

Figurative Language

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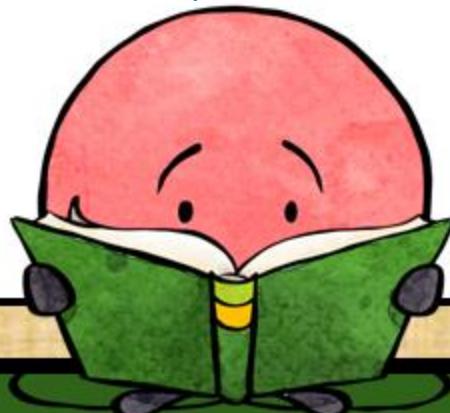
[Malapropism Definition, Examples, and Lesson](#)

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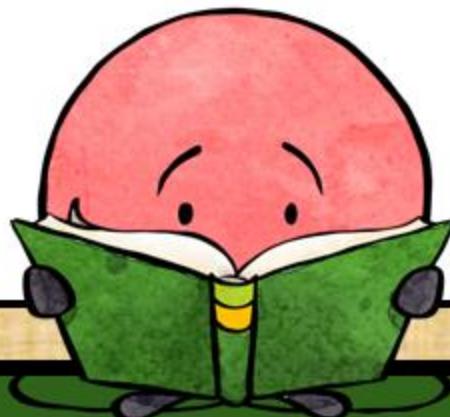
Google Slide Links

This handout provides definitions and examples of euphemisms to help students understand this figurative language concept. Additionally, it includes links to access the video lesson and accompanying organizer.

Click here to download the free activities from Google Drive.

- This is the [**digital version**](#) including the YouTube video lesson.
- Check out the blog post for activities not included in this handout.

[**Teaching Euphemisms with Classic Cartoons**](#)



What Are Euphemisms?

A **euphemism** is a mild or indirect way of saying something that might otherwise sound a little harsh, awkward, or just plain rude.

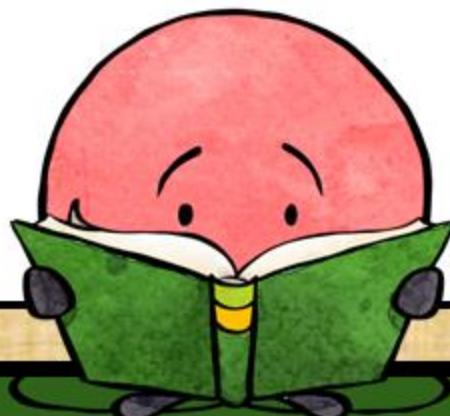
We use them *all the time*, sometimes without even realizing it:

“**passed away**” instead of “died”

“**let go**” instead of “fired”

“**taking a break**” instead of “I’ve had enough and need chocolate immediately”

Cartoons use euphemisms to keep things light and kid-friendly; after all, “He got bonked on the head” sounds a lot better than “He just suffered a mild concussion.”



PRINTABLE VERSION -- Organizers

Three versions of most organizers are offered: one with blanks where students write definitions and create examples; one with the definitions provided but with blank spaces for students to write in keywords; and one with the answers provided. The third copy of the organizer may be used as an **answer key**, for differentiated instruction, for students who were absent during instruction, or if you wish for the students to have the organizers already completed.

1. Edit the organizers.

- The structure of the page and the clipart can't be changed. They are embedded into the background of the Google Slides.
- Textboxes are on top of the embedded background. This means all text can be altered.
- Look through the organizers. Change font size and style, spacing between lines, or text to fit the needs of your students. (Warning: The samples match the video.)

2. Print the organizers.

- Print the organizers after you make edits.

3. Using the Organizers:

- Have students watch the instructional video that goes with the organizer. Pause the video when instructed to do so. Have students complete the organizer. Next have students watch the remainder of the video to check their answers.

4. Fold the Organizer.

- This organizer requires no cutting or coloring. I recommend telling students that they can color the blackline drawings at home if they wish to, but it is not necessary.
- The organizer folds like a fan. Make sure the first fold is under, so the definitions are on top and will be visible when flipping through the interactive notebook.

