What Is a Euphemism?

A euphemism is a word or series of words which replaces sad, unpleasant or shocking ideas with softer and nicer expressions. For instance: “departure from life” is a euphemism for “death”.

The expressions in italics are euphemisms. What do they probably mean?

1. She was less favoured by beauty. 
   ______________________________

2. Tom’s driving ability had plenty of room for improvement. 
   ______________________________

3. They are now at their final rest. 
   ______________________________

4. Tears were my only company. 
   ______________________________

5. Someone borrowed money without asking from my purse. 
   ______________________________

Choose some examples from poems or other texts you’ve read. What do you think the author meant to say?

a) ______________________________ - ______________________________

b) ______________________________ - ______________________________

c) ______________________________ - ______________________________

d) ______________________________ - ______________________________

1- Now, that you are familiar with this figure of speech, think of something you could soften using a euphemism. Either use a standard euphemism, or if you want, make one up and see if other students can guess what it means.

a) ______________________________ - ______________________________

b) ______________________________ - ______________________________

c) ______________________________ - ______________________________

d) ______________________________ - ______________________________
Euphemisms

Answers

The expressions mean that:

1. She was ugly or unattractive.
2. Tom was a bad driver.
3. They died.
4. The person cried a lot.
5. Someone stole money from her purse.