

## General Advice to Develop Understanding of Non-Literal Language

Literal language is when language states exactly what is happening or what it means. Non-literal language is more abstract and may use similes, metaphors, and personification to describe something. Some students can find non-literal language difficult to understand and they may take the language literally e.g. 'it's raining cats and dogs' they may take this as cats and dogs falling from the sky.

The student may need support to understand the meaning of non-literal language including:-

### Sayings

e.g. 'Reach for the sky', 'Get your act together', 'Hit the ground running.'

Support the student to understand these by discussing the literal and non-literal meanings. Look for any examples of non-literal language on greeting cards, e.g. sorry you're under the weather, and in advertisements. Discuss the literal and non-literal meanings.

### Jokes

Read through joke books. Pick a joke and discuss why it is funny, e.g. that words can mean different things in different contexts. Draw a picture that explains what it means.

**Similes** (a saying which uses the word 'as' or 'like' to compare to things which are not similar)  
e.g. 'proud as a peacock', 'brave as a lion'

Choose a feeling e.g. proud, angry, or miserable

Support the student to understand the meaning and think of more examples.

**Metaphors** (comparing 2 nouns without using 'as' or 'like')  
e.g. 'Life is a roller coaster.' 'They were swamped with orders.'

Support the student's understanding by explaining the meaning and changing one word to make more metaphors:- He's a champion with the ball, He's an elephant with the ball, He's an old man with the ball.

### Slang

The student may need support to understand the meaning of slang phrases and abbreviations related to their age/peer group and appropriate situations for using this language. Discuss these words/phrases and what they mean and give examples of how to use them appropriately.

