Figures of Speech -
Euphemism, Synecdoche, & Metonymy

A euphemism is a word or phrase substituted for a word that is too blunt or possibly offensive to say directly. Synecdoche uses a part of something to refer to the whole entity, or in reverse, a whole entity is used to refer to a part. Metonymy occurs when one thing refers to something else that it’s closely associated. Unlike synecdoche, there isn’t necessarily any part-whole relation.

Directions: Identify the following as euphemism, synecdoche, or metonymy.

1. Ethnic cleansing
2. Letting someone go
3. All hands on deck
4. Nice ride
5. Birds and the bees
6. Collateral damage
7. Plastic
8. Bread and butter
9. Suits
10. Society
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1. Ethnic cleansing - euphemism for genocide
2. Letting someone go - euphemism for firing
3. All hands on deck - synecdoche means everyone work together
4. Nice ride - synecdoche means nice car
5. Birds and the bees - euphemism for sex
6. Collateral damage - euphemism for killing innocents
7. Plastic - synecdoche means credit cards
8. Bread and butter - synecdoche means livelihood
9. Suits - metonymy means businessperson
10. Society - synecdoche means socialite elites