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

**What Is Imagery?**

An image is a descriptive passage from a poem, play, or fictional work in which the author uses language that appeals to the five senses. Images help the reader connect to the imaginary world within the literary work; especially powerful imagery are a way for the reader to be drawn in through their own experiences. Images also help the writer to establish mood and tone.

Along with simile and metaphor, personification, and symbol, imagery is a type of figurative language. These other forms of figuration are often present in images.

Besides helping the reader to connect to the literary work, imagery also functions to strengthen and develop the work’s underlying themes. For instance, in Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour,” Mrs. Mallard sits alone at her window, contemplating the news that her husband is dead. A storm outside has just passed:

*She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all aquiver with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was crying his wares. The notes of a distant song which some one was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were twittering in the eaves.*

This image of resurrection mirrors the transformation going on in the character’s mind and prepares the reader to understand why she feels freed by her husband’s death.

**How Do You Identify Imagery in Writing?**

An image is unified description of a person, thing, or human action. It appeals strongly to any of the five senses, especially vision. It most likely uses simile and metaphor, and it might use alliteration, onomatopoeia, and any other literary device that helps the reader to visualize what is being described.

**Examples of Imagery**

Imagery Example 1. “His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy and he continually used them in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy. The pupils where abnormally large, as though he were addicted to belladonna, but there was a glassy glitter about them which that drug does not produce.” — from “Paul’s Case,” by Willa Cather

Imagery Example 2. “[T]here was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions.” — Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron

Imagery Example 3. The smell of death, rank yet sweet, punched the detectives in the face the moment they kicked in the apartment door.

Imagery Example 4. “While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,/ And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue; /Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn/Among the river sallows, borne aloft /Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;” — John Keats, “To Autumn”

Imagery Example 5. The furious screech and clamor of grackles ratcheted through the forest.

Imagery Example 6.  “A host, of golden daffodils;/ Beside the lake, beneath the trees,/ Fluttering and dancing in the breeze./Continuous as the stars that shine/And twinkle on the Milky Way.” —  William Wordsworth, “Daffodils”