Practical Poetry
A Guide to Teaching the Common Core Text Exemplars for Poetry in Grades 6-8

by
Mary Pat Mahoney
for Secondary Solutions®

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Practical Poetry: A Guide to Teaching the Common Core Text
Exemplars for Poetry in Grades 6-8

Table of Contents

About Secondary Solutions .................................................................................................................. 5
Notes for the Teacher .......................................................................................................................... 6
Common Core Standards Alignment ................................................................................................... 7
Elements of Poetry .............................................................................................................................. 9
  Glossary of Poetry Terms .................................................................................................................. 9
  Glossary of Types of Poetry ............................................................................................................. 11
Pre-Reading Ideas ............................................................................................................................... 12
Pre-Reading Activities ......................................................................................................................... 13
  Building Background Knowledge ..................................................................................................... 13
  Analyzing the “Star-Spangled Banner” ........................................................................................... 14
  “The Star-Spangled Banner” by Francis Scott Key ........................................................................ 16
“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes ..................................................................................... 17
  Historical Context/ Author Biography .......................................................................................... 17
  Historical Context/ Author Biography Comprehension Check ....................................................... 19
  Notes and Terms to Know ................................................................................................................. 20
  Analyzing the Poem ......................................................................................................................... 21
  Standards Focus: Analyzing Poetry ................................................................................................. 22
  Standards Focus: Literary Comparisons ........................................................................................... 25
  Assessment Preparation: Verb Tense .............................................................................................. 26
  Write Your Own “Today/Tomorrow” Poem .................................................................................... 30
“Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ..................................................................... 35
  Author Biography and Historical Context ....................................................................................... 35
  Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context ..................................... 37
  Notes and Terms to Know ................................................................................................................. 38
  Vocabulary List ................................................................................................................................. 38
  Unique Terms .................................................................................................................................... 39
  Standards Focus: Paraphrasing and Inference ................................................................................. 40
  Comprehension Check ...................................................................................................................... 43
  Assessment Preparation: Incorporating Quotations Into Writing .................................................. 44
  You Try—Write a Parody .................................................................................................................... 49
  Sample Student Poem ....................................................................................................................... 52
  “Paul Revere’s Ride” Quiz ................................................................................................................ 53
“O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman ...................................................................................... 55
  Author Biography and Historical Context ....................................................................................... 55
  Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context .................................... 56
  Notes, Vocabulary, and Terms ........................................................................................................... 57
  Comprehension Check ....................................................................................................................... 58
  Standards Focus: Tone and Diction ................................................................................................. 59
  Assessment Preparation: The Power of Punctuation ................................................................... 63
  You Try—Write In the Style of Whitman ......................................................................................... 65
  Sample Student Poem ....................................................................................................................... 67
  “O Captain, My Captain” Quiz ....................................................................................................... 68
“Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll ........................................................................................................ 71
  Author Biography and Historical Context ....................................................................................... 71
  Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context ................................... 72
  Notes ................................................................................................................................................ 73
  Vocabulary List ................................................................................................................................. 74
  Comprehension Check ....................................................................................................................... 74
  Standards Focus: Meter and Rhyme ................................................................................................. 76
  Assessment Preparation: Parts of Speech ...................................................................................... 83
  You Try—Write a Nonsense Poem ................................................................................................. 87
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Jabberwocky” Quiz</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”- A Navajo Traditional</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Song of Wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Book of Questions by Pablo Neruda</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twelfth Song of the Thunder” Quiz</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Historical Context</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension Check</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards Focus: Imagery and Repetition</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Preparation: Connotation, Essential and Nonessential Elements</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write a Poem About “Land”</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Twelfth Song of the Thunder” Quiz</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write a Personification Poem</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Railway Train” Quiz</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write Your Own Poem of Longing</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Song of Wandering Aengus” Quiz</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write a Poem About Choices</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Road Not Taken” Quiz</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write a Poem About a Place</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chicago” Quiz</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Student Poem</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Try—Write a Poem About a Place</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About Secondary Solutions

Secondary Solutions is the endeavor of a high school English teacher who could not seem to find appropriate materials to help her students master the necessary concepts at the secondary level. She grew tired of spending countless hours researching, creating, writing, and revising lesson plans, worksheets, quizzes, tests, and extension activities to motivate and inspire her students, and at the same time, address those ominous content standards. Materials that were available were either juvenile in nature, skimpy in content, or were moderately engaging activities that did not come close to meeting the content standards on which her students were being tested. Frustrated and tired of trying to get by with inappropriate, inane lessons, she finally decided that if the right materials were going to be available to her and other teachers, she was going to have to make them herself. Mrs. Bowers set to work to create one of the most comprehensive and innovative Literature Guide sets on the market. Joined by a middle school teacher with 21 years of secondary school experience, Secondary Solutions began, and has matured into a specialized team of intermediate and secondary teachers who have developed for you a set of materials unsurpassed by all others.

Before the innovation of Secondary Solutions, materials that could be purchased offered a reproducible student workbook and a separate set of teacher materials at an additional cost. Other units provided the teacher with student materials only, and very often, the content standards were ignored. Secondary Solutions provides all of the necessary materials for complete coverage of the literature units of study, including author biographies, pre-reading activities, numerous and varied vocabulary and comprehension activities, study-guide questions, graphic organizers, literary analysis and critical thinking activities, essay and writing ideas, extension activities, quizzes, unit tests, alternative assessment, and much more. Each Guide is designed to address the unique learning styles and comprehension levels of every student in your classroom. All materials are written and presented at the grade level of the learner, and include extensive coverage of the content standards. As an added bonus, all teacher materials are included.

As a busy teacher, you don’t have time to waste reinventing the wheel. You want to get down to the business of teaching. With our professionally developed teacher-written Literature, Writing, and Poetry Guides, Secondary Solutions has provided you with the answer to your time management problems, while saving you hours of tedious and exhausting work. Our Guides will allow you to focus on the most important aspects of teaching—the personal, one-on-one, hands-on instruction you enjoy most—the reason you became a teacher in the first place.
Notes for the Teacher

The following is a teaching Guide teeming with practical, ready-to-go resources and activities for teaching the Common Core Text Exemplars in Poetry for Grades 6-8. These texts are not only recommended as text exemplars, but the lessons and activities are aligned with the actual Common Core Standards for Reading: Literature for Grades 6-8. Additionally, although these texts are aligned to Grades 6-8, they are also quite flexible and can be used at additional grade levels and in classrooms that have not adopted the Common Core State Standards. For specific standards, see pages 7-8.

Some notes about this Guide:
1. The majority of poems are available in their entirety on the Common Core website at http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf. Please note “Paul Revere’s Ride” is found in both 13 and 14-stanza versions. We chose to use the more popular 14-stanza version for this Guide.
2. It will be easiest for you to follow the poems in the order they’re presented in the Literature Guide. If you choose to vary the order or teach selected poems, you may need to teach students skills from prior lessons.
3. Scanning and meter are taught, but you may wish to go into more depth and require it for applicable poems.
4. The “Comparing Literature” section is at the bottom of the page so you can omit it if you don’t need it or it doesn’t apply to your lessons.
5. You may want students to keep poems, notes, and activities in a folder with bands or a small three-ring binder. It will make it easier for students organize materials and study; it will also make it easier for you to assess student performance.
6. It may be helpful to duplicate graphic organizers for an overhead transparency, projector, or smart board, and to go through the work—or at least start it—as a class.
7. If you are planning to use the Elements of Poetry exam at the end of the unit (pages 216-217), it will be helpful for students to create a glossary in their folders or binders. Add terms and definitions as you progress through the unit. You can use the Glossary of Poetry Terms on pages 9-10 for help, or you can duplicate it for students to keep in their binders.
8. You may want to have students create a timeline of author lives and important world events.
9. You may want show students videos from a website like You Tube in which the poem is read and, in some cases, acted out. As with any online activity, preview your selection to make sure it is appropriate for your students.
10. Consider keeping a classroom bulletin board display of the poems as you proceed through the unit. You can display literary terms as they are covered to help reinforce concepts.
11. You may want to display poetry collections of the different authors as you study them.
12. There are several novels written in poetic form (Love That Dog, Out of the Dust) that you may also want to display.
13. Enjoy working with the “You Try” sections for each poem. Write your own poems along with the students and share them! You may want to choose some of the best student work to display in your classroom.
14. Don’t forget to share your own favorite poems and poets with your students.
Common Core Standards Alignment
Reading: Literature, Grades 6-8

The activities and lessons in this packet are designed in alignment with the Common Core Standards in Reading: Literature for Grades 6-8. The standards these activities and lessons teach are outlined by grade level below and on the next page. Additionally, although these texts are aligned to Grades 6-8, they are also quite flexible and can be used at additional grade levels and in classrooms that have not adopted the Common Core State Standards.

Key Ideas and Details

Grade 6
- RL.6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Grade 7
- RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Grade 8
- RL.8.1. Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.8.3. Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Craft and Structure

Grade 6
- RL.6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- RL.6.5. Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
- RL.6.6. Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Grade 7
- RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
• RL.7.5. Analyze how a drama’s or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
• RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

**Grade 8**

• RL.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
• RL.8.5. Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
• RL.8.6. Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

**Grade 6**

RL.6.9. Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

**Grade 7**

RL.7.9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

**Grade 8**

RL.8.9. Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.

**Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

**Grades 6**

RL.6.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Grade 7**

RL.7.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

**Grade 8**

RL.8.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
**Elements of Poetry**

**Glossary of Poetry Terms**

**alliteration** – the repetition of the first sound of a word; for example the “w” sound in “when white moths were on the wing” from “The Song of Wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats

**assonance** – similar vowel sounds in words that end with different consonants; for example: “Wanders and watches, with eager ears” from “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**consonance** – similar consonant sounds at the ends of words, i.e. “blank, think, tank”

**couplet** – two rhymed lines of poetry; for example: “Then he said “Good-night!” and with muffled oar/ Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore” from “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**diction** – the specific words an author chooses

**extended metaphor** – a metaphor that is applied throughout the entire poem; the poem “The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson is an extended metaphor

**figurative language** – using language to create a particular effect; forms of figurative language include simile, metaphor, and personification

**hyperbole** – extreme exaggeration to make a point; for example: the speaker in the poem “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes states “I, too, am America.” He creates a hyperbole when he states that he is America.

**iamb** — a metrical foot consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable or a short syllable followed by a long syllable

**iambic pentameter** – a rhythmic pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in which there are five stressed syllables in each line (penta = five)

**imagery** – the primary images or pictures the author uses to convey meaning in a poem

**metaphor** – a comparison of two unlike things; for example: “I, too, am America” from “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes

**meter** – the deliberate use of stressed and unstressed syllables to create a particular beat for a poem; for example the line, “I like to see it lap the miles” from “The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable

**narrator**—one who tells the story in a piece of work
onomatopoeia – when the sound of a word suggests a particular thing; for example: buzzing bees

paraphrase – to restate a piece of writing in simple terms

parody – an imitation of something, usually with the intent of making fun

persona – the person created by the writer to tell a story

personification – to give human qualities to something that is not human

quatrain – four lines of poetry, which may be rhymed; “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll is written in quatrains

rhyme scheme – the pattern of rhyme used in a poem

rhythm – like meter, rhythm refers to the beat of a poem; unlike meter, the rhythm of the poem may be irregular and different in every line

simile – a comparison between two unlike things using like or as to make the comparison; for example: Mr. Smith is as angry as a hornet.

speaker— the voice that tells the story in a poem

stanza – a group of lines in poetry; in prose, you would call it a paragraph

tone – the attitude or behavior the speaker has toward the subject matter; the tone could be formal, informal, humorous, serious, etc.
Glossary of Types of Poetry

**ballad** – a poem that tells a story; ballads are usually sung

**free verse** – poetry that doesn’t follow any specific patterns in rhythm, rhyme scheme, or line length; free verse may contain rhymes, but they are not used in a prescribed manner

**Haiku** – a three-line Japanese poetic form in the lines follow the pattern of five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the third line.

**Limerick** – a five-line poem that follows a specific rhyme scheme and rhythm. The first, second, and fifth lines contain eight syllables. Lines two and three contain six syllables. Limericks are usually funny or silly.

**lyric poem** – a poem that express the speaker’s thoughts or feelings and creates a single, imaginative impression on the reader. Many poems can be classified as lyric poems including sonnets, ballads, and odes. Originally, lyric poems were set to music (Greeks played the lyre while singing the poem).

**narrative poem** – a poem that tells the sequence of events of a story; “The Song of Wandering Aengus” is a narrative poem

**ode** – a long, serious poem in praise of something

**sonnet** – a very structured fourteen-line poem that follows a specific rhyme structure and rhythm. The two most common sonnets are the Italian sonnet and the English sonnet. William Shakespeare wrote many English sonnets, which are also referred to as Shakespearean sonnets.
Pre-Reading Ideas

1. While completing the pre-reading activity on pages 13-16, create a wall entitled “What is poetry?” to display student ideas.
2. Create a bulletin board for students to post their favorite poems or excerpts of songs that they feel are examples of poetry or poetic language.
3. Have students take their definitions of poetry and write their own poem entitled “What is a Poem?” Use the writing as a reflection for students to evaluate their thoughts about poetry at the end of the unit.
4. It may be helpful for students to create a “word wall” of literary terms that will be used throughout the unit. The list can be added to as new terms are introduced.
6. Provide students with collections of poems. Include novels written through poems like Love That Dog by Sharon Creech, Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse, Shakespeare Bats Cleanup by Ron Koertge, God Went to Beauty School by Cynthia Rylant.
7. Consider sharing “a poem a day” with students through the “Poetry 180” website. http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/
8. Have students research the biographies of the poets they’ll be studying. You may want to have a featured poet display with quick facts students discover about the poet. Students could work in pairs or independently to create a power point or poster about a poet’s life and work.
9. April is National Poetry Month. Plan a poetry day for the entire school. Have parents and teachers share and read favorite poems. Students can read both favorite poems and poems they have written.

