

## Argument Analysis: Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech using words or phrases that have no literal relationship with the subject matter. Some common metaphors you may have heard before include: the black sheep of the family; skeletons in the closet; skating on thin ice; low hanging fruit; a bad egg; a frog in your throat.

An easy way to identify metaphors is that they often seem absurd or unlikely if taken literally. If someone has difficulty speaking, there usually *isn't* a frog in their throat. Most of the time, someone with a dubious past doesn't *actually* have skeletons in their closet. There are very few occasions when people doing something risky or dangerous are *literally* skating on thin ice.

Comparisons that use the words 'like' or 'as' are called similes. The difference? Similes state that one thing is *like* another whereas metaphors state one thing *is* another.

Because they are symbolic, metaphors often allow writers to make connections or comparisons that are abstract, memorable and emotive. This is why the metaphors above have become cliched parts of everyday speech. When unpacking a metaphor, consider: whether the symbolism is positive or negative; what the writer is encouraging their audience to think or feel; and how the metaphor contributes to the writer's overall argument.

### Plastic: what a load of rubbish

Angus Hagel, February 21, 2020

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Plastic is a cancer. It has spread through our environment: destroying our waterways, ravaging wildlife, and infecting our food chain. The prognosis is grim. We've done little to change our behaviour and the insidious disease continues to spread.

The amount of plastic that Australians consume is staggering. Between 2018 and 2019, we collectively churned through 3.5 million tonnes of the stuff.

According to the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, only 11.5% of this was recycled.

What happened to the rest?

If we're lucky, some of it will end up in landfill where it will take up to a thousand years to degrade. Unfortunately, plastic never disappears completely. It just breaks down into small and smaller pieces of plastic—so called microplastics—that contaminate our environment and creep into the food chain.

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A 2019 study by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) found that these microplastics have entered the food chain and Aussies could be ingesting a teaspoon of microplastics every

week, the equivalent of chowing down on a credit card.

The worst offender is single-use plastic.

After a heavy downpour last week, I took a stroll through a nearby nature reserve. Following the creek through this tranquil and stunning stretch of bushland, I was appalled to see the sheer amount of single use plastic built up along the banks. Plastic bags, utensils, bottles and containers choked the waterway.

Our biggest enemies are the major supermarkets, propylene pharaohs who continue to mummify fresh produce in plastic wrap. In response to our overwhelming criticism of their poor practices, Woolworths, Coles and Aldi have started packing apples in cardboard containers. While this is a step in the right direction, we need to keep pushing for change. Refuse products with unnecessary packaging. Return soft plastic to stores for recycling. Rally support for responsible packaging.

Australians overwhelmingly take pride in their country and care for the environment. Together we can ensure that the natural wonders this country has to offer can be enjoyed by generations to come.

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## Argument Analysis: Plastic: what a load of rubbish

Read the article 'Plastic: what a load of rubbish'. Identify the issue, contention, audience and tone of the piece. Identify the persuasive techniques in the piece and explain the effect they are intended to have on the audience.

**Issue:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contention:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tone:** \_\_\_\_\_

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