

# Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Word Choice & Meaning

Read the short story and answer each question.



## When Words Had Wings

Ellie was known in her village as “the girl with too many words.” She described things in such strange ways, even grown-ups didn’t always know what she meant.

“I’m tired,” her brother would say.

“I feel like my bones are made of mashed potatoes,” Ellie would reply.

She didn’t mean her bones were *actually* mushy—it just felt that way.

One morning, Ellie found a glowing feather on her windowsill. When she touched it, her words began to float—literally. Whenever she spoke, her phrases popped into the air like puffy clouds.

“I’m jumping out of my skin!” she shouted during a surprise party—her skin stayed put, but a tiny Ellie-shaped balloon leapt into the sky.

At first, everyone laughed. But soon, her words caused chaos. When Ellie yelled, “It’s raining cats and dogs!”—well, umbrellas weren’t enough.

Finally, Ellie whispered, “I need to choose my words more carefully.”

The next day, her feather disappeared—but her imagination stayed.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Cloudy with a Chance of Jellybeans

1. What happens when Ellie touches the feather?

- A. Her voice disappears
- B. Her words turn into pictures and float into the air
- C. She forgets how to speak
- D. She grows wings

2. What does Ellie mean when she says "my bones are made of mashed potatoes"?

- A. She feels like eating mashed potatoes
- B. She's very tired or weak
- C. She has broken her arm
- D. She's cold

3. Fill in the blank:

Ellie's words began to float like \_\_\_\_\_ after she touched the magical feather.

4. What are two examples of nonliteral language Ellie uses? What do they really mean?

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5. How does the story help you understand why people use nonliteral phrases?

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# Parent and Teacher Guide

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**Guide Reading Level:** N

**Lexile Level:** 530L-680L

**Grade Level:** 3rd Grade, Beginning of the Year

**Genre:** Fantasy

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## Introducing the Text

"Today's story is about a girl whose imagination is so strong, her words take on a life of their own—literally. We'll focus on how the author uses nonliteral language and how we can use context to understand what Ellie really means."

**Vocabulary:** literal, nonliteral, imagination, phrases, carefully

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## Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever heard a funny phrase that didn't mean exactly what it said?
  2. What do you think it means to say, "I'm jumping out of my skin"?
  3. Why might an author choose to use nonliteral language?
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## During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the funny or strange things Ellie says?
  2. What starts to happen after her words begin to float?
  3. How does Ellie react when her words cause problems?
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## After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How does the author use nonliteral language to create humor?
  2. What does Ellie learn about using words thoughtfully?
  3. How would the story change if she had only used literal language?
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## Activity Idea

Students create a **"Nonliteral Language Comic Strip."** First, they choose a nonliteral phrase from the story (or their own imagination), then draw what it would look like if it came true. Under the comic, they write the real meaning of the phrase and explain why using playful language can make writing more fun or expressive.