Cross Curricular Activities

1. Social Studies: Study the “The Star-Spangled Banner” in connection with the War of 1812.
2. Social Studies: Many of the poems in this selection have connections with history. Use the historical background information to build connections with other historical events at the time.
3. Music: The “Star-Spangled Banner” has been widely interpreted by singers. Students can listen to and evaluate various versions available through the “Oh Say Can You Sing” National Anthem Singing Contest sponsored by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History. Additional versions are available on YouTube.
4. Technology: The Favorite Poem Project offers videos of ordinary people talking about a poem and reading it. Students can create videos of their own to share with classmates. http://www.favoritepoem.org/
5. Technology: Create a podcast collection of poems. Students can practice oral reading fluency by recording a favorite poem.
6. Technology: Using moviemaker software, have students create a slide show or video of a poem.
7. Technology: Create a series of digital photos to accompany the text of a poem. The photos could either be incorporated into a slide show/power point or on a poster.
8. Drama: Have students create a dramatic reading of one of the poems. A poem like “Paul Revere’s Ride” lends itself to this. Students may want to act out stanzas as well.
9. Art: Have students choose a poem or a stanza of a poem to illustrate. Illustrations and poems can be displayed.
Pre-Reading Activities
Building Background Knowledge

What is poetry?

Poetry was probably invented shortly after language. Chants, songs, storytelling are forms of poetry. From the earliest time, people have looked for connections between their lives, the earth, and their relationships, and poetry offers a way to do that. But what is poetry? Share your answer with a classmate. Did you agree on the definition of poetry?

Poetry is difficult to define because there are so many forms, topics, and styles. There are probably as many different definitions for poetry as there are poets. But there are a few things that will help you determine what makes a poem a poem, and those are the elements of a poetry. Poetry generally is literary – that means it is written intentionally with the goal of conveying a significant experience. Poetry often follows many forms, but uses precise, condensed language, images, poetic devices, repetition, and imagery. Those are the items you’ll be examining as you read the poems in this unit.

Why do people write poems?

Poems reflect our deepest loves, hates, desires, fears, yet they can also express the simplest experiences like a sunrise, watching a train, a birthday, or the first day of school. Humans record important events, silly thoughts, and impassioned ideas in poems. Poems can be written according to strict rules of rhyme and meter, or they can be written with no rules. It is no wonder that poetry is nearly impossible to define! It can be written in nearly any style and can be about nearly anything. But the flexibility of poetry is part of poetry’s appeal; anyone can write poems.

In 1814, Francis Scott Key was on a ship watching a battle. The British were bombing Ft. McHenry in Baltimore and Key watched the twenty-five hour battle – waiting until dawn to learn if the American’s had won or not. The sight of the American flag flying over the fort the next morning inspired Key. He wrote a poem about the battle and the flag on the back of a letter. The poem was put to the music of a popular melody of the time and was quickly adopted as the unofficial national anthem. Finally, in 1931, “The Star-Spangled Banner” was made the official national anthem of the United States.

Francis Scott Key wasn’t a poet by trade. He was a lawyer, but he enjoyed writing poetry. He also didn’t write “The Star-Spangled Banner” with the intent of creating a national anthem. Like poets of today, Key felt inspired by an event and wrote his impressions and thoughts down in the condensed form of a poem. His poem, and the resulting song, captured a feeling patriotism an entire nation could relate to and understand.

Pre-Reading Activity
Analyzing the “Star-Spangled Banner”

Part One

Directions: There are four stanzas to “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Read the entire poem first; then examine each stanza. Answer the following questions about the poetic nature of the poem.

1. Paraphrase each stanza. Write one or two sentences about what you think is happening in each stanza. ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

2. First, read the first stanza of the poem. Think about creating a slide show or movie in your mind as you read. Underline the any images that you can see vividly.

3. Look for repetition in the poem. The last two lines of each stanza are similar, but not the same. What is different about the last two lines of each stanza? ______
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

4. Look at punctuation in the poem. Where does punctuation help you understand the meaning of the poem? ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

5. How does the poem “feel” like a song? ________________________________
   ________________________________

6. We generally only sing the first verse of the national anthem, and many people don’t know there is more than one verse. Do you think it is important for people to know the other verses? Why or why not? ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
   ________________________________
7. Would knowing the rest of the poem change the meaning of the “Star Spangled Banner”? Explain your answer.

Part Two
Try this activity with a song of your choice. Find the verse of a song you like that you think could be considered a poem. That means the words are meaningful and poetic on their own, without the music. Copy the verse of the song you want to analyze and use the questions below to analyze the lyrics.

1. Paraphrase each stanza. Write one or two sentences about what you think is happening in each stanza.

2. First, read the first stanza of the poem. Think about creating a slide show or movie in your mind as you read. Underline the any images that you can see vividly.

3. Look for repetition in the poem. The last two lines of each stanza are similar, but not the same. What is different about the last two lines of each stanza?

4. Look at punctuation in the poem. Where does punctuation help you understand the meaning of the poem?
“The Star-Spangled Banner” by Francis Scott Key

O! say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming.
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O! say does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines in the stream:
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country should leave us no more!
Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave:
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Some definitions:
gleaming – bright light
perilous – dangerous
ramparts – a raised fortification
haughty – proud
reposes – rests
conceals – hides
discloses – shows
vauntingly – boastfully
havoc – great destruction
hireling – someone hired; in this case, perhaps hired soldiers.
desolation – ruin
**“I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes**

**Historical Context/ Author Biography**

**Renaissance** is an old-fashioned sounding word that means a rebirth or revival. In history or social studies class, you may have learned about the Renaissance in Europe that occurred after medieval times. During the Renaissance period in the 14th Century, the arts flourished.

Hundreds of years later and in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem, another renaissance occurred. From the 1920s through the 1930s, the Harlem Renaissance developed within a community of African Americans who were interested in the arts, culture, and racial equality. Originally called the “New Negro Movement,” this time period fostered literature, theater, and music – specifically jazz – that celebrated African-American culture. Many black musicians, artists, and writers flourished during this period. Langston Hughes was one of them.

Langston Hughes was born in 1902. His childhood was difficult and lonely. His parents split up, and while his mother moved from town to town in search of a job, Langston was raised by his grandmother. Though he missed his mother terribly, Langston loved listening to his grandmother’s stories. Her first husband died at Harpers Ferry fighting to free slaves, and her second husband helped runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad. To add to his love of stories, Langston discovered the joy of reading, and his favorite poets were Carl Sandburg and Walt Whitman.

In high school, his English teacher encouraged him to write, and some of his early poems were published in the school paper. Then, at the age of nineteen, his first poem was published in an adult black magazine called *Crisis*.

As an adult, Langston Hughes traveled to Mexico, Paris, Spain, Africa, and Russia. He had a variety of jobs, from dishwasher to research assistant, but the one constant in his life was his passion about writing. He looked for jobs that would allow him time to write his poetry, plays, and short stories. In spite of his mother’s advice to get a steady job, he continued to work odd jobs that gave him varied life experiences and the opportunity to pursue his passion for writing. Unfortunately, he was often not paid for his writing.

In a pre-Civil Rights world, Langston Hughes experienced discrimination, both as a child and as an adult in the form of Jim Crow laws and segregation. It was difficult for a black writer to be recognized by a white publisher and consequently earn money from selling books. But Carl Van Vechten, a white writer and critic,
recognized the quality of Langston’s poetry and acted as his mentor. This resulted in the publication of Hughes’ first collection of poems *The Weary Blues*.

Langston Hughes received acclaim as a black writer. His poetry, plays, and novels became an important part of the Harlem Renaissance, and he is one of the most recognized poets from that time period. Hughes is considered the father of “jazz poetry” which is poetry that reflects the rhythms and repetition of jazz music, and also the culture that surrounded the music. For Hughes, the African-American culture was the focus of his writing.

When Langston Hughes died in 1967, he had written forty-six books in addition to plays, song lyrics, and essays. Though Langston Hughes lived most of his life in poverty, he never stopped believing in what he was writing about – the experiences of being African American. As an established writer, he was considered the “poet laureate” of African Americans, meaning he wrote to communicate the feelings and experiences of the people at that time. In one of his most famous poems, “Dreams,” Hughes expresses the value of dreams he held onto for his entire life, and the value dreams hold for all people.

“*Dreams*”
By Langston Hughes

*Hold fast to dreams*
*For if dreams die*
*Life is a broken-winged bird*
*That cannot fly.*

*Hold fast to dreams*
*For when dreams go*
*Life is a barren field*
*Frozen with snow.*
“I, Too, Sing America”

Historical Context/ Author Biography Comprehension Check

Directions: Using what you read about the Harlem Renaissance and Langston Hughes, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. What was the Harlem Renaissance?
2. What was Langston Hughes’ role in the Harlem Renaissance?
3. How would you summarize Langston Hughes’ life?
4. What facts from the biography would you select to show that Langston Hughes was passionate about writing?
5. What conclusions can you draw about Langston Hughes as a person? What three adjectives would you use to describe him and why?
6. What do you think would have happened if Langston Hughes had followed his mother’s suggestions and gotten a steady job?
7. Compare the poem “Dream” with Langston Hughes’ life. What connections can you see between the two?
8. Evaluate the poem “Dreams.” Do you think this poem is true about the value of dreams? Why or why not?
“*I, Too, Sing America*”

**Notes and Terms to Know**

**Free Verse:** The poem “I, Too, Sing America” is written in free verse. Poems written in free verse do not have to conform to a particular rhyme pattern or rhythm. The author may choose to use rhyme and rhythm, which the author often does, but there are no restrictions as to how they’re used. So many modern poets write in free verse.

**Stanza:** A stanza is a group of lines. In a poem that follows a rhyme scheme, the stanzas often break apart as the rhyme scheme shifts. In a free verse poem, a stanza may occur when there is a shift in ideas, time, or events.

**Point of view:** Who is narrating the poem? The point of view of a poem helps readers understand who is doing the talking. You can determine the point of view by looking for pronouns:

- I, me, my, we = first person point of view
- He, she, it, them, they = third person point of view

**Speaker:** Who is saying the poem? In reading “I, Too, Sing America,” the poem is spoken in the first person. Who is the person speaking? Is it Langston Hughes? Perhaps it is, but maybe it isn’t. The speaker and the author of the poem are not necessarily the same. Just like in fiction, an author may choose to write about something that he or she hasn’t personally experienced. The author of a poem may choose to do the same thing.

**Persona:** Persona is another name for the speaker. The persona is the role taken on by the narrator of a poem or story; it is not necessarily the voice of the author.
“I, Too, Sing America”

Analyzing the Poem

Directions: Read the poem “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes and answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. Paraphrase the poem. What do you think is happening?

2. Who is the speaker of the poem?

3. Why do you think the speaker is sent to the kitchen when company comes?

4. Infer what you think the speaker means when he says in stanza two “Nobody'll dare” tell him to eat in the kitchen.

5. Describe the relationship between the speaker and “they.”

6. Why is it important to the meaning of the poem that the speaker refers to himself as “the darker brother”?

7. What kind of person is the speaker of the poem?
“I, Too, Sing America”  
Standards Focus: Analyzing Poetry

Have you ever been to a party or celebration and you’ve had to eat at the “kiddie” table or in another room because the main table was full? How did you like that?

Part One  
With another classmate, discuss your feelings about sitting at a different table. If you’ve never had that experience, discuss how you’d feel if you went to a party and were seated in the kitchen away from the guest of honor. How might you feel? How might eating in the kitchen be different from eating with the others? What are some differences you might expect in the setting, food, conversation, and overall quality of the event? With your classmate, jot down those differences in the chart below on your own paper. Some ideas have already been written to get you started.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Dining Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary table or card table</td>
<td>Table cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper plates or everyday dishes</td>
<td>Fine China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special guests (company)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In “I, Too, Sing America,” the speaker goes to the kitchen to eat, but is eating in the kitchen a bad thing? After all, he eats well, grows strong, and laughs. Should the speaker just be happy being in the kitchen? Why or why not? Explain.

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Part Two  
Is this really a poem about eating in the kitchen at a party? What else could the poem be about? Answer the following questions using complete sentences. Be sure you can support your answer with evidence from the poem.

1. What words does the speaker use to describe how he feels while he’s in the kitchen?  

____________________________________
2. How does the speaker of the poem “I, Too, Sing America” feel about sitting in the kitchen? Why do you think this is so?

3. How might the kitchen be symbolic of the writer’s place in society?

4. Contrast being seated in the kitchen and being seated with company. Taken as a pair, what might the two settings symbolize?

