Metaphor: seeing the light

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Tick the correct source domain for each metaphorical expression.

Expression | Journey | War | Building | Plant

1 lay the foundation [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
2 defend an argument [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
3 reach a crossroads [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
4 the idea blossomed [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
5 attack a position [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
6 a long road ahead [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
7 build a relationship [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
8 plant a seed of doubt [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

1 They lay foundation of for the plan. _____
2 She defend her argument strongly. _____
3 We reached crossroads of in our careers. _____
4 The idea blossom into something big. _____
5 He attack her position in the debate. _____
6 There is long road of ahead. _____
7 They build of a strong relationship. _____
8 He planted seed of doubt in her mind. _____

3 Choose the metaphor that best fits each context.

1 For starting a project with careful preparation: lay the foundation / attack the problem.
2 For a difficult moment requiring an important choice: reach a crossroads / plant a seed.
3 For an idea developing successfully over time: the idea blossomed / the idea attacked.
4 For criticising someone's argument forcefully: attack a position / build a position.
5 For a long, difficult period still ahead: a long road ahead / a short foundation.
6 For causing someone to start doubting something: plant a seed of doubt / lay a seed.

Metaphor: seeing the light

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

4 Complete the sentences with metaphors from the box.

attacked her position | blossomed | build a relationship | crossroads | foundation | long road ahead | planted a seed of doubt | reached

1 They worked hard to lay the 1 _____ for future success.
2 The critic 2 _____ during the debate.
3 The company 3 _____ an important 4 _____ in its history.
4 What began as a small idea eventually 5 _____ into a major achievement.
5 There is still a 6 _____, but progress continues.
6 His comment 7 _____ in her mind.
7 They took time to 8 _____ before discussing business.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Why we think in metaphors

Cognitive linguists studying figurative language argue that metaphor is not merely a decorative feature of literary writing but a fundamental structure of ordinary thought. People routinely discuss arguments using the language of war, attacking a position or defending a claim, and discuss careers using the language of journeys, reaching crossroads or facing obstacles along the way. This patterned use of metaphor, researchers argue, reveals how abstract concepts such as debate or personal development are habitually understood through more concrete, physically grounded domains, suggesting metaphor shapes reasoning itself rather than merely decorating language that could otherwise be expressed literally without any real loss of meaning.

1 What do cognitive linguists argue metaphor is, beyond a decorative literary feature? _____
2 What example is given of using war language for arguments? _____
3 What example is given of using journey language for careers? _____
4 What does this patterned use of metaphor reveal, according to researchers? _____
5 What does metaphor shape, according to the text? _____
6 What does the text suggest metaphor is not merely doing? _____

6 Rewrite each phrase using the metaphor in capitals.

1 They prepared carefully before starting the project. LAY THE FOUNDATION _____
2 She reached an important decision point. CROSSROADS _____

Metaphor: seeing the light

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

3 The idea developed successfully over time. BLOSSOMED _____

4 He caused her to start doubting the plan. PLANTED A SEED OF DOUBT _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 100-120 word account describing a personal or professional journey using at least ten metaphors (journey, building or plant metaphors). Include specific stages.

[ ] Use at least ten target metaphors. [ ] Include polite, precise wording. [ ] Organise the account clearly.

Metaphor: seeing the light

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
INTERMEDIATE | B1-B2

ANSWER KEY

1 Categories

1 Building 2 War 3 Journey 4 Plant 5 War 6 Journey 7 Building 8 Plant

2 Corrections

1 lay the foundation for the plan 2 defended her argument strongly 3 reached a crossroads in our careers
4 blossomed into something big 5 attacked her position in the debate 6 a long road ahead
7 built a strong relationship 8 planted a seed of doubt in her mind

3 Suitable metaphors

1 lay the foundation 2 reach a crossroads 3 the idea blossomed 4 attack a position 5 a long road ahead 6 plant a seed of doubt

4 Sentences

1 foundation 2 attacked her position 3 reached 4 crossroads 5 blossomed 6 long road ahead 7 planted a seed of doubt 8 build a relationship

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 A fundamental structure of ordinary thought.
2 Attacking a position or defending a claim.
3 Reaching crossroads or facing obstacles along the way.
4 How abstract concepts are habitually understood through more concrete, physically grounded domains.
5 Reasoning itself.
6 Merely decorating language that could otherwise be expressed literally without any real loss of meaning.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 They laid the foundation. 2 She reached a crossroads.
3 The idea blossomed. 4 He planted a seed of doubt.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check range, respectful register and clear organisation.