Figurative Language

When a writer or speaker uses figurative language, he is describing something through the use of unusual comparisons. This is often done to make a point, generate interest in the topic, or to make something clearer.

One example of figurative speech is: *It was raining cats and dogs.* Of course, since cats and dogs were not falling from the sky, this sentence could be rewritten as *It was raining very hard.*

Read each of the following sentences.
Underline the figurative language in each sentence.
Rewrite the sentence with the same meaning omitting the figurative language.

1. The athlete was as strong as an ox.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

2. The children were covered with dirt from head to toe.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

3. Susan could run like the wind.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

4. The message was as clear as a whistle.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

5. Grandmother insisted that the house be spick and span.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

6. Mother made enough dinner to feed an army.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

7. His feet were as big as a house.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

8. Grandfather is as sharp as a tack.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

9. That watermelon is as big as a barn.
   ____________________________________________
   _______________________

10. I got home late and my parents snapped my head off.
    __________________________________________
    _______________________

11. The ball bounced and hit the sky.
    __________________________________________
    _______________________

12. The ice cream sundae had toppings that were a mile high.
    __________________________________________
    _______________________

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Answer key notes
The following sentences are given as examples only. There may be a variety of ways to rewrite many of the sentences and still stay within the assignment guidelines.

1. The athlete was as strong as an ox.
The athlete was very strong.

2. The children were covered with dirt from head to toe.
The children were completely covered with dirt.

3. Susan could run like the wind.
Susan could run very fast.

4. The message was as clear as a whistle.
The message was easy to understand.

5. Grandmother insisted that the house be spick and span.
Grandmother insisted that the house be very clean.

6. Mother made enough dinner to feed an army.
Mother made a very large dinner.

7. His feet were as big as a house.
His feet were big.

8. Grandfather is as sharp as a tack.
Grandfather is very smart.

9. That watermelon is as big as a barn.
That watermelon is very large.

10. I got home late and my parents snapped my head off.
I got home late and my parents scolded me.

11. The ball bounced and hit the sky.
The ball bounced very high.

12. The ice cream sundae had toppings that were a mile high.
The ice cream sundae had a lot of toppings.