

Exploring metaphor

Introduction

The English language, both written and spoken, is full of metaphor. Using metaphor will add impact and interest to your English.

Look at the meaning of *storm* in the following sentences. In the first sentence it is used literally, in the second metaphorically.

- 1 Did you hear the **storm** last night? (heavy rain and wind, sometimes with thunder and lightning)
- 2 The new taxes were met with a **storm** of protest. (a very large amount)

► Activity 1

Match the following words to make expressions and then match the expressions to the metaphorical images they refer to. Discuss the meaning of the expressions with a partner.

- | | | |
|------------|----------|--------|
| a blazing | job | health |
| b spice | row | road |
| c dead-end | recovery | food |
| d economic | up | fire |

► Activity 2

Anger is often described in terms of **heat**. Check you understand the literal meaning of the 'heat' words in the box and then complete the sentences, using the words metaphorically. Use your dictionary to help you.

blazing heated fiery flare up boil

- a We had a blazing row in the middle of the shopping centre. It was so embarrassing!
- b My new boss has got a very _____ temper.
- c It really made my blood _____ when my bicycle was stolen for the third time.
- d She tends to _____ for no good reason.
- e They were having a _____ discussion about politics.

► Activity 3a

Images of **water** are often used to talk about **quantity**. Complete the following sentences with 'water' expressions from the box.

showered trickle dried inundated poured

- a She was showered with compliments on her new dress.
- b The company was _____ with phone calls complaining about the new TV commercial.
- c The customers began to _____ in very slowly.
- d The fans _____ out of the stadium at the end of the cup final.
- e Her offers of work _____ up over the summer months.

► Activity 3b

Problems are often described with reference to **health**. Complete the sentences with a 'health' word from the box.

headache paralysed unhealthy wounds
heal remedy

- a The road works are a real headache for drivers at the moment.
- b They are trying to find a _____ for the problem.
- c After a serious argument it can take a long time for the _____ to _____.
- d The country was _____ by the fuel strikes.
- e There has been an _____ drop in sales over the last year.

For discussion

Ask and answer these questions with a partner.

- a Do you often have blazing rows?
- b What kind of things are real headache for you in your studies or job?
- c Were you showered with gifts on your last birthday?
- d Do you know anyone with a fiery temper?
- e What sort of things make your blood boil?