5. Gluing the Organizer:

- Flip the organizer over with the text box with the definition faces down. Have students place a single line of white school glue down the back right-hand side of the organizer. Glue the organizers two to a page (four to an open notebook).

Idiom

Idioms are a group of _____ that cannot be _____ merely by knowing the meanings of its _____.

Examples



Don't let the cat out of the bag.



Don't cry over spilled milk.

Proverb

Proverbs are short _____ known by people, stating some commonly given _____ or a short popular _____ usually of origin, that expresses effectively some commonplace _____ or thought.

Example



A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.



When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Adage

Adages are old familiar _____ that express _____.

Examples



A penny saved is a penny earned.



Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

Personification

Personification is when an author gives an _____ or _____ qualities or traits of a _____.

Examples



The sun smiled down at me.



The moon played hide and seek with the clouds.

Euphemisms

A **euphemism** is _____

Rules for Using Euphemisms

Examples

Cartoon #1: Popeye – April Fool's Day

Euphemism Highlights:

“April Fool!” →

“Can’t you take a joke?” —

“That’s embarrassing.” —

“Sucker for a gag.” →



Cartoon #2: Casper – A Haunting We Will Go

Euphemism Highlights

“Wouldn’t scare people” —

“Scaring the daylights out of people” →

“I might as well be dead” =

“In better spirits” →

Cartoon #3: Superman – Billion Dollar Limited

Euphemism Highlights:

“This looks like a job for Superman!” →

“Turns up just when you need him.” →

“Fights a never-ending battle.” →

“Brought to justice.” →



Euphemisms

A **euphemism** is a mild or indirect _____ or expression used in place of something more _____, harsh, or _____.

Rules for Using Euphemisms

They replace direct words.

They change the tone.

They're common in conversation and media.

They can soften or hide meaning.

Examples

💀 Death

💼 Fired / Job Loss

☒ ☐ Serious Problem / Mistake

🚻 Toilet / Bathroom

✚ Sickness or Injury

⽼ Old Age

💬 Lying / Dishonesty

💔 Breaking Up

Cartoon #1: Popeye – April Fool's Day

Euphemism Highlights:

"April Fool!" →

"Can't you take a joke?" →

"That's embarrassing." →

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Euphemism Highlights:

"This looks like a job for Superman!" →

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"Fights a never-ending battle." →

"Brought to justice." →



Euphemisms

A **euphemism** is a mild or indirect word or expression used in place of something more direct, harsh, or uncomfortable.

Rules for Using Euphemisms

1. They replace direct words.

Example: "He passed away" instead of "He died."

2. They change the tone.

Euphemisms make something sound more polite, formal, or gentle.

3. They're common in conversation and media.

You'll find them in the news ("downsizing" instead of "firing employees") and in advertising ("previously loved" instead of "used").

4. They can soften or hide meaning.

Sometimes euphemisms are used to avoid strong emotions or make a message easier to hear.

Examples

💀 Death

passed away
laid to rest
he's no longer with us
departed
gone to a better place

💼 Fired / Job Loss

let go
between jobs
seeking new opportunities
taking some time off
moving in a different direction

☒ ☐ Serious Problem / Mistake

a little trouble
a small setback
a bump in the road
had a rough patch

🚽 Toilet / Bathroom

restroom
ladies' room / men's room
powder room
washroom
facilities

✚ Sickness or Injury

under the weather
not feeling one's best
feeling a bit off

⌚ Old Age

senior citizen
getting up there in years
golden years

🗣 Lying / Dishonesty

stretched the truth
told a little white lie
creative storytelling

💔 Breaking Up

taking a break
going separate ways
seeing other people

Cartoon #1: Popeye – April Fool's Day

Euphemism Highlights:

"April Fool!" → I fooled you on purpose.

"Can't you take a joke?" → Stop being upset—I didn't mean harm.

"That's embarrassing." → That made me feel foolish.

"Sucker for a gag." → Someone who falls for tricks easily.



Cartoon #3: Superman – Billion Dollar Limited

Euphemism Highlights:

"This looks like a job for Superman!" → Something dangerous needs a hero's help.

