

ArivArk General English Video Series

Figures of Speech: Practice Questions

Group 2/2A Prelims: General English, Literary Works

Real questions: TNPSC previous year questions from four recent papers (Group 2/2A Prelims 2025 official key; Group 2 2022, Group 2 2024 and Group 4 2025 as marked in the PYQ bank). Practice questions: ArivArk Academy.

The figures at a glance

Figure	What it does	Example
Simile	Compares two unlike things using like or as	Her smile was like sunshine. He is as brave as a lion.
Metaphor	Says one thing is another, with no like or as	Her smile was sunshine. His words are pearls of wisdom.
Personification	Gives a human quality or action to a non-human thing	The wind whispered through the trees.
Apostrophe	Speaks directly to a thing, an idea or an absent person, as if it could hear	Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are.
Alliteration	The same consonant sound at the start of nearby words	Peter's pet parrot. The wheel's kick and the wind's song.
Assonance	The same vowel sound repeated in nearby words	The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain.
Consonance	The same consonant sound inside or at the end of nearby words	Odds and ends. Pitter patter.
Anaphora	The same word or words at the start of lines or clauses, one after another	No time to see ... No time to see ... No time to turn ...
Repetition	A word or phrase repeated anywhere, for emphasis	"Oh, no, no", said the little fly.
Hyperbole	Deliberate exaggeration	I have told you a million times.
Synecdoche	A part stands for the whole	He has just got some new wheels (a car). All hands on deck (sailors).

Figure	What it does	Example
Metonymy	A thing is named by something closely connected with it (not a part of it)	The Crown (the king). The pen is mightier than the sword.
Oxymoron	Two opposite words side by side	sweet sorrow, deafening silence, open secret
Imagery	Words that make a picture for the senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste)	the crunch of dry leaves (a sound image)
Transferred epithet (hypallage)	An adjective moved from the person to a thing	a sleepless night, a happy day

How to tell them apart

Simile or metaphor? Look for like or as. Like or as means simile; is or was (one thing simply IS another) means metaphor.

Personification or apostrophe? Personification DESCRIBES a thing as human (the wind sang). Apostrophe TALKS TO it (O wind, ...; little star, how I wonder what you are).

Alliteration, assonance or consonance? Same consonant sound at the start = alliteration. Same vowel sound = assonance. Same consonant sound inside or at the end = consonance.

Anaphora or repetition? The same words at the START of lines one after another = anaphora. Repeated anywhere else, or one word said again ("no, no") = repetition.

Synecdoche or metonymy? Ask: is it a PART of the thing? Wheels of a car = synecdoche. Only connected with it (the Crown for the king) = metonymy.

Oxymoron or paradox? An oxymoron is two opposite words side by side (sweet sorrow); a paradox is a whole statement that seems to contradict itself (The child is father of the man).

A line with many devices? Choose the one that runs through the whole line or stanza and is in the options. In "No time to see ..." there is a simile (like skies at night) and personification (Beauty's glance), but anaphora runs through every line.

Common mistakes

- 1. Calling every comparison a simile.** Without like or as, it is a metaphor: He is a walking dictionary.
- 2. Looking at letters, not sounds.** City and sun start with the same sound (alliteration); knife and king do not.
- 3. Mixing up the two apostrophes.** The punctuation mark (Ravi's book) is not the figure of speech (O Death, ...).
- 4. Calling "the Crown" synecdoche.** A crown is not a part of the king, only connected with him: metonymy.

Most asked so far (24 questions in 4 papers): alliteration 6, simile 5, anaphora 3, personification 2, imagery 2, repetition 2, hyperbole 1, metaphor 1, synecdoche 1, hypallage 1.

TNPSC PYQs: all 24 figure of speech questions

1. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2/2A Prelims 2025] What figure of speech is the following? Life is compared to pathless wood with the word 'like'.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| (A) Metaphor | (B) Personification |
| (C) Simile | (D) Hyperbole |

Answer: (C) Simile. A comparison with like is a simile. (Official key.)

**2. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] "My computer has always been so brainy and smart
It seems to know mountains of information by heart"
The figure of speech used in the above lines is**

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Hyperbole |
| (C) Repetition | (D) Anaphora |

Answer: (B) Hyperbole. "Mountains of information" is a deliberate exaggeration.

3. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] "O'er the yellow pebbles dancing"**Identify the figure of speech**

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| (A) Oxymoron | (B) Onomatopoeia |
| (C) Imagery | (D) Anaphora |

Answer: (C) Imagery. The line paints a picture for the eye: yellow pebbles and dancing water.

4. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] "Oh, no, no", said the little fly.**What figure of speech is used here?**

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| (A) Assonance | (B) Alliteration |
| (C) Anaphora | (D) Repetition |

Answer: (D) Repetition. "no" is said again for emphasis, not at the start of lines one after another: repetition.

5. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] "That hears the sweetest music and that finds the finest mirth;" Identify the figure of speech used here.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| (A) Metaphor | (B) Personification |
| (C) Imagery | (D) Onomatopoeia |

Answer: (C) Imagery. The line appeals to the sense of hearing (sweetest music): imagery.

**6. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] "Through the flowers and foliage glancing
Like a child at play".****Mention the figure of speech used in the above lines.**

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| (A) Imagery | (B) Simile |
| (C) Epithet | (D) Metaphor |

Answer: (B) Simile. The comparison uses like: simile.

7. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] All of the sights of the hill and plain

Fly as thick as driving rain;

The figure of speech used in the above line is

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Oxymoron |
| (C) Repetition | (D) Metaphor |

Answer: (A) Simile. "as thick as driving rain" is an as ... as comparison: simile.

8. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] Pick out the words in alliteration in the below line?

'And heaven a surer heritage'

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Surer, heritage | (B) Heaven, heritage |
| (C) Heritage, heritage | (D) And, heritage |

Answer: (B) Heaven, heritage. heaven and heritage both start with the h sound.

9. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] So I had to call in a doctor, double quick.

Which of the following poetic device is used in the given line?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Metaphor |
| (C) Alliteration | (D) Hyperbole |

Answer: (C) Alliteration. doctor and double start with the same d sound.

10. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2022] Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign

Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes

Of air that is everywhere our own,

Remember, no men are foreign, no countries strange.

What literary device is used here?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| (A) Metaphor | (B) Repetition |
| (C) Epithet | (D) Simile |

Answer: (B) Repetition. The same line comes back with its words turned round, for emphasis: repetition.

11. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] Identify the figure of speech employed in the following lines.

"The bleeding bark will heal".

(A) Personification

(B) Simile

(C) Metaphor

(D) Oxymoron

Answer: (A) Personification. Bleeding and healing are human actions given to a tree: personification.

12. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] "We were taken from the ore-bed and the mine,

We were melted in the furnace and the pit,

We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,

We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit".

What is the poetic device used here?

(A) Oxymoron

(B) Paradox

(C) Assonance

(D) Anaphora

Answer: (D) Anaphora. Every line starts with "We were": anaphora.

13. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] "But of late, my computer has been behaving badly too,

It is so absent-minded, that I don't know what to do".

Mention the figure of speech used in the above lines.

(A) Simile

(B) Personification

(C) Metaphor

(D) Repetition

Answer: (B) Personification. A computer is called absent-minded, a human quality: personification.

14. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] And I Sunned it with smiles

Identify the alliteration in the given line.

(A) I-it

(B) And-with

(C) Sunned-smile

(D) Sunned with

Answer: (C) Sunned-smile. Sunned and smiles start with the same s sound.

15. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] To win, run as fast as the wind

Identify the figure of speech in the given line.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| (A) Personification | (B) Metaphor |
| (C) Simile | (D) Anaphora |

Answer: (C) Simile. "as fast as the wind" is an as ... as comparison: simile.

16. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] Which of the given option in a Metaphor?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (A) Life is like a chocolate box | (B) Raj is like his twin brother |
| (C) His words are pearls of wisdom | (D) The bus is slow as a snail |

Answer: (C) His words are pearls of wisdom. A, B and D use like or as (similes); only C says words ARE pearls.

17. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2 2024] And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking

Pick out the figure of speech given in the above poetic line.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| (A) Metaphor | (B) Simile |
| (C) Alliteration | (D) Hyperbole |

Answer: (C) Alliteration. wheel, wind, white: the same w sound at the start.

18. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] An interchange of two elements in a phrase or sentence from a more logical to a less logical relationship ____

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| (A) Hypallage | (B) Malapropism |
| (C) Metaphor | (D) Simile |

Answer: (A) Hypallage. Hypallage is the transferred epithet: a sleepless night (it is the person who cannot sleep).

19. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] Identify the figure of speech in the following poetic line:

'They growl at the rain and they growl at the sun'.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| (A) Epithet | (B) Contrast |
| (C) Anaphora | (D) Oxymoron |

Answer: (C) Anaphora. "they growl at" opens both halves of the line: anaphora.

20. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] Identify the figure of speech employed in the following lines.

Born of despair with a sudden spring.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| (A) Anaphora | (B) Alliteration |
| (C) Assonance | (D) Consonance |

Answer: (B) Alliteration. sudden and spring start with the same s sound.

21. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] Identify the figure of speech of the following phrase. He has just got some new wheel

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| (A) Paradox | (B) Personification |
| (C) Synecdoche | (D) Imagery |

Answer: (C) Synecdoche. Wheels, a part of the car, stand for the whole car: synecdoche.

22. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] Identify the figure of speech in the poetic lines given below:

Down in the hill sat the little doggie Nell

There she dillied and she dallied all Day, Day, Day

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| (A) Assonance | (B) Consonance |
| (C) Alliteration | (D) Anaphora |

Answer: (C) Alliteration. dillied, dallied, Day: the same d sound at the start.

23. [TNPSC PYQ Group 4 2025] Identify the figure of speech in the lines given below:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night,
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

(A) Consonance

(B) Assonance

(C) Anaphora

(D) Personification

Answer: (C) Anaphora. "No time" starts line after line. Beauty's glance is a smaller trap; anaphora runs through the stanza.

The question from the video

1. [TNPSC PYQ Group 2/2A Prelims 2025] Identify the figure of speech in these lines.

Faster than a cheetah
With a tail that's miles long
Bigger than a mountain
So powerful and strong.

(A) Imagery

(B) Anaphora

(C) Consonance

(D) Simile

Answer: (D) Simile (official key). The creature is compared with a cheetah and a mountain, so the official key gives Simile. (The "than" lines also exaggerate, which is hyperbole, but hyperbole is not an option.)

Practice MCQs

1. The classroom was a zoo when the teacher left. The figure of speech is

(A) Simile

(B) Personification

(C) Hyperbole

(D) Metaphor

2. The baby slept like a log. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Oxymoron |
| (C) Alliteration | (D) Metaphor |

3. The stars danced in the sky. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Anaphora |
| (C) Personification | (D) Synecdoche |

4. She sells sea shells on the sea shore. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| (A) Repetition | (B) Alliteration |
| (C) Metaphor | (D) Assonance |

5. I am so hungry, I could eat a horse. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| (A) Metaphor | (B) Personification |
| (C) Hyperbole | (D) Metonymy |

6. O Death, where is thy sting? The figure of speech is

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| (A) Alliteration | (B) Simile |
| (C) Apostrophe | (D) Oxymoron |

7. The Crown has signed the order. "The Crown" means the king. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| (A) Hyperbole | (B) Metonymy |
| (C) Synecdoche | (D) Simile |

8. All hands on deck! "Hands" means sailors. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| (A) Apostrophe | (B) Personification |
| (C) Metonymy | (D) Synecdoche |

9. It was an open secret. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Oxymoron |
| (C) Paradox | (D) Anaphora |

10. Every day we work, every day we learn, every day we grow. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| (A) Assonance | (B) Alliteration |
| (C) Metonymy | (D) Anaphora |

11. Go slow over the road. The same vowel sound is repeated. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (A) Consonance | (B) Assonance |
| (C) Alliteration | (D) Onomatopoeia |

12. He is as busy as a bee. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| (A) Simile | (B) Metaphor |
| (C) Hyperbole | (D) Personification |

13. Which sentence has a metaphor?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (A) He is cleverer than his brother. | (B) He talks like a dictionary. |
| (C) He is as clever as a fox. | (D) He is a walking dictionary. |

14. The pen is mightier than the sword. "The pen" stands for writing. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| (A) Metonymy | (B) Synecdoche |
| (C) Simile | (D) Oxymoron |

15. She spent a sleepless night. "Sleepless" really belongs to the person, not the night. The figure of speech is

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| (A) Oxymoron | (B) Anaphora |
| (C) Personification | (D) Transferred epithet |

Answer key: 1 D, 2 A, 3 C, 4 B, 5 C, 6 C, 7 B, 8 D, 9 B, 10 D, 11 B, 12 A, 13 D, 14 A, 15 D

Why? Short explanations

- 1 (D) The classroom IS a zoo, with no like or as.
- 2 (A) A comparison with like.
- 3 (C) Dancing is a human action given to the stars.
- 4 (B) The same s sound at the start of the words.
- 5 (C) An impossible exaggeration.
- 6 (C) The poet speaks directly to Death, as if it could hear.
- 7 (B) A crown is connected with the king, not a part of him.
- 8 (D) A part (hands) stands for the whole (the sailors).
- 9 (B) Two opposite words side by side.
- 10 (D) "Every day we" starts each clause.
- 11 (B) The long o sound in go, slow, over, road.
- 12 (A) An as ... as comparison.
- 13 (D) He IS a dictionary, with no like or as.
- 14 (A) A thing named by something connected with it.
- 15 (D) An adjective moved from the person to a thing.