

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hyperbole in Literature (High School)

We all use **hyperbole** (exaggeration) in our everyday speech. Think about how many times you have heard a friend say, "The teacher is going to kill me!" This is an exaggeration—the teacher is just going to be very angry.

Writers often use **hyperbole** (exaggeration) in their writing. It is important for you to recognize and understand **hyperbole** so that you don't take the words seriously as you read.

Exercise:

Explain the hyperbole in each example. First, explain what is being exaggerated. Then, write a sentence that states what the writer really means.

From *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

"People moved slowly then. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County."

From *Living to Tell the Tale*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez:

"At that time Bogota was a remote, lugubrious city where an insomniac rain had been falling since the beginning of the 16th century."

From "Old Times on the Mississippi," by Mark Twain:

"I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far."

From *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare:

"Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red."

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From *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee

"People moved slowly then. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County."

The lack of things to do and lack of money is being exaggerated. The author is trying to say that life was slow-paced in Maycomb County.

From *Living to Tell the Tale*, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez:

"At that time Bogota was a remote, lugubrious city where an insomniac rain had been falling since the beginning of the 16th century."

The length of time that the rain has been falling has been exaggerated. The author is trying to say that it rains a lot in Bogota.

From "Old Times on the Mississippi," by Mark Twain:

"I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far."

The eyes of a person could not stick out so far that a hat hangs on them. The author is trying to say that he was so scared that his eyes were wide and large.

From *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare:

"Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red."

The blood on one person's hand could not turn the entire ocean red. The author is trying to say that the person feels very guilty—there is so much blood on the person's hands that they will never be clean, and the person will never feel innocent.