5. Evaluate what you think the speaker means at the end of the poem when he states “I, too, am America”?

6. The speaker believes someone needs to change. Who? Why do you think that?

7. Why do you think the speaker states that they will be “ashamed”?

8. Why do you think the title of the poem included the word “sing”?
Part Three
The message the author is trying to get across through a piece of writing is called the theme. Determining the theme can be challenging because the author doesn’t state it directly; the reader must infer the theme by analyzing the text. In addition, a piece of writing may have several themes.

Be careful not to confuse theme with moral. The moral of a story is a lesson the story teaches. In Little Red Riding Hood, the moral of the story is “don’t talk to strangers.” Theme is not a lesson. It’s a message, a thought, a consideration about life, or an observation that the author wants to share with the reader. The theme of Little Red Riding Hood might be “family is important.”

What theme do you detect in “I, Too, Sing America”? Write a one or two paragraph response that includes evidence from the poem to support your answer.

NOTE: When quoting three or fewer lines of poetry in your response, enclose it in quotation marks. Use a slash mark to indicate the end of the line.
“I, Too, Sing America”  
**Standards Focus: Literary Comparisons**  

As you read in the biography of Langston Hughes, one of the writers who influenced him was Walt Whitman. Walt Whitman lived from 1819 – 1898, dying before Hughes was even born. Whitman often wrote in free verse and many of his poems reflected the American spirit as he observed it.

Langston Hughes was certainly familiar with Whitman’s poem “I Hear America Singing” and perhaps he wanted to write about a different America than the one Whitman portrayed.

**I Hear America Singing**  
by Walt Whitman

_I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear, _
_Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong, _
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
_The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work, _
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand _
singing on the steamboat deck, _
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,  
_The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or _
at noon intermission or at sundown, _
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of _
the girl sewing or washing, _
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day—at night the party of young fellows, _
robust, friendly, _
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs._

**Directions:** After you have read Whitman’s poem, answer the following questions using complete sentences on the back of this sheet or on a separate piece of paper.

1. Compare the image of America in Whitman’s poem and that of Hughes’ poem. How are they different?

2. What message might Hughes be trying to convey by titling his poem “I, Too, Sing America”? 

“I, Too, Sing America”  
Assessment Preparation: Verb Tense

If you want to create power in your writing, carefully choose the verbs you use. Verbs create action in writing, and they are also responsible for tense – when something happens.

Look at the verb and sentence construction in “I, Too, Sing America” to help you determine the theme of the poem. You’ll notice Hughes uses helping verbs (also called auxiliary verbs). Helping verbs often help convey the time period or tense of the sentence. There are twenty-three helping verbs that can be combined with a main verb.

Hughes also uses the verbs of “to be.” These are called state of being verbs. They don’t convey action like running or jumping, but they express being or existence. Pay attention to the way Langston Hughes uses these verbs in the poem.

Part One  
Directions: In the space below, identify the verbs in the poem. Langston Hughes uses several contractions that “hide” the complete verb. Write out the entire verb rather than the contracted form. Include any verbs found in the title of the poem.

The verbs of “to be”: am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been  
The twenty-three helping verbs: am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, have, has, had, do, does, did, shall, should, would, will, can, must, may, might, could

Sort the verbs into tense. There are three tenses – past, present, and future. Hughes doesn’t use any past tense verbs in the poem. Write your answers in the chart below. Notice the third stanza uses a compound verb: will see, (will) be ashamed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Tense</th>
<th>Future Tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>will be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two
How can the verb tense help you understand the theme of the poem? Use your notes from Part One to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What verb tenses are used in the last two stanzas?
2. What tense does the speaker use to describe himself in the last two stanzas?
3. Evaluate how the speaker feels about himself. How do you know?
4. How would the meaning of the poem be different if the speaker said, “I will be beautiful” and “I will be America”?
5. Interpret what you think the last line “I, too, am America” means.
6. What does the speaker really mean when he says “today” and “tomorrow”? Is he just talking about a day, or does he mean something more?
7. The speaker uses the subject and verb combination “I am” at the beginning and end of the poem. Evaluate why that is more effective than the speaker making a statement like “I believe” or “I think.”
8. Why do you think the verb tense is important in conveying the feeling of the speaker?

Part Three
In English, to show when something happens, we change the tense of the verb. Events can occur in the past, present, and/or future.

In order to show tense, verbs are classified into what are called the principal parts of the verb. See the chart below for some examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Present Participle</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talk</td>
<td>talking</td>
<td>talked</td>
<td>talked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laugh</td>
<td>laughing</td>
<td>laughed</td>
<td>laughed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>going</td>
<td>went</td>
<td>gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has/have</td>
<td>having</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>am/is/are</td>
<td>was/were</td>
<td>been</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fall</td>
<td>falling</td>
<td>fell</td>
<td>fallen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>seeing</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>writing</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two verbs in the chart are regular verbs; they are created by adding an –ing or –ed to the base form of the verb. The other verbs in the chart are irregular verbs. They are created by using some other spelling pattern.

What tense is missing? The future tense. We create the future tense by adding a helping verb to the base or present participle form of the verb. Often the phrase is
going or the helping verb will is used to create the future tense. For example: She will cook dinner. He is going to cook dinner.

To create the simple present, use the base form of the verb. You may need to add an –s to the verb. For example, the following sentences are both in the present tense: I sing in the choir. He sings in the choir.

Why is it important to know the tense of a verb? When you are writing, of course, you want your reader to know when in time an event is occurring and if the event is complete or ongoing. You convey that through tense. Think about the difference between these sentences:

I sing in the choir.
I am singing in the choir.
I sang in the choir.
I have sung in the choir.

For the future tense, the sentence can be written: I will sing in the choir. OR I will be singing in the choir.

Notice that in order to make the present participle or past participle form of the verb, you need to add a helping verb.

**Directions:** Add the following verbs to the chart like the ones on the previous page. Use what you’ve learned about the verbs to create the correct form. Remember that when you are deciding the form of the present and past participles you need to add a helping verb. Use a dictionary for extra help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Present Participle</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Past Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>begin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giggle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>draw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Four
“"I, Too, Sing America" is written about what is happening today and what will happen tomorrow.

Directions: Write a series of sentences in which you write about yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Choose from the list of verbs in Part Three and use the verb tense specified. An example has been done for you.

Ex. Base form of the verb: go
   a. Yesterday (past): I went to band practice.
   b. Today (present participle): I am going to band practice.
   c. Tomorrow (future): I will go to band practice.

1. Base form of the verb:
   a. Yesterday (past participle): ________________
      ________________________________
   b. Today (present): ________________
      ________________________________
   c. Tomorrow (future): ________________
      ________________________________

2. Base form of the verb:
   a. Yesterday (past participle): ________________
      ________________________________
   b. Today (present): ________________
      ________________________________
   c. Tomorrow (future): ________________
      ________________________________

3. Base form of the verb:
   a. Yesterday (past participle): ________________
      ________________________________
   b. Today (present): ________________
      ________________________________
   c. Tomorrow (future): ________________
      ________________________________
“I, Too, Sing America”
Write Your Own “Today/Tomorrow” Poem

Now that you’ve analyzed “I, Too, Sing America,” try writing a poem in the same style as Langston Hughes. You noticed that the poem had two parts: today and tomorrow. Each of those parts represented the way something was occurring in the present and the dream or vision the speaker had for the way things would be in the future. Additionally, the speaker uses an “I” statement in the present tense at the beginning and at the end to frame the poem.

Part One
Use the graphic organizer below to help generate ideas for your own “Today/Tomorrow” poem. In the first column, write what you “are” now. In the second column, write about how you hope your life will evolve in the future. Think about how things that you like to do or excel at will be part of your future. Try to come up with at least 3-5 things.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I am today</th>
<th>What I hope to be in the future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: I am good in math.</td>
<td>I will be an engineer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two
Choose one of the ideas from your graphic organizer and create a verb bank you may want to use in your poem. Use a thesaurus for extra help.

Example: adding, subtracting, multiplying, crunching, formulating, thinking, creating, drawing, painting, constructing

Verb Bank
Part Three
Write a draft of your poem. Before writing, reread the poem, “I, Too, Sing America” and pay attention to how it is constructed. Notice that the “I” statement at the beginning of the poem and the “I” statement at the end of the poem are different, but connected. Both use the present tense of the verb. An example has been done for you.

Example:

I am a math student.

Today I add
I subtract
And I multiply easily.
My skills improve.

Tomorrow,
I’ll create bridges,
Crunch formulas and
Design new creations.

I am a mathematician.

“I” statement: ____________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

Today stanza: ____________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

Tomorrow stanza: ____________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________
Part Four

1. Once you have written a draft of your poem, you will want to revise it.

2. Look at word choice. Can you create stronger images by changing the verbs? Use a thesaurus to help.

3. Theme. What theme are you trying to convey in your poem? Can you add a theme to your poem by contrasting what is happening today with what will happen in the future?

4. Examine the “I” statements that frame the poem. Compare them to Langston Hughes’ poem. Do your statements frame your poem in a similar manner?

5. Add a title. Remember that a title is going to give the reader a clue as to what the poem is about.

6. Review your poem again. Notice how simple Langston Hughes’ poem is, yet it has a deep meaning and theme. Can you revise your poem to include a deeper meaning?

Part Five

Publish your poem. Write or print a clean, revised draft of your poem. Your teacher may wish to display your finished work in the classroom for others to enjoy.
“I, Too, Sing America” Quiz

Part I: Short Answer
Directions: Write your answer on the lines provided.

1. Why has the speaker of the poem been sent to the kitchen when the company comes? 

2. How does the speaker grow powerful? 

3. What kind of future does the speaker see for himself? 

4. Why does the speaker claim “I, too, am America” at the end of the poem? 

Part II: Matching
Directions: Write the letter of the correct match on the line provided.

_____ 5. free verse
_____ 6. persona
_____ 7. point of view
_____ 8. stanza
_____ 9. speaker
_____ 10. theme
“Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Author Biography and Historical Context

What can poetry do?

You already learned that the poem “The Star-Spangled Banner” became the National Anthem, and still inspires patriotism in those who hear it. Poetry can also capture and memorialize people and events.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” does just that. The subject of the poem is a Revolutionary War figure who had been largely forgotten at the time Longfellow wrote the poem. Longfellow’s poem memorialized Paul Revere and what he did to help the colonists prepare for battle with the British. “Paul Revere’s Ride” became one of Longfellow’s most famous poems, and certainly secured the memory of Paul Revere and his role in the American Revolution.

The Poet

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow lived from 1807 – 1882. He was born in Maine and drawn to literature at an early age. He published his first poem when he was thirteen. He attended Bowdoin College in Maine, and planned to teach modern languages there after graduating. To prepare for his job, he traveled to Europe for three years. During his trip, he was exposed to new writers and new experiences that influenced his own writing. After returning to Bowdoin, he taught Italian, Spanish, and French and also wrote textbooks and essays.

In 1831, he married Mary Storer Potter and soon accepted a new teaching career at Harvard. To continue his study of languages, he and his wife traveled to Europe. During this trip, his wife died. Distressed and grieving, Longfellow continued his travels through Europe before returning to his teaching job at Harvard. During his European travels, he met the woman who, seven years later, would become his second wife.

As a professor at Harvard, Longfellow had to balance his writing and working life. He wanted to focus solely on his writing, but wasn’t financially able to do so until fifteen years later when his popularity with the public allowed him the financial stability to quit his teaching job and write. He was one of the first American authors to be able to financially support himself through his writing.

During the next several years, Longfellow wrote many of his great works, including “Paul Revere’s Ride.” The poem was first published in a magazine in 1860 and then later in a collection of poems called Tales of a Wayside Inn.

Take a poll among the adults in your life. How many of them read “Paul Revere’s Ride” in school? Can any of them recite the famous opening? Were any of them required to memorize the entire poem?
In 1861, his wife, Frances (Fanny) died in a tragic fire. After her death, Longfellow’s writing changed. He focused more on his translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* than on new writing. He continued to be honored as a great poet, receiving honors and international notoriety including a meeting with Queen Victoria. Longfellow died in 1882, a much-loved and nationally mourned American poet.

**Why Was Longfellow Popular?**

“Paul Revere’s Ride” was first published in 1860, the time prior to the Civil War. Like other poems Longfellow wrote, the subject was America’s identity and history. Longfellow’s readers were captivated by the heroism of the story and themes of national pride the poem conveyed.

Like “Paul Revere’s Ride,” many of Longfellow’s other poems celebrated and romanticized American history and historical events. At a time when the United States was discovering what it meant to be its own nation, Longfellow created American themes by writing about events and people that were distinctly American. He helped his readers value their own stories and heroes. Today, many literary critics think of Longfellow’s poems as sentimental or overly romantic, yet Longfellow’s poems are still widely read and considered an important part of the literature of the United States.

**The History of Paul Revere’s Ride**

Longfellow’s poem told of Paul Revere’s ride, but it wasn’t historically accurate. As you know, prior to the Revolutionary War, the British were anxious to squelch the colonist rebels. The British planned a secret attack to capture rebel leaders, ammunition, and supplies hidden in Lexington and Concord. The plans for the surprise attack were leaked to the colonists, and armed colonists met the British when they arrived in Lexington. There “the shot heard ‘round the world” was fired, and the Revolutionary War began.

