

A Long Way Gone Ishmael Beah

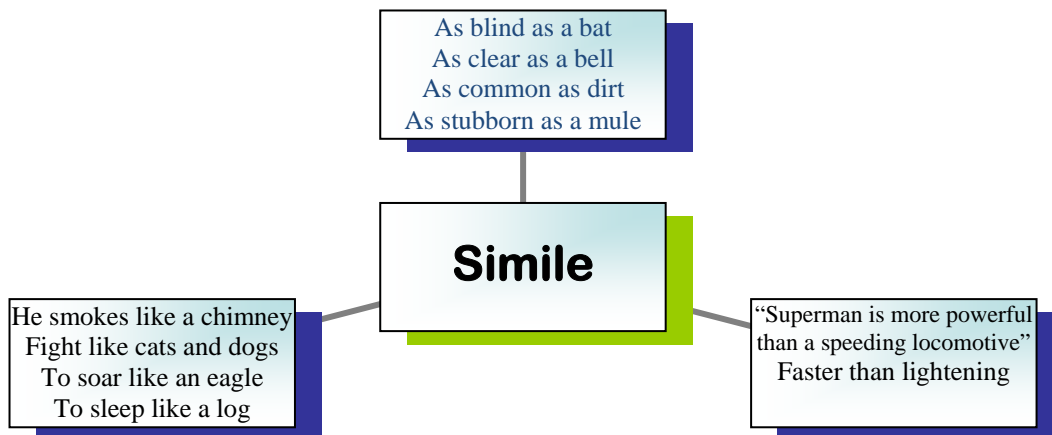
Sarah Crichton Books; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pp. 16-17, 2007

BEFORE YOU READ

What are similes?

A simile is a comparison between two different things. It is designed to create an unusual, interesting, emotional effect in literature. Sentences or phrases that use the words *like*, *than* or *as*. To help us remember this figure of speech, we often say "a simile is similar or alike."

Look at the title of this story, what two things are similar or alike? Following are some classic similes. Can you explain what each means? Do you know other common similes?



Watch for additional similes in the story. (Underline them as you read.)

Vocabulary

Nouns

Verbs

kernal
frond
adage
mortar

penetrate
proclaim
grumple
embed

The government _____ this day as a holiday.
She used a _____ and pestle to grind the _____ of corn.
A traditional saying is also called an _____.
That experience will be _____ in his memory forever.
He will _____ his candidacy tomorrow.

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Background

Some stories are passed on among families and members of the community. They are used as stories to “impart wisdom” or tell us the best way to do something. Have you ever listened to or read a story like that? What was the “wisdom” that the story was sharing with its audience? Try to figure out what “wisdom” this folktale idealizes.

READ Pages 16-17 in *A Long Way Gone*

AFTER YOU READ

Reading Comprehension - **Writing your own Questions**

Directions: Think of some questions that could be answered from reading the text. This can be done in pairs. Write at least one question under each Question Answer Response (QAR) heading.

In the Book---Right There (reread, scan, look for key words)	In My Head - On My Own (The answer is in several places in the text - skim or reread, look for important information or summarize)
In the Book - Think and Search (think about what you already know and what the author says to you, predict)	In My Head - Author and Me (The answer is not in the text so think about what you've read and make connections.)

After each question write the answer in parenthesis or for more advanced students, write three possible answers to make a multiple choice question. Only one answer should be correct.

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WRITING

Just like Ishmael, many of you have heard stories or narratives told by your grandparents or parents, some of you may have read these stories also. Since many of you know the similar stories you can join together to retell a them.

Get into groups of 4 or 5 based on your knowledge of a favorite story. As a group, outline the story or narrative then each will take one section or event and write it. Merge the sections when you do the final edit.

Write what you all know	Outline of the Plot
Plot summary Characters name and brief description Setting – describe where it takes place	What happened first? List Essential events in the plot Conclusion Morale – what does the story teach us?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ishmael Baeh speaks at the UN in 2002.

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Ishmael Beah was born in Sierra Leone in 1980. When he was eleven a brutal civil war broke out in his country. After his parents and two brothers were killed, Ishmael was recruited to fight as a child soldier. He was thirteen. He fought for almost three years before he was removed from the army by UNICEF and placed in a rehabilitation home. In 1998, Ishmael came to live with an American family in New York City. He completed high school and later was accepted to attend Oberlin College. Soon after his graduation, he published his memoir of his youth in Sierra Leone, it is called *A Long Time Gone*.