

A metaphor is a word or phrase that is applied to something as a symbol, not as a literal description.

Examples of metaphors:

Life is a roller coaster. The world is a stage. He's a night owl.
The snow formed a white blanket over the grass. The coach is an ogre.

Explain the meanings of the metaphors above.

BUILDING METAPHORS—Today we'll look at building metaphors. For example, we use cement to make buildings stronger. We also use it to refer to making relationships stronger. Let's have a drink to **cement** our relationship.

Read these sentences and explain the meaning of the underlined metaphor.

1. When she asked him about showing his tax returns, she hit a brick wall.
2. The town council put a ceiling of \$1,000,000 on the budget for road improvements.
3. Many women face a glass ceiling as they advance toward the top of management.
4. The roof fell in on my world the day my husband died.
5. My mother went through the roof when she discovered my dad had bought a boat without telling her.
6. Food prices have gone through the roof in the last twelve months.
7. Mother will hit the roof when she sees what a mess you have made.
8. Professors are often criticized for living in an ivory tower.
9. My brother was a tower of strength while I was going through my divorce.
10. Jay is over 6 feet tall and towers over his classmates.
11. His problem with anger management shut a lot of doors in management.
12. Knowing several languages opens doors to many opportunities.
13. We finally got the project approved, though we had to go through the back door to do it. The first manager we talked to disapproved of the idea and refused to send it up the chain of command. But my partner played golf with the wife of one of the upper level managers. My partner told her about our great idea and she mentioned it to her husband. The next day we got a call asking us to come in and present our ideas to top management.
14. Knowing the right people holds the key to success in business.
15. The key figures in government all attended the same university.
16. The company has been locked in a legal battle for years.
17. We have laid the foundation for a good relationship by always doing what we promised.
18. The speaker's request met a wall of silence.

Match the metaphors to their meanings.

METAPHOR	MEANING
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ceiling	not familiar with the real world
through the back door	make a relationship stronger
gone through the roof	cannot be more than
tower of strength	enormously supportive
cement	risen dramatically
in an ivory tower	in an unofficial way
a brick wall	barrier

Discuss:

- A. In your country, do you think women in business generally experience a glass ceiling as they move up?
- B. What makes you “go through the roof”?
- C. Do you and your spouse discuss major purchases before buying?
- D. Do you think becoming proficient in English will open doors for you in your home country?
- E. Do you think it’s unethical to use the “back door” when trying to get something done?
- F. Is it common for the highest government officials in your country to have attended school together?
- G. How do you lay a good foundation for a sound marriage?
- H. What are some of the key issues in your country’s most recent election?
- I. What was a key factor in deciding to come to the U.S.?