Historical errors in the poem include the fact that Paul Revere had arranged for the signals in the Old North Church (one if by land and two if by sea); he already knew the British were traveling by sea before he left Boston. The signal wasn’t for Revere; it was for other colonists in case Revere couldn’t make the ride. Additionally, Revere wasn’t the only rider. Another rider, William Dawes, rode from Boston to Lexington. Dawes met Revere and a third colonist, Samuel Prescott in Lexington. The three planned to ride on to Concord, but were captured by the British. Prescott escaped and was the only one of the three to ride on to Concord to warn the residents there. The British released Revere, without his horse, in Lexington.

In spite of its historical errors, the poem created a patriotic myth and a symbol of national pride and independence. Considering that the poem was first published in the years prior to the Civil War, it surely stirred patriotic pride in what the American patriots fearlessly did to fight for what they believed in.
“Paul Revere’s Ride”
Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

Directions: Using what you read about Longfellow and the Revolutionary War, answer the following questions using complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. When did Longfellow live?

2. List three important events from his life.

3. What facts show that Longfellow was dedicated to writing?

4. What questions would you ask in an interview with Longfellow?

5. What conclusions can you draw about what kind of person Longfellow was? How would you describe his personality? Explain your answer.

6. Choose three events from Longfellow’s life that you think were important in forming his work as a poet. Explain why you think they were important.

7. Formulate a hypothesis about why Longfellow’s poem was historically inaccurate. Why didn’t he include all the correct facts?

8. Compare “The Star-Spangled Banner” and “Paul Revere’s Ride.” How are the two poems alike?
“Paul Revere’s Ride”
Notes and Terms to Know

Narrative Poem: a poem that has a story with a beginning, middle, and end

Paraphrase: to rewrite a piece of text in terms the writer can more easily understand. The writer should be sure to retain the original meaning and not oversimplify.

Personification: to give human characteristics to something that is not human

Vocabulary List

Stanza 2
aloft – above

Stanza 3
muffled – quieted

Stanza 4
alley – a narrow road or path that leads behind a building
tramp – the sound the soldiers made when marching
tread – footsteps

Stanza 5
stealthy – sneaky; catlike
sombre – (also spelled somber) dreary; gloomy

Stanza 7
impetuous – forceful or passionate
spectral – like a ghost

Stanza 8
kindled – started a fire

Stanza 11
aghast – horrified

Stanza 14
defiance – an act of challenge
peril – danger
“Paul Revere’s Ride”

Unique Terms

**Stanza 1**
“eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five” means April 18, 1775

**Stanza 2**
belfry – the tower of a church where the bell is hung

**Stanza 3**
moorings – the place where a ship is anchored
man-of-war – a war ship
phantom – deceptive; mysterious
spar – a pole on the ship

**Stanza 4**
muster – the assembly of soldiers
barrack – the building used to house soldiers
grenadiers – British soldiers who fired cannons and other heavy guns

**Stanza 5**
raffers – the beams that support a roof

**Stanza 6**
encampment – the place where the troops make camp
sentinel – a soldier standing watch

**Stanza 7**
spurred – wearing spurs, a device worn on the boots to encourage a horse to run faster

**Stanza 9**
mystic – refers to the Mystic River that Revere is riding next to
alders – a type of tree that often grows alongside a river

**Stanza 11**
weathercock – a weather vane with a rooster on it that pivots in the wind

**Stanza 12**
musket ball – a musket was the type of gun used in colonial times; the ball is the bullet

**Stanza 13**
regulars – the common name for the British soldiers

**Stanza 14**
borne – carried
“Paul Revere’s Ride”

Standards Focus: Paraphrasing and Inference

Sometimes after reading a poem you may want to say, “Huh? I don’t get it.” There are a few reading techniques you can use that will help you understand the basics of a poem.

Use the Title

Never underestimate the power of a title! Use the title of a poem to give you a preview of what the poem is about. Even a title like “Sonnet 18” is going to tell you something – the poem is a sonnet, and the author wrote at least seventeen others. It is true that the title of a poem isn’t always going to give you insight into the poem, but don’t ignore it.

Before you read “Paul Revere’s Ride,” take a few minutes to think about what you already know about the title – the time period, Paul Revere, and his ride. By preparing your mind to read the poem, you will understand the events of the poem better. Discuss with a classmate what each of you knows about Paul Revere.

Part One

Once you have read a poem, paraphrase it. Paraphrasing is rewriting something in simple terms, or your own words, but keeping the same meaning. Paraphrasing isn’t summarizing. The entire poem “Paul Revere’s Ride,” could be summarized in a few sentences. But when you paraphrase a poem, you should rewrite each stanza or group of lines in words you understand. Be careful not to oversimplify what’s happening in the stanza.

Use the graphic organizer below to help you paraphrase the poem. To help you write enough, prompt words and phrases are included. The first stanza has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The speaker is telling children a story about Paul Revere’s ride on April 18, 1775; the speaker states that hardly anyone now alive remembers what happened that day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2      | Paul Revere tells a friend:  
Paul Revere will be ready to:  
That way, the people will be: |
| 3      | Paul Revere rows to:  
He sees on the bay:  
It looks: |
| 4      | His friend:  
Finally, his friend hears: |
| 5      | The friend then:  
When he gets to the top:  
At the top of the belfry, the friend looks at: |
| 6 | He looks at the churchyard and sees a cemetery. It reminds him:  
   | The night-wind:  
   | Then suddenly, the friend sees:  
| 7 | Paul Revere, on the other side of the water, is:  
   | As he waits, Paul Revere:  
   | Finally:  
   | He then:  
| 8 | Then:  
   | The spark:  
| 9 | Paul Revere rides along the:  
| 10 | At 12:00:  
   | He hears:  
   | He feels:  
| 11 | At 1:00:  
   | He sees:  
   | The meetinghouse windows are like:  
   | As if they know:  
| 12 | At 2:00:  
   | He hears:  
   | He feels:  
   | He wonders who:  
| 13 | The speaker tells the listener:  
   | The British:  
   | The farmers:  
| 14 | And so:  
   | His cry was one of:  
   | Because from our past we know that in times of trouble or need, people will:
Part Two

Directions: Now that you have paraphrased the poem, use your notes to answer the questions on the next page. If you discover new information about what is happening in the poem, add it to your graphic organizer.

1. Why do you think the speaker thinks the story he is about to tell is important?

2. In the second stanza, what is Paul Revere's friend responsible for?

3. In the third stanza, what effect is the narrator trying to get when he describes the British war ships in the bay?

4. What might it mean when the narrator describes the shadow of the ship's mast like a “prison bar”?

5. In stanza five, the friend climbs up the belfry and disturbs the pigeons. What does it mean when the friend then climbs up the “trembling ladder”?

6. In stanza six, the friend is looking out of the belfry onto the cemetery. How does he feel about the dead buried there?

7. List the verbs in stanza seven that describe Paul Revere’s actions. What can you infer about how Paul Revere is feeling? Explain your answer.

8. What does the spark in stanza eight do?

9. Do you think the spark literally makes a fire, or does it symbolize something else? Explain your answer.

10. Compare and contrast stanzas ten, eleven, and twelve. How are they alike? How are they different?

11. Why does stanza thirteen seem like a summary?

12. Recall what you learned about the tense of verbs when you read the poem “I, Too, Sing America.” Contrast the verb tense at the beginning of stanza fourteen and the end of the stanza. Why do you think Longfellow changed the tense?

13. Based on your answer to number eleven, what might be the “midnight message of Paul Revere”?

14. Do you agree or disagree that this is a patriotic poem? Explain.
“Paul Revere’s Ride”
Comprehension Check

Directions: Read the poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. Who is the speaker of the poem and to whom is he speaking?

2. When did the events of the poem take place?

3. What is the difference in meaning between one lantern and two lanterns?

4. What is the friend watching for in the fourth stanza?

5. Where are the lanterns hung?

6. Describe Paul Revere’s actions as he waits to see the lanterns.

7. Determine when Paul Revere begins his ride. What stanza(s)? What clues in the poem help you know that?

8. Using historical information from the pre-reading activity, list four facts from the poem.

9. Why do you think Longfellow only told the story from Paul Revere’s side rather than including the other riders?

10. Do you think the poem should have included more accurate facts from the event? Why or why not?

11. Why do you think the poem was so popular at the time it was written? Explain your answer.
Once you have a clear understand of what a poem is about, you’ll want to look deeper into themes, symbols, and meanings. Often, you’ll be asked to write about your analysis. To prove that your analysis is correct, you’ll need evidence, and the best evidence is the poem itself.

Using evidence from the poem makes sense, but students often struggle with just how to do that. Should you include the whole poem or part of it? What if you want to skip some of the words in the middle? And isn’t it enough just to include some quotes? Incorporating quoted material isn’t difficult if you follow a few steps:

1. Be sure to enclose any parts of the poem you use in quotation marks. By placing the line of poetry in quotation marks, the reader can tell which is your writing and which is Longfellow’s.

   For example:
   Correct: “Listen my children” is the famous opening line for the poem.
   Incorrect: Listen my children is the famous opening line for the poem.

   • If you want to eliminate some of the words in the middle of a quote, use an ellipsis in place of the words you have removed. An ellipsis is three dots (...). When you use an ellipsis, be sure you aren’t removing key words that will change the meaning of the quote. If you are just quoting a word or phrase, you don’t need an ellipsis.

   For example:
   Correct: “And beneath … a spark.”
   Incorrect: “And beneath…….. a spark.”

2. Incorporate your quote into your sentence. Try to make the quote sound natural with your writing.

   For example: As Paul Revere waits for the signal he “turned and tightened his saddle girth.”

3. If you need to add your own words, to change the verb tense, or to modify the capitalization to make the quote clear, use brackets to indicate the changes you made.

   For example: “[T]hen a gleam of light” indicates that the British are coming.
4. Make it easy for the reader to locate the quoted material in the poem. You should indicate where in the poem the quoted material is found by providing parenthetical information. Notice in the example below that the line number is written in parentheses at the end of the sentence, and the end punctuation is outside the parentheses. You only need to include the word *line* the first time; after that, the reader will understand that you are identifying line numbers.

*For example:* As Paul Revere waits for the signal he “turned and tightened his saddle girth” (line 63).

- You can also direct the reader to the stanza by indicating that in the sentence.

*For example:* In stanza seven, as Paul Revere waits for the signal, he “turned and tightened his saddle girth” (63).

5. If you are quoting more than one line of poetry, use a slash mark to indicate where one line ends and the other begins.

*For example:* As Paul Revere waits he sees “on the belfry’s height / A glimmer, and then a gleam of light” (69).

6. If your quote is longer than three lines, separate the quote from the rest of your text, and indent the entire block, and use the format of the original poem. You don’t need to use quotation marks.

*For example:*
As Paul Revere waits he sees:
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns. (69 – 72)

7. “Connect the dots.” Always introduce quotes and explain why they are important to your argument. Make sure the reader draws the same conclusions you did by “connecting the dots” of your argument for your reader.

*For example:* By beginning the poem with the call, “Listen my children and you shall hear” (1), the narrator lures the reader into the poem with a promise of an exciting story.
Part One
Directions: Look for errors in incorporating quotes in the following writing samples. Highlight or circle the errors, and then correct them.

1. Many people are familiar with the opening lines of the poem “Listen my children and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere.”

2. “Just as the moon rose over the bay” (17).

3. As the friend enters the top of the belfry he looks down a moment on the roofs of the town and the moonlight flowing over all.

4. The friend finally discovers how the British are going to travel. At the Old North Church, he “climbed the tower.......to the belfry chamber overhead” (31 – 32) to hang the lanterns.

5. The colonists were determined in their battle against the British. They didn’t stop once the British began to retreat, instead, the colonist fought “From behind each fence and farmyard wall, / Chasing the redcoats down the lane, / Then crossing the fields to emerge again / Under the trees at the turn of the road, / And only pausing to fire and load” (115 – 118).

Part Two
Directions: Practice using the rules for incorporating quotes by answering the following questions. Write your answers on the lines provided. Attach an additional piece of paper if you need more room to answer fully.

1. What is your favorite line of the poem? Start your sentence with: “My favorite line is” and end the sentence with the parenthetical information about the line.

2. In stanza three, Paul Revere is rowing past the British war ship. What is the scene? What do the ship masts look like? What might that symbolize? Use at least two lines from the poem in your answer. Use a slash as directed in rule number five.
3. Review stanza eight. What is the “spark”? What could it symbolize? Explain where the spark comes from, what happens to it, and what it might mean. You may write as many sentences as you need, but use at least two quotes in your answer.

4. In stanza eleven, Revere rides through Lexington. As he passes the meetinghouse, he looks at the windows. The windows are personified. They are non-human things that are given human qualities. What do the windows do? What do they already seem to know as they watch Revere pass? You may write as many sentences as you need, but use at least two quotes in your answer.

