



MEAN

TAYLOR SWIFT

**TEACHING
SIMILES, INFERENCES,
IMAGERY WITH
ANTI-BULLYING MESSAGE**

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Note to the Teacher

Students should have already been taught literary terms:

1. Simile
2. Inference
3. Imagery

Have the song, "Mean," by Taylor Swift playing as students enter the classroom. After taking care of rote classroom agenda, give out copies of the lyrics to the students and play the song again. Then give them the questions to answer as you continue to play the song.

You can have a great classroom discussion about their answers to #10.

To take this a step further, make an assignment that for one week, students must perform at least ONE random act of kindness every day. Every day after that, you could have them either write in their journals about the random act of kindness they did or discuss it in class. At the end of the week, students could write a short essay about what they did and how they felt as they did those kind acts.

"Mean"

By Taylor Swift

Stanza 1	You, with your words like knives	line 1
	And swords and weapons that you use against me	line 2
	You have knocked me off my feet again	line 3
	Got me feeling like a nothing	line 4
	You, with your voice like nails on a chalkboard	line 5
	Calling me out when I'm wounded	line 6
	You picking on the weaker man	line 7

Well you can take me down with just one single blow
but you don't know, what you don't know...

Refrain	Someday I'll be living in a big ol' city
	And all you're ever going to be is mean
	Someday I'll be big enough so you can't hit me
	And all you're ever going to be is mean
	Why you gotta be so mean?

Stanza 2	You, with your switching sides
	And your wildfire lies and your humiliation
	You have pointed out my flaws again
	As if I don't already see them
	I walk with my head down
	Trying to block you out 'cause I'll never impress you
	I just wanna feel okay again

Stanza 3	I bet you got pushed around
	Somebody made you cold
	But the cycle ends right now
	Cause you can't lead me down that road
	And you don't know, what you don't know...

Refrain	Someday I'll be living in a big ol' city
	And all you're ever going to be is mean
	Someday I'll be big enough so you can't hit me
	And all you're ever going to be is mean
	Why you gotta be so mean?

Stanza 4

And I can see you years from now in a bar
Talking over a football game
With that same big loud opinion
But nobody's listening
Washed up and ranting about the same old bitter things
Drunk and grumbling on about how I can't sing
But all you are is mean

All you are is mean
And a liar, and pathetic, and alone in life
And mean, and mean, and mean, and mean

Refrain

But someday I'll be living in a big ol' city
And all you're ever going to be is mean, yeah yeah
Someday I'll be big enough so you can't hit me
And all you're ever going to be is mean
Why you gotta be so mean?

Refrain

Someday I'll be living in a big ol' city
And all you're ever going to be is mean, yeah yeah
Someday I'll be big enough so you can't hit me
And all you're ever going to be is mean
Why you gotta be so mean?

“Mean” lyrics ©Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

Questions over "Mean"

Answer in complete sentences.

1. In the first stanza, find the two similes that the writer uses and write them on the lines.

2. What does the first simile mean?

What does the second simile mean?

3. In the first three lines of Stanza 1, what inference can you make as to what the other person has done repeatedly to the writer's self esteem?

4. To which sense does the imagery in line 5 appeal?

5. In Stanza 2, why do you think the writer uses wildfire to describe lies? Think about things that a wildfire suggests.

6. In Stanza 2, what does the writer reveal about herself?

7. In Stanza 3, lines 1 and 2, what does the author infer happened to the other person to make him/her the way he/she is?

8. What does the writer predict will happen to the other person in the future?

9. What does the writer predict for herself in the future?

10. Do you believe meanness or kindness is the stronger? Why?

Proofread your answers to make sure you have written in complete sentences.

CREDITS

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A lesson you might like is "Interpreting Personification in 'Mirror' a poem by Sylvia Plath" which, among other things, deals with self esteem. It is shown below as are other lessons.

