
Other times
I feel
Balanced
All of my decisions
Acceptable
Life is a silver plated scale
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(In this order-bottom to top)

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- Completed Peer Conference Checklist
- Completed Rubric (from peer)
- A neatly written final copy

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