5. Is this just a poem about the past or is there a message for people today? Write as much as you need to answer the question, but include at least one quote in your answer.
Part Three: Vocabulary

Directions: Use the word bank to complete the sentences.

aloft  muffled  alley  tramp  tread
stealthy  sombre (also spelled somber)  impetuous  spectral
kindled  aghast  defiance  peril

1. The puppy was in ____________ when it tried to cross the busy highway.
2. After a long day at school, students may ____________ and ____________ heavily along the ____________ as they walk home.
3. My mother was ____________ when she saw the condition of my bedroom.
4. The children were frightened by the ____________ figure that floated through the room.
5. Brenda held the lantern ____________ so she could see the entire garage in the dark.
6. After his ____________ speech to the class, Garver convinced many students to carry their lunchboxes all day.
7. The ____________ sound of the electric guitar could be heard coming from the old closet.
8. Wearing a mask and carrying a water balloon, the ____________ kid sneaked up on his unsuspecting neighbor.
9. It was a dark night, and the ____________ atmosphere made Elvin anxious to tell ghost stories.
10. Hoping for warmth, Gerta ____________ a small fire in the stove.
11. In an act of ____________ against the school chef, Victor refused to eat his broccoli.
“Paul Revere’s Ride”
You Try—Write a Parody

A parody is an intentional imitation of something, usually in order to make fun of, ridicule, or to critique a person, way of life, event, or other work of literature. Parodies have been around since the time of the Greeks and have been written for songs, books, movies, television shows, and poetry.

Part of the fun of a parody is that it’s like an inside joke. If the audience is familiar with the original and serious version of the work, the audience will appreciate and understand the humor of the parody.

Since the opening lines and subject matter of “Paul Revere’s Ride” is so well known, it makes a great poem to parody. Try your hand at writing a parody of “Paul Revere’s Ride” by following the steps below.

**Part One:** The poem starts with the speaker gathering a group of children in order to tell a tale that’s nearly forgotten. What humorous tale can you tell? A nightmare haircut? A trip to the dentist you’d rather forget? A bad vacation? Brainstorm a list of possible topics in the space below.

**Part Two:** “Paul Revere’s Ride” is a narrative poem. It tells a story with a beginning, middle, and end. You want to make sure your parody tells a story as well. Include an introduction and conclusion based on the first and last stanzas of Longfellow’s poem. Your poem should have five stanzas (though you can add more if you like). Fill in the outline on the next page with ideas you have for each stanza. An example has been done for you below.

**Example:**

1. *Introduction:* listen to my horrible Halloween event
2. *Beginning of the tale:* I was going trick-or-treating by myself so I could get more candy
3. *Middle of the tale:* I decided to go to the spooky house on my block where they give out lots of candy
4. *End of the tale:* A zombie answered the door, and I ran home and didn’t get any candy that year
5. *Conclusion of the tale:* Now I stay at home and pass out candy
1. Introduction

2. Beginning of the tale

3. Middle of the tale

4. End of the tale

5. Conclusion of the tale

**Part Three:** Listen again to “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Read it out loud, and listen for the distinct rhythm of the words. You should hear four strong beats in each line. Try to imitate the beats in your own poem. Write the introduction to your poem in the space below. An example has been done for you. Notice that several words are taken from the original poem and used in the parody. That way, the reader knows the writer is intentionally writing a parody.

Listen my children and you will hear
’bout the worst Halloween of your friend dear.
On the thirty-first of October in Twenty-ten,
It was a night I would never want to live again.
I remember that famous night of fear.

Your Turn:

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

**Part Four:** Before you start writing the events of your poem, review how Longfellow wrote his stanzas. Look at stanza nine. There are six lines, but notice the rhyme pattern. The first and third lines rhyme, the second and sixth lines rhyme, and the third and fourth lines rhyme. Try following this rhyme scheme as you write the three stanzas that narrate the events of your poem. It is okay to exaggerate the facts. Write the drafts of your stanzas on the next page.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
The beginning of the story:

The middle of the story:

The end of the story:

**Part Five:** Before writing your conclusion, reread the last stanza of “Paul Revere’s Ride.” You remember through your analysis of the poem that the last stanza reflects about the past and the future. Can you do the same with your conclusion? Do you want your reader to learn a lesson from the story you are telling? Write a draft of your conclusion in the space below.

**Part Six:** Now you have a rough draft of your parody. Read through it out loud and mark any sections that sound rough, need more work, or should be adjusted so the rhythm is correct. Look at your word choice. Did you include detail and description? Finally, write a title. You may want to parody the title of “Paul Revere’s Ride” as well.
"Paul Revere's Ride"
Sample Student Poem

The Halloween Ride...I Mean, Roll

Listen my children and you will hear
‘bout the worst Halloween of your friend dear.
On the thirty-first of October in Twenty-ten,
It was a night I would never want to live again.
For I remember that famous night of fear.

It was ten o’clock when I left my home
With a pillowcase ready for piles of loot.
No sister to slow me; I traveled alone
For I knew I’d go faster and gather more candy
And I wore roller skates for I thought they’d be handy
On my journey along my neighborhood route.

It was ten-fifteen when I got to the gate
Of the creepiest house at the end of the street.
While I wanted to pass it, I’d heard stories of late
Of the gigantic treats—and of so much more
To brave kids who had traveled up to the front door.
So I skated, and knocked, and I yelled, “Trick or Treat!”

It was ten-sixteen when I raced back to home
My old pillowcase dropped, forgotten, unseen.
A zombie had opened the door with a groan
And the drool from its chin was an odd shade of green.
And the breeze whipped my hair as my feet nearly flew
Over sidewalk and lawn, through the front door I blew.
From under the bed, I yelled “Forget Halloween!”

You can guess all the rest from the books that you’ve read:
That I now give out candy to the young and the old.
And I never will stray to that house of the un-dead
No, I never go out on a Halloween night.
Yet since that night’s horror, I feel not a fright
For the blood of the zombie, in my veins now runs cold.
“Paul Revere’s Ride” Quiz

Part I: Matching
Directions: Write the letter of the correct match on the line provided.

_____ 1. to rewrite a piece of text in terms the writer can more easily understand
       A. aghast
       B. alley
       C. aloft
_____ 2. started a fire
       D. defiance
       E. impetuous
_____ 3. a narrow road or path that leads behind a building
       F. kindled
       G. muffled
_____ 4. danger
       H. narrative poem
_____ 5. footsteps
       I. paraphrase
       J. peril
_____ 6. sneaky; catlike
       K. personification
       L. sombre (also spelled somber)
_____ 7. dreary; gloomy
_____ 8. forceful or passionate
_____ 9. to give human characteristics to something that is not human
_____ 10. quieted
       M. spectral
       N. stealthy
_____ 11. horrified
       O. tramp
       P. tread
_____ 12. an act of challenge
_____ 13. the sound the soldiers made when marching
_____ 14. a poem that has a story with a beginning, middle, and end
_____ 15. above
_____ 16. like a ghost
Part II: Multiple Choice

Directions: Write the letter of the correct response on the line provided.

_____ 17. At the beginning of the poem
   a. the speaker is telling a story.
   b. Paul Revere begins his famous ride.
   c. someone places a lantern in the Old North Church.
   d. the British begin their invasion.

_____ 18. This poem was written in order to
   a. praise the soldiers of the American Revolution.
   b. remember the deeds of one person.
   c. accurately depict a historical event.
   d. show the misdeeds of the British.

_____ 19. The last stanza of the poem
   a. shows Paul Revere fighting the British.
   b. emphasizes the sacrifices the colonists made.
   c. describes how people today and in the future will respond to a call.
   d. explains the battle of the war.

_____ 20. This poem is written
   a. in free verse.
   b. in a very regular, structured form with every stanza exactly the same.
   c. in a fairly regular, structured form with some similarities between the stanzas.
   d. in a form that imitates other famous poems.
“O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman

Author Biography and Historical Context

Walt Whitman was born in 1819 in Long Island, New York and grew up in New York City. He left school at eleven and began working to help support his family. Even after he had left school, he was an avid reader and self-taught. He worked for a newspaper, learning about the printing world and he also worked as a teacher for a short period of time.

In 1855 he published the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, a collection of poems. Whitman published the first edition himself – fewer than 800 copies. The book wasn’t favorably accepted by the few who read it, but a copy of the book was sent to Ralph Waldo Emerson, a well-respected poet and lecturer of the time. Emerson wrote a glowing letter about the value of the book. Emerson’s words of praise were later reprinted on the cover of future editions of *Leaves of Grass*.

