

# Epic Similes

In Homer's *Odyssey*

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# Epic Similes

**Similes** are a storytelling technique that poets and writers use to make the intangible tangible and the unfathomable fathomable.

**Epic similes** are noted as **epic** because 1) they appear in **epic poems** and 2) they are longer than other similes; i.e., they are **extended** similes.

# Epic Similes: “The Poetry of Poetry”

“The narrative prescribes the situation on which the simile projects its image..., but then the narrative stops and **the moment of double-vision occurs**: the image is given room to form in the reader’s imagination and then to encompass, frame, color the real event, to lift it out of its narrative bounds into another world.

**Simile is thus the poetry of poetry.** The image seizes the event into another world, under whose aspect almost everything is significant and beautiful” (from Eva Brann’s *Homeric Moments*)

- 1) Read the page and remember the moment in Book 5 when this scene is happening.  
(Retrieval)
- 2) Draw the scene that the simile describes
- 3) Discuss the way this simile increases or doubles your vision of what’s happening in the scene with Odysseus.

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## [Odysseus] scraped a bed together

Of leaves: there were enough to cover two  
Against the worst of winter. Seeing this,  
the hero who had suffered for so long was  
happy. He lay down inside and heaped more  
leaves on top. **As when a man who lives out  
on a lonely farm that has no neighbors  
buries a glowing torch inside black embers  
to save the seed of fire and keep a source —  
so was Odysseus concealed in leaves.  
Athena poured down sleep to shut his eyes  
so all his painful weariness could end.**  
(5.482-493)

*Odyssey*, Emily Wilson translation  
Slide made by Christa Forster  
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## Link to Epic Similes worksheets for CTTs

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_Qci6yypbJ6gOeabi6iz7VbY6oJfjmhwEQmNecHVi1Q/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Qci6yypbJ6gOeabi6iz7VbY6oJfjmhwEQmNecHVi1Q/edit?usp=sharing)