
Hyperbole

Interpretation Guide

CA Language Arts Standards Covered:

9/10 R 1.1, 1.2, 2.2; LRA 3.7, 3.11; 11/12 LRA; 3.4; R 2.2

Hyperbole: A figure of speech that uses incredible exaggeration, or overstatement, for effect.

For example:

I pulled up with a million trucks—lookin, smellin, feeling like a million bucks. (*Ludacris*)

People often use exaggeration to make their point strong and clear. In the example above, the speaker did not really have a million trucks; the speaker is boasting about his status as well as how good he feels. Most Hip-Hop lyrics contain a lot of hyperbole.

Hyperbole is commonly used in society. *For example:*

- I nearly died laughing.
- I knocked on the door a million times.
- John was so scared he jumped out of his skin.

Classic Poets use **HYPERBOLE**

I love thee with the breath, smiles, tears
of all my life!

(*Elizabeth Browning*)

This little world of mine has lost its light.

(*Dorothy Parker*)

A robin redbreast in a cage
Sets all heaven in a rage.

(*William Blake*)

Questions:

- In the first example does the poet *literally* love with her breath, smiles and tears?
- In the second example has the world *literally* lost its light?
- In the third example is ALL of heaven *literally* in a rage?

Hip-Hop Poets use **HYPERBOLE**

A lot of MCs today really know how to please, but I gave birth to most of them MCs.
(*Roxanne Shante*)

My mom's words echo in my head and if I let go I'm dead.
(*Nas*)

I can roast an MC like a barbecue.
(*Big Daddy Kane*)

Questions:

- In the first example did she *literally* give birth to them MCs?
- In the second example if the poet *literally* lets go will he die?
- In the third example will another rapper *literally* be put on a barbecue?

Poetry Writing Exercise: Hyperbole

Learning Objective: Students will identify and utilize the poetic device of hyperbole.
Standards Addressed: 9/10 W&O 1.3, 1.4; LRA 3.7, 3.11, 11/12 W&O 1.1, 1.2; W 2.2; LRA 3.4
Materials needed: This worksheet.
Methodology: See below.

Use the following writing prompts to create hyperbole.

- I am so thirsty _____
- The guy is so cheap _____
- She is so smart _____
- I love it more than _____
- The teacher is so boring _____

A TALL TALE is a story that contains a great deal of exaggeration.

For example:

My grandfather came home from fishing yesterday and explained to me how he caught the largest bass in the river. But it wasn't just a gigantic bass — it was a gigantic, speaking bass. This is why, my grandfather explained, he didn't return home with the fish. The gigantic, speaking bass asked to be let go and my grandfather did as he was told.

Use hyperbole to create a TALL POEM. Your poem should:

- Tell a short story.
- Be filled with exaggeration.
- Be at least 8 lines long.
- Attempt to use a rhyme scheme.

For example:

Hip-Hop Star Hyperbole

I'm the baddest rapper
with the sweetest ride.
But it's not about the money,
it's about the pride.
I came through with my army,
my truck is like a tank.
If you try to test me,
I'll take you straight to the bank.

Hyperbole Poem