Even with Emerson’s praise, the general public was not quick to accept Whitman’s poetry. The writing style of *Leaves of Grass* was not like other poetry of the time, and the subject matter was somewhat controversial and difficult for the average reader to understand. As you know, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was a popular poet of this time period, and his poems were written with regular rhythms and distinct rhyme patterns. But Whitman’s poems sounded different, and were therefore largely dismissed or criticized. Read the first lines of *Leaves of Grass*:

```
I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my soul,
I lean and loaf at my ease ... observing a spear of summer grass.
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In spite of the lack of public support, Whitman continued to write poetry. To support himself and his family, he continued to work in the newspaper business.

When the Civil War began, his younger brother joined the army. After learning that his brother may have been injured in battle, Whitman traveled to the South to find him. His brother had only suffered minor injuries, but through his travels, Whitman observed the results of the battle injuries the soldiers endured. Seeing the wounded and dying soldiers had a great impact on Whitman. He decided to move to Washington, D.C. where he helped in an Army hospital.

In 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Whitman was a great admirer of Lincoln and had even seen him on the streets of Washington. His death upset Whitman greatly and, like many writers who struggle with emotions, he turned to writing and poetry. Whitman published a book of poems about the Civil War entitled *Drum-Taps* that included two poems about Lincoln’s death: “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” and “O Captain! My Captain!”
Whitman continued to live in Washington, on and off, until 1873 when he suffered from a stroke. He then returned to New Jersey to live with family. Whitman received numerous visitors, many of whom were famous writers of the time, and he continued to write. Sadly, his only poem that was widely accepted and reprinted in his lifetime was “O Captain! My Captain!” This poem is written in a more conventional style with rhythm and rhyme that readers were familiar with. Additionally, the subject matter struck a chord with readers who could understand the conflicting emotions of the poem.

Walt Whitman’s poems helped shape America’s identity; he loved writing about the common worker and American life. But, his poetry remained controversial throughout his life. Some critics loved it, and some hated it. Regardless, Whitman’s poetry changed the way poems were written. Today, he is considered the father of free verse poetry. Since Whitman’s death in 1892, Leaves of Grass has been translated into many languages and is prized as an important piece of American Literature.

**Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context**

**Directions:** After reading the article about Walt Whitman, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. When did Walt Whitman live?
2. Where did he live?
3. What facts from the article show that Whitman couldn’t be a full-time poet?
4. What does Whitman’s willingness to help in an Army hospital show about him?
5. Interpret the lines from *Leaves of Grass.* What do you think they mean?
6. Theorize why people were more accepting of a traditional poem like “O Captain! My Captain!” rather than *Leaves of Grass.*
7. What does Whitman’s desire to revise *Leaves of Grass* so many times tell you about him?

**Comparing Literature**

8. Contrast Whitman and Longfellow’s lives. How were they different?
9. Compare their lives. How were they similar?
“O Captain! My Captain”

Notes, Vocabulary, and Terms

Notes

**Irony**: the difference between what is expected to happen and what actually happens. Often irony is humorous, but in the case of this poem, it is tragic.

**Line break**: the end of a line of poetry. It is not necessarily the end of a sentence; the sentence may continue on the next line. When reading poems aloud, follow the punctuation marks rather than the line breaks.

**Near-rhyme**: not a true rhyme, but a close rhyme that hints at the perfect rhyme

Vocabulary List

**rack**: the shaking or straining of something as in a storm racking a ship

**trills**: to play a musical instrument with a quavering sound

**victor**: the winner

**exulting**: rejoicing

**grim**: stern and with a single purpose

Terms

**weather’d**: an abbreviated form of the word “weathered.” It means to have endured a hardship and succeeded.

**port**: a harbor for a ship; the safe place for a ship to dock

**keel**: the ship; the keel of the ship is the central structure of the ship that keeps it stable
“O Captain! My Captain!”

Comprehension Check

Part One

Directions: After reading “O Captain, My Captain,” paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

| Stanza | 1 | The speaker is talking to: the Captain
The trip is: over
On the trip, they: weathered every storm, won the prize
On the port:
But the speaker notices: |
|--------|---|------------------------------------------|
| Stanza | 2 | The speaker tells the Captain:
The speaker then takes action by:
The speaker thinks this must be: |
| Stanza | 3 | The speaker describes the Captain:
The ship:
The people on the shore:
But the speaker: |

Part Two

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences on the back of this paper or on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Who is the speaker talking to in the first and second stanzas?
2. Who is the speaker talking to in the third stanza?
3. Where is the action of the poem happening?
4. What is happening at the port?
5. What is wrong with the Captain?
6. Infer the relationship between the speaker and the Captain.
7. Identify the events that occurred on the trip the ship made.
8. Formulate a theory about what you think happened to the Captain.
9. Why don’t you think anyone else has noticed that the Captain has fallen?
10. Contrast the way the speaker is acting and the way the people at the port are acting. How are they different?
11. Analyze the actions of the speaker. How do they change through the poem?
12. Now that you are familiar with the poem, how do you think this poem can be symbolically related to the death of Abraham Lincoln?
“O Captain! My Captain!”
Standards Focus: Tone and Diction

Have you ever been told, “Don’t use that tone with me”? What does that mean? What is meant by the tone of voice we use when talking? Discuss with a classmate.

In poetry, the tone of a poem is not unlike the tone you may use while talking. Tone is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject. The author’s tone might be formal or informal, serious, playful, or one of many other attitudes.

The tone of a piece of writing can be described with any number of adjectives. A few include: passionate, silly, gloomy, sad, depressed, angry, reflective, instructive, humorous.

Understanding the tone of a poem is important in understanding what the poet is trying to say. It is also important in determining the theme of the poem.

How do you determine the tone?
After a first reading, you may have a feel for the tone of the poem. But how do you know you’re right? You need evidence from the poem to back up your claim. You find that evidence by looking at diction.

Diction is the word choices the author makes when writing a poem. Think about the choices you have when you are writing. You can choose any number of words to say something. How do you choose the right word? If you are trying to be serious, you may choose certain words that convey a serious tone, and if you are trying to be funny, you would choose completely different words.

Part One
Directions: Read the following sentences. The tone of the sentence is written first. Underline the diction (words) you think help to create the tone of each sentence.

Simple sentence: The ice cream melted.
1. Disgust: Slowly, as if it were a snail crawling along in search of its next meal, the ice cream that had dripped off my cone and into the gritty dirt, melted.

2. Formal: The frozen dairy treat was, much to my dismay, not firmly solidified into the frozen state, so it trickled over the sides of the waffle cone leaving a trail of sweet cream in the freshly-dug garden.

3. Informal: Rats! It happened again! I barely had a chance to lick my triple-decker ice cream when I looked at my arm and saw that I was elbow-deep in a gooey, chocolaty mess, melting, dripping, and falling smack-dab into the dirt.

4. Analyze the word choice. How do the words create the tone of the sentence?
Part Two
Try your hand at writing sentences with a specific tone. Use the simple sentences and moods listed below. After you’ve written your sentences, underline the words you used to create the tone.

1. Simple sentence: *We have homework.*
   Tone: *exaggeration*
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

2. Simple sentence: *I feel sick.*
   Tone: *sadness*
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

   Tone: *happiness*
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

4. Simple sentence: *I ate dinner.*
   Tone: *informal*
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. Review the sentences you analyzed and those you wrote. Evaluate why it’s important to think about tone. Explain your answer. ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

The power of tone comes from the connotation of words. *Connotation* is the feelings or emotions a word carries with it.
Part Three
Tone of “O Captain! My Captain!”

To determine the tone of the poem, first look at the diction of the poem. Use the graphic organizer below to distinguish the word choice that Whitman makes when writing about the Captain, the speaker’s words, the people on the port, the journey, and the ship. Some of the answers have been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>People/Port</th>
<th>The Journey</th>
<th>The Ship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bleeding drops of red Fallen cold and dead</td>
<td>O Captain, My Captain O heart!</td>
<td>bells, people are exulting, follow eyes the steady keel</td>
<td>Fearful trip, prize is won</td>
<td>Ship has weather’d rack, Steady keel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Four
Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences on the lines provided.

1. List the words the speaker uses to refer to the captain. What does that diction tell you about how the speaker feels about the captain? ____________________________
2. What lines are repeated? ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. Why do you think Whitman used a similar ending for each stanza? _______
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

4. How would you describe the tone of the poem? _________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. Identify diction from the poem that supports the tone you think the poem conveys. _________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

6. Why do you think the diction you listed in question number five conveys that tone? Explain your answer. _________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

7. As you look over the chart, you may notice the contrast between what is happening on the port and what is happening with the speaker. Describe the contrast. _________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

8. Irony is the contrast between what you expect to happen and what actually happens. What is ironic about this poem? _________________________
   ____________________________
“O Captain! My Captain!”
Assessment Preparation: The Power of Punctuation

If someone sends you a text message or email and it’s written in all capital letters, what does it mean to you?

It is generally understood that messages written in capital letters mean the sender is shouting, yelling, or using emphasis. In the poem, “O Captain! My Captain!” the speaker could very well have been shouting. How do you know? Write your answer below.

What are some other ways Walt Whitman could have written the poem to show emotional speech? (Think about how you would show emotion in something you were writing.)

Using the chart below, write the phrase and words that use exclamation points. The chart has been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza 1</th>
<th>O Captain! My Captain!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part One**
**Directions:** Using the information from the chart, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. What do you notice about the use of the exclamation point in this poem?
2. Look up the word “heart” in the dictionary. What meaning of “heart” may the speaker have had in mind?
3. Why do you think he repeats “heart” three times in the first stanza?

4. What is the effect of repeating the phrase “O captain! My captain!” in the first and second stanzas?

5. What do you notice about the pattern of exclamation points as the poem progresses from stanzas 1 – 3?

6. Do you think what you observed in question five is significant? Explain.

7. Why doesn’t the speaker repeat “O captain!” in the third stanza? Explain.

8. Who is the speaker talking to in the third stanza? How is that different from who he has been speaking to in the first and second stanzas?

**Part Two: Comparing Poems**

1. Both Whitman and Longfellow wrote about dramatic events. Look back at “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Where does Longfellow use exclamation points?

2. If you were to add exclamation points to Longfellow’s poem, where would you put them? Why?

3. Review the poem “I, Too, Sing America.” Would you add exclamation points? Why or why not? If you would, where would you place them?

4. Comparing the three poems, do you think Whitman overused the exclamation point? Why or why not?

**Part Three: Vocabulary**

**Directions:** Using the word bank, add the correct vocabulary word to complete the paragraph.

rack  trills  victor  exulting     grim

It didn’t look good for our team. We were tied, and it was the final round. Shayne stepped up for his turn. He knew our team would be the __________ if he made his move correctly. His face was frozen with __________ determination. Not even the __________ from the flutes in the school band could break his concentration. It was clear he had to __________ his brain and come up with the perfect play. He made his move. It was brilliant! The crowd was __________ over our victory in the tiddlywinks competition.
“O Captain! My Captain!”
*You Try—Write In the Style of Whitman*

In “O Captain! My Captain!” The speaker loses someone he looks up to and reveres as a father. In writing your own poem in the style of Walt Whitman’s poem, you probably don’t want to write about the death of someone you look up to (especially if that person is still living!) Instead, try writing to an inanimate object. Follow the steps below to get you started.

**Part One**
Choose something (nonliving) that is vital to you—something you may have spent a lot of time with or endured an ordeal with. Use the graphic organizer below to help you get ideas. Try to come up with many items and situations so you’ll have choices when you get ready to write the poem. Some ideas have been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Ordeal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>Worked on a research paper for five weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Practiced every night for two hours before the recital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>Used it to talk to my best friend who moved away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerator</td>