"Turns up just when you need him." → Arrives right on time to save people.

"Fights a never-ending battle." → Always works to protect others.

"Brought to justice." → The villains were caught and punished.



Cartoon #2: Casper – A Haunting We Will Go

Euphemism Highlights:

"Wouldn't scare people" → Refuses to frighten others.

"Scaring the daylights out of people" → Terrifying someone.

"I might as well be dead" → Feels lonely or unseen.

"In better spirits" → Feeling happier or more positive.

Teacher Directions: Euphemism Matching Cards

Overview:

This set includes 16 cards labeled with **categories** (e.g., Death, Job Loss, Bathroom) and 16 cards with **euphemisms** (e.g., “passed away,” “let go,” “restroom”). Students will match each euphemism to its correct category using one of the activities below.

Preparation

Print and cut out the 32 cards (16 categories + 16 euphemisms).

Optional: Laminate for durability or print on colored cardstock (e.g., blue for categories, green for euphemisms).

Activity Options

1. Concentration Game (Memory Match)

Shuffle and lay all 32 cards face down in a grid.

Students take turns flipping two cards at a time.

If they find a matching category/euphemism pair, they keep the cards.

If not, they flip them back and the next player goes.

Continue until all matches are found.

2. Direct Matching Challenge

Distribute all 32 cards to small groups.

Students work together to match each euphemism to its correct category.

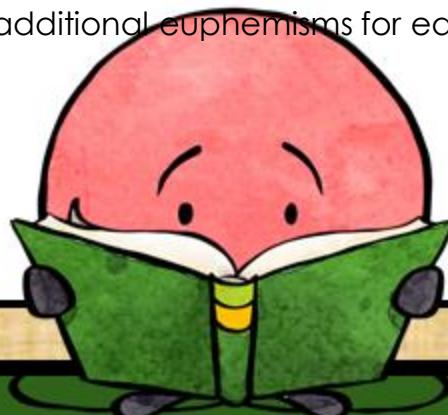
Encourage discussion: “Why do you think this euphemism fits that category?”

3. Sort and Explain

Students sort euphemism cards into category piles.

For each match, they write or explain the literal meaning behind the euphemism.

Extension: Have students brainstorm additional euphemisms for each category.



Death

Fired / Job Loss

**Serious
Problem /
Mistake**

**Toilet /
Bathroom**

**Sickness or
Injury**

Old Age

**Lying /
Dishonesty**

Breaking Up

Homelessness

**Financial
Difficulty**

Death of a Pet

Housework

**Moving /
Relocation**

**Military
Combat**

Jail or Arrest

Weight Gain

between jobs

put on a few pounds

powder room

between homes

saw action

stretched the truth

tidying up

golden years

under the weather

living on a tight budget

laid to rest

seeing other people

a bump in the road

doing time

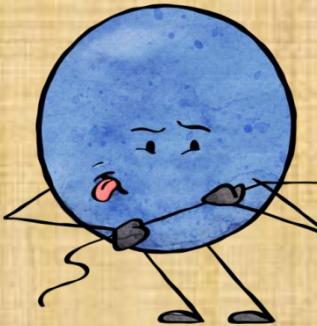
somewhere new

crossed the rainbow bridge



Credits





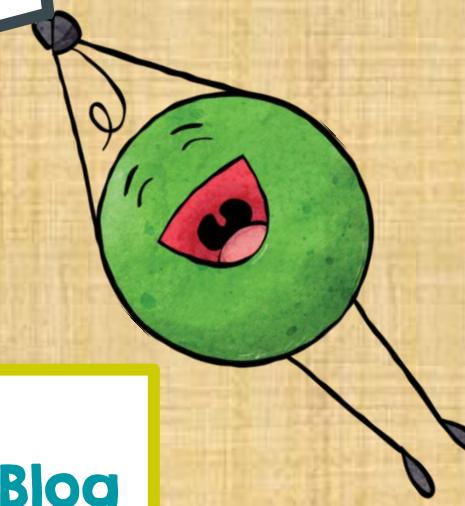
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