



Civil Discourse: Exploring Reading Metaphors in Cartoons (4 and 5)

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Learning Objectives

- Define windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors
- Create other types of metaphors to discuss our relation to the media we consume
- Use what we have learned to self-reflect and relate media we consume to our own experiences



Essential Questions

How do the cartoons that we watch serve as a window, mirror, or sliding glass door for us as we view them? What other metaphors can we use to describe our connections to the media we consume?

Media

- Access to cartoon episodes such as the *Steven Universe* episode “Mindful Education”
- To be able to talk about windows, mirrors, and doors more clearly, here are some articles to familiarize you with the concepts: “[Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors](#)” by Wits and “[Windows, Mirrors, Sliding Glass Doors and Beyond](#)” by the Mackin Community

WARM-UP

Before starting, review norms from the first lesson in this unit or use that lesson to discuss and create norms before proceeding.

Here are some norm examples, although it is best if students create these norms as a class.

- Respect other people's opinions.
- Try to understand other people's points of view; listen to understand, not to respond.
- Participate, participate, participate.
- Respect all opinions.
- Be rational in responding; attack ideas, not people

Share with the class information about reading as a window, mirror, or sliding glass door.

Important points:

- What we read can be a window (to look into the world of others), a mirror (a reflection of ourselves so we can see who we are), or a sliding glass door (giving us the ability to go into other worlds).
- Rudine Sims Bishop states that “books should be windows into the realities of others, not just imaginary worlds, and books can be mirrors that reflect the lives of readers. Sliding glass doors refers to how readers can walk into a story and become part of the world created by the author—readers become fully immersed in another experience.”
- It's important to see yourself and others in the media we consume, including in what we read.
- Media we consume can also be metaphors other than sliding glass doors (see the image in the article “[Windows, Mirrors, Sliding Glass Doors and Beyond](#)” by the Mackin Community).
- It is important to be exposed to and have diverse perspectives.

Ask students to write down what they think these metaphors mean. After writing, ask them to reflect by talking to a partner.

SHARE

Create class definitions of windows, mirrors, and doors. Have these, as well as the metaphors students discuss and create for this lesson, displayed for the remainder of the unit.

ASK

What metaphor do you most identify with and why? What are other metaphors that we can create to describe our experiences with what we see, hear, and read? Record students' answers and definitions.

Part I: Metaphors for Viewing

Provide an overview of the cartoon that students will be watching by highlighting its themes of mindfulness, self-reflection, and/or coping with difficult emotions.

Discuss the importance of understanding different metaphors for interpreting media, referencing the class discussion of metaphors. Have students create or provide them with the chart below to help them capture their learning as they view the cartoon. Encourage students to have 1–2 examples for each.

CARTOON AND EPISODE TITLES

Use the space below to record what you see as we watch. Think about the characters' experiences and emotions.

How is this cartoon episode a . . .

Window	Mirror	Sliding glass door	Metaphor you choose

You can close this lesson here, asking students to discuss the 3 most important things they learned. Use what they say to hit the ground running for the next lesson.

Part II: Using the Metaphor to Discuss a Cartoon

WARM-UP

Open the day's lesson by asking students to review what they learned in the previous lesson.

Watch the selected episode as a class, pausing at key moments to facilitate discussion and reflection.

ASK

- What do you notice or note about the characters? How are they like you? How are they different?
- Did you like what was happening? Why or why not?
- What happened in what you watched? Why did it happen, and why did it happen that way?
- Who are the main characters or people involved? What do they do to propel the plot?
- What is the major theme/claim of the work? How do we know?

After viewing, engage students in a discussion about the episode, exploring its themes, character development, and impact on the audience.

Prompt students to choose a metaphor (window, mirror, sliding glass door, or other) to describe their viewing experience and explain their choice. Prompt students to consider which metaphor resonates most with them in relation to this episode and why.

ASK

What metaphor would you choose to describe your experiences with this work, and why did you choose that metaphor?

Part III: Using the Metaphor to Discuss

Use the rest of class time to discuss the cartoon. Talk about how cartoons can have meaning and purpose when we use them to reflect the world around us.

Closing the Lesson

These can be used at the end of class to bring the topics of the day's lessons together:

- How can metaphors help us understand our experiences?
- What does it mean when what we watch is a window, mirror, or sliding glass door?
- How can these metaphors be applied to what we read?

Common Core State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1:** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3:** Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9:** Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels; and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.