<td>Kept my after-school ice cream nice and cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.V.</td>
<td>Kept me from being bored when I was home sick from school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Two**
Think about how the item has been important to you, and how it helped you get through the ordeal, but also imagine that the item is no longer working. Use the chart below to gather ideas for each stanza. An example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>My response</th>
<th>The item’s response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Together we have spent hours researching the internet for information about the Civil War.</td>
<td>But oh no! my computer won’t turn on. The screen is blue and flashing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>item –</td>
<td>We’ve won the race to the finish line when the assignment was due.</td>
<td>Oh computer! Please work!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Together we have ...</td>
<td>But you ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve won ..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>We did these things together:</td>
<td>But you ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We accomplished this:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3

My _____ is unresponsive

We accomplished this:

But now I without _____,

**Part Three**
With a rough idea of what you’ll have in each stanza, go back to the original poem. You may choose to write your stanzas in rhymed lines, like Whitman did, or you may decide to write your poem in free verse. Look at the last four lines of each verse. Try making them repeat like Whitman did.

**Part Four**
Review your rough draft and look over your diction and tone. Are they accurate? If you are trying to be funny and lighthearted, did you accomplish that through your diction? Go through your poem again and underline diction that helps create your tone. Use a thesaurus if you need help choosing stronger words.

**Part Five**
Add a title and publish the final draft.
“O Captain!  My Captain!”
Sample Student Poem

Oh Computer!  My Computer!

Oh computer!  My computer!  We finally finished our work;
You helped me research the Civil War – I didn’t once go berserk.
The due date is here, but it is ready with parenthetical citation;
All the hard work we’ve done, the hours put in…we both deserve a vacation.
   But oh no!  Yikes!  What’s happening!
   My curser seems to be shrinking
   For on my desk, the thing I see
   Is my computer, simply blinking.

Computer!  Dear computer!  Can’t you hear me beg and plead?
My paper is finished, but it’s time to play... a game or two is what I need.
You worked so hard, gathering data, facts, and helping me sound smart;
You never tired of all that work – without you I wouldn’t have known where to start.
   But oh no!  My dear computer!
   With my friends, how will I be linking?
   For on my desk, the thing I see
   Is my computer, simply blinking.

My computer won’t boot up and start the way it always will
It won’t connect, won’t open or close, won’t do a thing – just nil.
My work is done; my paper turned in; I’m sure I got an A
I’m moving to the top of the class with nothing to get in my way.
   My parents are thrilled with my fabulous grades,
   But my heart is surely sinking
   For on my desk, the thing I see
   Is my computer, simply blinking.
“O Captain, My Captain” Quiz

Part I: Short Answer
Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

1. Explain the relationship between the speaker and the captain. 

2. How does the speaker feel about the captain? 

3. How do you know that? 

4. Describe the difference between what the speaker knows and what the people on the shore know. 

5. How does the refrain of the poem help create the poem’s emotion? 

6. What historical figure is the poem really about? 

7. In your opinion, why do you think this poem is read at funerals? 

Part II: Multiple Choice
Directions: Choose the best response. Write your answer on the line provided.

_____ 8. the difference between what is expected to happen and what actually happens 
   a. grim 
   b. trills 
   c. irony 
   d. rack

_____ 9. stern, depressing, or unpleasant 
   a. victor 
   b. rack 
   c. irony 
   d. grim
10. not a true rhyme, but a close rhyme that hints at the perfect rhyme
   a. rack
   b. near-rhyme
   c. line break
   d. trills

11. the shaking or straining of something
   a. rack
   b. line break
   c. grim
   d. exulting

12. the end of a line of poetry
   a. trills
   b. near-rhyme
   c. line break
   d. victor

13. to play a musical instrument with a quavering sound
   a. irony
   b. exulting
   c. near-rhyme
   d. trills

14. the winner
   a. victor
   b. rack
   c. exulting
   d. irony

15. rejoicing
   a. near-rhyme
   b. victor
   c. exulting
   d. trills
“Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll
Author Biography and Historical Context

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson was born in 1832 in Cheshire, England. He was one of eleven children, and his siblings loved hearing and reading the stories and poems he made up. Growing up, he loved to read and write, and he excelled in math. Ultimately, he graduated with a degree in math and in 1856 he became a mathematics teacher at Oxford. During his time there, he published math papers, textbooks, and student materials.

In addition to writing about math, he also enjoyed writing poems. One of his poems was published under his pseudonym, Lewis Carroll. He invented his pseudonym from the Latin form of his first and middle names which were then “translated” into an English-sounding name: Lewis Carroll.

Lewis Carroll created one particular story about a girl who traveled underground. This story was popular with his friends, and they encouraged him to write it down. That story was eventually published in 1865 as Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. The book was well received by the public and was a financial success for Dodgson.

In the 1880s, people didn’t have entertainment from radio, TV, or computers. People recited poetry, told stories, and played musical instruments to entertain each other. Lewis Carroll was very good at inventing stories, and he enjoyed sharing them with the children of his friends. In addition to writing, Dodgson was an accomplished photographer, and enjoyed creating puzzles and logic questions.

Dodgson continued to write, publish, and teach mathematics for most of his adult life, but he eventually left his teaching post in 1881 in order to devote more time to his writing. When Dodgson died in 1898, he had published several books, poems, and essays in addition to word and logic puzzles. He was well-known to the world as Lewis Carroll.

The actual year that marked the beginning of Oxford University in England is unknown, but it began sometime around 1096. Oxford is recognized throughout the world as a prestigious school with renowned students and faculty.

Entertaining Poetry
Reading a poem like “Jabberwocky” helps you realize that poems can be about anything. They can be written and read to entertain, and it’s clear that that was Lewis Carroll’s intention. It’s also clear that he enjoyed playing with language in the poem.

A limerick is a particular form of poetry that’s designed to entertain. Limericks follow a distinct rhythmic pattern and rhyme scheme. Lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme; these lines have three strong beats.
per line. Lines 3 and 4 rhyme and have two strong beats per line. See if you can hear and feel the pattern as you read the limerick below.

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared!
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!'

By Edward Lear

Today, poets still enjoy playing with language in their poems. Ogden Nash, Jack Prelutsky, and Shel Silverstein are popular poets who use word play and humor to entertain readers.

**Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. When did Lewis Carroll live?
2. What might have influenced him to become a writer?
3. Why might someone take a pseudonym?
4. Why might Charles Dodgson have taken a pseudonym?
5. What does the fact that Lewis Carroll created his name from Latin tell you about him?
6. What facts would you use to show that Lewis Carroll wrote good stories?
7. What inference can you make about the type of person Lewis Carroll was? Explain your answer.
8. Do you agree that poetry can be entertaining? Defend your response.

**Comparing Literature**

9. Compare Lewis Carroll’s life with Longfellow and Whitman’s. How were their lives alike?
10. Contrast the three writers. How were they different?
11. Of the four poets you’ve read about, which one do you admire most? Why?
“Jabberwocky”

Notes

After reading “Jabberwocky,” you may feel like Alice did after she first read it. She says, “It seems very pretty...but it’s rather hard to understand!” The poem “Jabberwocky” appears in the first chapter of *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* by Lewis Carroll, the sequel to *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. In a later chapter, Humpty Dumpty tells Alice he can help her understand the poem. He says, “I can explain all the poems that ever were invented – and a good many that haven’t been invented just yet.”

Humpty Dumpty goes on to explain several words from the poem:

- **brillig** – four o’clock in the afternoon
- **slithy** – is a combination of slimy and lithe (active)
- **toves** – a creature that Humpty Dumpty tells Alice is like a badger, lizard, and corkscrews that live under sundials and eat cheese
- **gyre** – means to go around in circles “like a gyroscope”
- **gimble** – to make holes – like a gimlet which is a tool used to drill holes
- **the wabe** – Alice figures this word out on her own (context clues!) – it is “the grass-plot around the sun-dial”
- **mimsy** – is a combination of flimsy and miserable
- **borogove** – is a bird that looks like a mop
- **mome raths** – Humpty Dumpty is not completely certain of this phrase. He tells Alice that a rath is a “green pig” and he thinks mome means lost – so mome raths are lost green pigs
- **outgrabe** – Humpty Dumpty relates the meaning of the word “outgribing” which he describes as “something between bellowing and whistling, with a kind of sneeze in the middle”
- **frumious** – Carroll explains in the preface to *The Hunting of the Snark* that this word is the combination of fuming and furious

When Humpty Dumpty explains the word “slithy” to Alice, he tells her it’s like a **portmanteau**, which is a bag that has two compartments. So it is one word made up of two other words. Mimsy and frumious are portmanteaus as well.

Today, we use the term portmanteau as Lewis Carroll did – to describe words, not suitcases or bags with two sections. Some other examples of portmanteaus include: brunch (breakfast + lunch), spork (spoon + fork), email (electronic + mail). What other portmanteaus can you think of?
“Jabberwocky”

Vocabulary List

‘twas — a contraction for “it was”

shun — to ignore, to intentionally stay away from or avoid

foe — enemy

thou — you

slain — killed

Comprehension Check

Part One

Directions: Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. When you begin paraphrasing stanza one, use the list from the “Notes” page. You do not need to translate stanza seven since it’s a repeat of the first stanza. Use the sentence prompts to help you get started.

| Stanza | Prompt | Paraphrase
|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | It was 4:00 pm and the slimy, active creatures that are like badgers, lizards and corkscrews were ... | A bird that looks like ... is ...
|        |        | And lost green pigs ...
| 2      | A father tells his son ... | It bites ...
|        |        | He should also beware of ...
| 3      | The son ... | After awhile, he ...

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**Part Two**

*Directions*: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. What does the father warn the son about?
2. Why is the Jabberwock dangerous?
3. In stanzas 3 – 5, what does the son do?
4. How does the father feel about the son’s actions?
5. What examples in the poem can you find to support your answer to question 4?
6. Identify three nonsense words that you think are nouns. Explain how you know they are nouns.
7. Imagine the vorpal sword. What qualities does the sword have? How do you know that?
8. Based on what you’ve read and already know about fairy tales, why do you think the son set out to kill the Jabberwocky?
9. Predict what the son might do next.
10. Compare stanza one and seven with the rest of the poem. How are they different?
11. Humpty Dumpty gave Alice the meaning of the words in the first stanza only. Why do you think he didn’t give her definitions for the words in the other stanzas?
12. Describe the diction of this poem.
“Jabberwocky”  
**Standards Focus: Meter and Rhyme**

Think about rhymes that you may have learned as a child or poems you’ve memorized. Can you recall any completely?

Have you ever used rhymes to help you remember something? Are you familiar with the rhyme for remembering the number of days in each month?

*Thirty days hath September,*  
*April, June and November;*  
*February has twenty eight alone*  
*All the rest have thirty-one*  
*Except in Leap Year, that’s the time*  
*When February’s Days are twenty-nine.*

1. Explain why it is easier to remember something when it rhymes.

The **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhymed words the author uses at the end of each line. To identify which words rhyme, we use letters. Notice how the rhyme scheme is noted in the following nursery rhyme:

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall*  
*a*  
*Humpty Dumpty had a great fall*  
*a*  
*All the king’s horses and all the king’s men*  
*b*  
*Couldn’t put Humpty together again*  
*b*

As you were reading “Jabberwocky” you probably noticed that the poem rhymes and that it has a distinct rhythm or beat.

2. The first two lines rhyme and the last two lines rhyme. Take a look at the first stanza of “Jabberwocky” and write the rhyme scheme next to each line.

*‘Twas brillig, and the slithy toves*  
*Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:*  
*All mimsy were the borogoves,*  
*And the mome raths outgrabe.*

*Mnemonic devices* are words, phrases, or sentences that help people remember information. Sometimes a mnemonic device will rhyme, and sometimes it won’t. For example, “Never eat soggy waffles.” = North, East, South, West; HOMES = The names of the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior.
3. As you go through the rest of the poem, you’ll add a new letter for the different end rhymes. Complete the rhyme scheme for the poem. The pattern has been started for you.

"Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?"
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!'
He chortled in his joy.

4. What do you notice about the rhyme scheme? Does it follow the same pattern throughout the poem?
5. Why do you think Lewis Carroll didn’t write each stanza with the same rhyme scheme? ______________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

Take a look at the rhythm of the second stanza. It has a strong and regular rhythm. Read the stanza and tap or clap on the strongest accented syllable. The stressed syllables are in bold.

