Vocabulary Strategy

LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE MEANINGS

The literal meaning of a word is its most common definition. The figurative meaning of a word is an expanded meaning that has emerged from the basic definition. For example, the literal meaning of erupt is “to explode from a volcano with fire and noise.” Now erupt is also used figuratively to refer to a person or animal “exploding” with emotion.

A. Directions: For each boldfaced word, write its literal and figurative meaning.

1. The bright sun bathed me with warmth.
   Literal meaning: ____________________________________________
   Figurative meaning: ________________________________________

2. The news of her marriage was fodder for all of the gossips in town.
   Literal meaning: ____________________________________________
   Figurative meaning: ________________________________________

3. A blanket of snow soon covered the sleeping farm.
   Literal meaning: ____________________________________________
   Figurative meaning: ________________________________________

4. A burst of wind ripped the pages from my hands.
   Literal meaning: ____________________________________________
   Figurative meaning: ________________________________________

B. Directions: Write two sentences using the word mule. Use the literal sense of mule in one sentence and the figurative sense in the other.

5. _________________________________________________________

6. _________________________________________________________