```
U / U / U / U /
"Be ware the Jab ber wock, my son!

The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jub jub bird, and shun

The frumious Bandersnatch!"
```

Identifying the accented syllables in a poem is called scanning. When a syllable is accented, use an accent mark to identify that the syllable is stressed: / mark an unstressed syllable with: U

Once you’ve scanned the line, divide the stressed syllables into feet. Each foot has only one stressed syllable in it. The second stanza of the poem can be divided like this:

```
U / U / U / U /
"Beware/ the Jab/berwock,/ my son!

U / U / U / U /
The jaws/ that bite,/ the claws/ that catch!

U / U / U / U /
Beware/ the Jub/ jub bird,/ and shun

U / U /
The frum /ious Ban/dersnatch!"
```

Types of Feet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>iambic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ U</td>
<td>trochaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U U /</td>
<td>anapestic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ U U</td>
<td>dactylic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ /</td>
<td>spondaic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Once you’ve determined the pattern of the feet, look for a pattern in the poem. What patterns do you notice about the stressed syllables and feet in the stanza?

7. What do you notice about the words that are stressed?

8. Using the correct terms for scanning, how would you describe the first three lines of the stanza?

9. How would you describe the fourth line?

**Some Hints:**
- If you get stuck when scanning a poem, focus on the key words of the line. Those words will often be stressed.
- For words with more than one syllable, the word will be stressed as it is in normal speech. If you are having trouble determining which syllable is stressed, check the dictionary.
- The natural rhythm of English is iambic. Start scanning with that unstressed/stressed rhythm in mind.
- Read the lines out loud, and tap or clap the strong beats.
- Don’t try to force the rhythm to fit what you think it should be.
- When breaking the line into feet, try starting at the end of the line and working backwards.
- Sometimes there is more than one way to scan a line. If your interpretation of the line is different from someone else’s, be sure you can justify your scan.

A foot that contains an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable is called **iambic**.

A line of poetry that has three feet is called **trimeter** and a line of poetry that has four feet is called **tetrameter**.

---

**Lines of Feet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Feet</th>
<th>Metre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>monometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>dimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>trimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>tetrameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>pentameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six</td>
<td>hexameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seven</td>
<td>heptameter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eight</td>
<td>octameter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Scan stanzas three – six. After scanning the stanzas, read through them out loud, and tap or clap the stressed syllables as you read. If you hear different rhythms when you read the poem as a whole, review your accent marks. What pattern do you see?

Why is scanning helpful? In poetry that has a distinct pattern, it can be helpful to determine how the poem is constructed. By using rhythm and rhyme intentionally, the poet can make the poem “sound” a particular way. Shorter lines move faster, and particular feet, like anapestic or dactylic, sound like running or galloping.

Lewis Carroll was familiar with classic poems that followed a particular pattern and was able to use patterns in rhyme and rhythm to play with sound as well as language.

Now scan the first and last stanzas of the poem.

`Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;

All mimsy were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

11. Using the correct terms for scanning, how would you describe the stanza? ___
12. Evaluate how Lewis Carroll used the first and last stanzas. Why do you think he framed the poem with these stanzas?  

13. Contrast how you felt when you were reading the opening stanza and then the middle section of the poem. Which was easier to understand? Explain your answer.  

14. Because the language of the poem is difficult to understand, how can the rhythm and rhyme of the poem help you understand the poem better?  

15. What are some disadvantages to a poet of writing in a specific meter?  

16. What are some of the disadvantages to a poet of writing in a specific rhyme scheme?  

17. What are some advantages of writing a poem in a particular meter and with a particular rhyme scheme?
Comparing Literature

18. Go back to “Paul Revere’s Ride.” Scan the first three lines of stanza eight when Paul Revere begins his ride. Based on your scan of the lines, how would you describe the meter and feet? ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

19. Compare the meaning of those lines and the rhythm. How does the rhythm help convey the action of the lines? ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

20. Scan the first stanza of “O Captain! My Captain!” How does the rhythm help convey the action of the lines in the first stanza? ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
“Jabberwocky”
Assessment Preparation: Parts of Speech

One reason people enjoy the poem “Jabberwocky” is that it shows how powerful and flexible the English language is. If you are a native English speaker, you probably understood the basic events of the first stanza. You based that on your knowledge of the parts of speech.

There are eight parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, interjections, conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns.

In “Jabberwocky,” Lewis Carroll relies on the reader’s knowledge of grammar to figure out the poem.

Finding Nouns
One of the easiest ways to find a noun is to look for a “noun marker” that tells you a noun is coming. Noun markers are also called articles, and they are adjectives. They are: a, an, the.

An easy way to remember the eight parts of speech is to think of IVAN CAPP.

I= interjections
V=verb
A=adverb
N=noun
C=conjunction
A=adjective
P=pronoun
P=preposition

1. Look at the first stanza of “Jabberwocky.” What is the primary noun marker? ____________

2. What do you already know about nouns? ____________________________

3. Look at stanza two. What are the nouns in that stanza? ________________

4. What kind of nouns are Jabberwock, Jubjub bird, and Bandersnatch? How do you know? ____________________________

Looking for Adjectives
In English, adjectives describe nouns and are usually found before them. When you have a noun marker and an adjective together in a sentence, the noun marker usually comes before the adjective. For example: Freddy wore the yellow socks to school. The adjective yellow modifies socks and comes after the article the.

Look at line three. This sentence includes a linking verb (were). In order to find the adjective, it’s helpful to transpose, or flip, the sentence. So the sentence reads: “The borogoves were all mimsy.”
5. Identify the adjectives in the first and second stanzas of “Jabberwocky.”

6. How does the ending of the word “frumious” help you determine that it’s an adjective?

7. What are some other adjectives that end in –ous?

---

**Digging Up Verbs**
To help the reader find the verbs in the first stanza, Carroll uses the helping verb *did*. The reader now knows that the toves are doing something. When reading the lines out loud, you may think the words *gyre* and *gimble* sound like other verbs you know. Readers also expect a verb to follow a noun in a sentence. The exception to this is a command or imperative sentence.

For example: Stop.
There is no noun in the sentence. The noun, or subject of the sentence, is understood as “you” since the command is directed to “you.”

8. Identify the other verbs in the first and second stanzas. Put a star next to any commands.

---

Readers also use the suffixes of a word to determine if it is a verb.

9. What are the common suffixes found on verbs?

10. Go through the remainder of the poem and identify the nouns, verbs, and adjectives. You do not need to identify articles (noun markers). Underline the nouns, place a box around the verbs, and place brackets around the adjectives.

   He took his vorpal sword in hand:
   Long time the manxome foe he sought --
   So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
   And stood awhile in thought.

   And, as in uffish thought he stood,
   The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

11. What other parts of speech can you identify in the poem? Use the graphic organizer below for your answers. Some answers have been started for you. You do not need to write every example for each part of speech. Try to locate at least two examples for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Speech</th>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverbs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Awhile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Snicker-snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>He</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Do you think it would be a better poem if Lewis Carroll had just used words everyone already knew rather than making up new words? Explain your answer.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

13. Invent a short story about a nightmare homework assignment. Include the vocabulary words 'twas, shun, foe, thou, slain. Your story should be at least one paragraph, and you may change the form of the word if you like.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

14. After you finish your story, read through it once more. What happens to the tone of your story when you use words like 'twas, thou, shun? Explain how diction (word choice) can convey tone or change meaning.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________________________
“Jabberwocky”
You Try—Write a Nonsense Poem

As you’ve studied the poem, you’ve noticed the way Lewis Carroll played with language by creating portmanteaus and made up creatures to tell a story. Give writing a fantasy poem a try.

Part One: Create a Story

The story the “Jabberwocky” tells isn’t complicated or even very original. It doesn’t sound much different from any number of fairy tales – go slay a dragon. What makes the poem extraordinary is the language.

Start by creating a simple fairy tale of your own. Will your fairy tale have a dragon, a witch, or evil dwarves? Use the graphic organizer below to create a beginning, middle and end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning: The Journey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle: The Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End: The Conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two: Create Words

Create nouns and verbs for your poem. What will your nouns do? Create verbs to go with your nouns. Remember to add endings to your verbs that will help the reader understand that a verb is a verb.

For fun, try your hand at creating a few portmanteaus for your poem. Create them by combining two similar words. Think about adjectives you can use to describe your noun; then combine the adjectives into a new word.

Use the graphic organizer on the next page to build your word bank. You don’t have to fill in each box.
Nouns | Verbs that the noun will perform | Adjectives to describe the noun and Portmanteau
--- | --- | ---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Adjective 1</th>
<th>Adjective 2</th>
<th>Portmanteau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Three**
Write a draft of your poem. Try to follow the rhyme and rhythm scheme that Lewis Carroll used in “Jabberwocky.” Write at least three stanzas – one for the beginning, the middle, and the end.

**Part Four**
Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Are there enough clues to help your friend understand what your poem is about? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

**Part Five**
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.

**Sample Student Poem**

*She searched her crowessy tovell for lunch;*
*She searched, in corners, high and low –*
*No food, or snack, but she had a hunch*
The Lockorg would surely know.

*The grealy Lockorg came just then*
slowing down the quempty hall
grubluging her lunch, she grabbed her pen
And slapured him. Her lunch — she saved it all!

*To the cafeteria she went with hapcited smile*
To eat lunch with her starngy friends.
The cookies and chips would last for a while
But the Lockorg, finally had met his end.*
"Jabberwocky" Quiz

Part I: Short Answer

Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

1. Explain the challenge the boy must face. ________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

2. Predict what you think is going to happen to the boy. ______________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

3. Describe the form the poet used to construct the poem. ______________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

4. Describe what is unusual about the diction of the poem. _____________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

5. Explain what a portmanteau is and how it is used in "Jabberwocky." ______
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

Part II: Matching

Directions: Match the vocabulary word with its definition. Write the letter on the line provided.

_____ 6. foe       A. a contraction for “it was”
_____ 7. shun      B. you
_____ 8. slain   C. enemy
_____ 9. thou     D. to ignore; to intentionally stay away from or avoid
_____ 10. ‘twas   E. killed
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“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”- A Navajo Traditional Historical Context

The Navajo people lived in the southwestern desert area of the United States long before European settlers arrived. The Navajo had their own language, religion, laws, and culture. They were farmers, weavers, and shepherds. They revered the earth and believed in living in harmony with nature. They did not, however, have a written language. Stories, poems, songs, and history were kept alive from generation to generation through oral tradition.

As you may know through your studies of American History, Native American people suffered greatly as a result of the western expansion of pioneers. Much of their culture was misunderstood and was in danger of disappearing. Many Europeans believed the Native American people should give up their tribal traditions and identity. Indeed, Native American culture was in danger of disappearing altogether as tribes were moved to reservations and populations were decreasing.

In 1865, an army doctor named Washington Matthews was assigned to an Army post in Montana. He became interested in the Native American people and began learning about the regional tribes. In 1880, he was assigned to a post in New Mexico. There, he began an extensive study of the Navajo culture. Matthews was a doctor, but was also interested in *ethnography* – a branch of anthropology that studies an ethnic group. He was one of the first ethnographers to record Navajo culture. Matthews learned the language, researched, and recorded many of the tribal rituals, chants, and stories. He was especially interested in the Navajo ceremonies and mythology. He translated many of the Navajo songs into English; “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” is one of his translations.

Washington Matthews died in 1905. He left behind many publications that still help scholars today understand the Navajo culture. His passion for the Navajo and other Native American cultures helped preserve traditions and songs that otherwise might have been lost over time.

*Matthews appreciated poetry and even wrote poems of his own.*

**In World War II, the Navajo Code Talkers were Navajo soldiers who created codes that couldn’t be broken by the enemy. They used the Navajo language as the basis for their codes.**
“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”
Exploring Expository Writing: Historical Context

Directions: Using what you read about the Navajo and Washington Matthews, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. Where did the Navajo people live?

2. How did Europeans feel about the Native American people?

3. What facts from the article would you select to show that Washington Matthews was important to the Navajo culture?

4. Contrast how Washington Matthews felt about the Navajo and how many Europeans felt about the Native Americans. How were they different?

5. Based on what you’ve learned, what kind of person was Washington Matthews?

6. How can studying poetry from another culture help us today?

Comparing Literature

7. How is Washington Matthews different from the other poets you’ve studied?

8. How is Washington Matthews similar to another poet you’ve studied? Which one and why?
“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”

Notes

What makes a poem a poem? Go back to your notes from the pre-reading activity when you defined poetry. Does “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” fit your definition? When Washington Matthews translated it, he created a poem out of a ritual song or chant. You already know that poems can become songs, as was the case with “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Can songs become poems?

Chants – Chants are different from songs. While a song may move up and down along the scale, a chant is generally more monotone and repetitive. Chants are often found in religious ceremonies, but chants are also used at sporting events as in the case of a cheerleading chant.

Oral tradition – Before written language, stories, poems, songs, and cultural traditions were passed from generation to generation by oral tradition. Some cultures have special people whose job it is to tell the stories. Even today, though, we share stories through oral tradition. Think of the family stories that are told at family gatherings. That is a form of oral tradition – the same type of storytelling and history sharing our ancestors practiced hundreds of years ago.

Translations – “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” is a translated poem. What kinds of difficulty might someone have trying to translate poetic language? The “shade of meaning” a word has can be difficult for a nonnative speaker to translate. A mutt is a dog, but so is a pedigree, runt, mongrel, and puppy.
Comprehension Check

Part One
Before answering the following questions, paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>The voice does something...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The voice is...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is found in ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The voice does something...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The voice is found...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two
Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences on the back of this sheet or a separate piece of paper.

1. What is the “voice” in the first stanza?
2. What does it mean to “beautify” something?
3. Explain why you think the voice “beautifies the land”?
4. Where is the thunder located?
5. What is the “voice” in the second stanza?
6. Where is the “voice” located?
7. Compare the two voices. What qualities do they share?
8. Contrast the two voices. How are they different?
9. Interpret the title of the poem. What do you think it means?
10. Explain why the title is important in understanding the poem?

Comparing Literature

11. Compare this poem to any of the other poems you’ve read so far. How is it similar? How is it different?
“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”

Standards Focus: Imagery and Repetition

Part One
Directions: Read the poem once more. Now draw a sketch in the box below of what you “see” and “hear” when you read the poem. If you have colored pencils or crayons, use color in your illustration.

Share your illustration with another student. Are your illustrations alike or different?

The mental pictures you create as you read is referred to as imagery. A writer uses imagery to help the reader experience the poem in a particular way.

1. What are the primary images of the poem? ________________________________

2. Refer back to the historical information you read about the Navajo people. How does what you know about their life affect the imagery of the poem? ________________________________

3. What does the imagery of the poem tell us about how the Navajo felt about the natural world? ________________________________
Part Two
It’s time for a big test in English. Your teacher tells the class at least five times before class is over to study the chapter.

4. What are some reasons he might have repeated that suggestion to study the chapter?

There is more than one reason to repeat something in everyday speech, and the same is true in poetry. You probably noticed the repetition in “Twelfth Song of the Thunder.”

5. What lines or phrases are repeated? ________________________________

6. Analyze the writer’s choice to repeat those words. What might be some reasons they are repeated? ________________________________

Look at the ways the “voice” changes throughout the poem. Using the graphic organizer below, list the qualities, abilities, or images associated with the voice in each stanza. Some of the answers have been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Beautifies the land,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Beautifies the land,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Contrast the “voice” in the two stanzas. How is it different as the poem progresses?

8. Think about different meanings for the voice. Look over your graphic organizer and list some ideas of what the voice might symbolize. ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
A term used to talk about opposites is antithesis. In literature, a writer uses antithesis to create emphasis. Opposite ideas are placed next to each other to emphasize them or to create a dramatic effect. Nathan Hale’s famous quote “Give me liberty or give me death” is a good example of antithesis.

9. Where in the “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” do you notice antithesis? 

10. As you look at antithesis in the poem, what might it indicate about who or what the “voice” is? Is it only the voice of the thunder? 

11. Infer what the voice might symbolize. Explain your answer. 

12. Infer what the voice does. How does the voice beautify the land? What could that line mean? 

13. When you first read the poem, you may have thought the poem was a song about thunder. Certainly, that’s what it feels like when you first read it. But, when you look at the repetition and the way the voice changes, do you think the poem is still just about thunder? What else do you think this poem may be about?

**Comparing Literature**

14. What other poems have you read during this unit of study that use repetition? 

“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”
Assessment Preparation: Connotation, Essential and Nonessential Elements

Part One: Connotation

How do you feel about thunderstorms? Share with a classmate.

How do you feel about bugs? Share with a classmate.

Do your answers agree? Most people have strong feelings about thunderstorms and bugs. Why do you think that?

1. Review the poem “Twelfth Song of the Thunder.” Can you find any diction that indicates how the speaker feels about thunder? ____________________________

2. Can you determine a tone for the poem based on the diction? Explain why or why not.

3. How does the speaker of “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” feel about thunder? How do you know? ____________________________

When you look at diction, you need to think about the connotation of words. Connotation means the feelings, images, and “shades of meaning” a word carries. For example, think about the difference between the words sob, weep, whimper, blubber, and wail. They are all words that describe crying, but there are subtle differences in what they mean.

4. Choose two of the words above and explain the difference between them. _________

5. What do you recall about the translation of “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” from the historical background information? ____________________________

Recall: Diction means word choice. Tone is the speaker’s attitude toward the subject.
6. Hypothesize how the translation of a poem could affect the diction of the poem. 

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. What are some words from the poem that you think could be changed in order to create a stronger image? Explain your choices. _____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Part Two: Essential and Nonessential Elements

*That or which?* Students are often confused by the correct use of these two words.

*Essential element or essential clause:* Part of the sentence that is important to understanding the meaning of the sentence. Because an essential element cannot be removed from the sentence, it is not separated from the rest of the sentence with a comma. In general, writers use *that* to indicate an essential clause.

*For example:* The lunchbox that looks like a yellow school bus is mine.

8. Why is the clause *that looks like a yellow school bus* an essential element? ________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

*Nonessential element or nonessential clause:* Part of a sentence that can be removed and still retain the full meaning of the sentence. Because a nonessential element can be removed from the sentence, it is separated from the rest of the sentence. Writers often use *which* to indicate a nonessential clause.

*For example:* She went to the shoe store, which is located at the mall.

9. Why is the clause *which is located at the mall* a nonessential element? ________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

To test to see if a word, phrase, or clause is nonessential or essential, omit it from the sentence. If the meaning of the sentence doesn’t change, the item is nonessential.

10. The line “The voice that beautifies the land” is repeated throughout the poem. It includes the phrase “that beautifies the land.” Why do you think *that beautifies the*
Practice using essential and nonessential elements. Write sample sentences and explain why you think they include essential and nonessential elements.

11. Sentence: ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

   Nonessential element and explanation: ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

12. Sentence: ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________

   Essential element and explanation: ____________________________

   ____________________________

   ____________________________
“Twelfth Song of the Thunder”
You Try—Write a Poem About “Land”

“Twelfth Song of the Thunder” extols the power of nature in the big and small things, and how they work together to create a beautiful land.

Part One
Take a moment to look at the natural world that you live in. What makes it beautiful to you? Mountains, streams, plants? Use the graphic organizer below to help you brainstorm ideas. Be sure to use items that exist where you live. An example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big things in nature</th>
<th>Small things in nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: large pine trees, Lake Erie, wide sky</td>
<td>Example: lady bugs, the buds on the trees, a single snowflake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two
Look at the two stanzas of “Twelfth Song of the Thunder.” Notice that the first stanza deals with one “big” element (the thunder), and the second stanza deals with one “small” element.

Choose one element for each stanza of your own poem. Then generate a word bank to help you create vivid imagery for each stanza. Use a thesaurus to help you build your word bank. Think about the connotative meanings of the words you choose to describe the elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Words to use to describe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Lake Erie</td>
<td>Crashing waves, glassy surface, soft sand, shushing sound of the waves, foaming white caps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three
Create a repeated line. In “Twelfth Song of the Thunder,” the line “The voice that beautifies the land” is repeated almost like a refrain that begins and ends each stanza. Write your own refrain. Consider using a thesaurus. Try to come up with at least three lines you could use as a repeated line. You can use words from the original poem to help you get started.

For example:
The voice that softens the beach.
A lake that refreshes the shores.
The water brightens the horizon.

Part Four
Write a draft of your poem. As you are writing, remember that you’re using “Twelfth Song of the Thunder” as a starting place. You do not need to imitate the poem. Make your own poem reflect your feelings about the natural world around you.

Part Five: Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Are there enough clues to help your friend understand what your poem is about? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

Part Six: Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.

Sample Student Poem
The First Song of Summer

A voice softens the beach.
The voice beyond
The voice of the waves
Rushing up to the sandy shore.
The voice that softens the beach.

A voice softens the beach.
The voice behind
The sound of the whispering trees
Bending and rustling in the gentle wind.
The voice that softens the beach.
“Twelfth Song of the Thunder” Quiz

Part I: Short Answer

Directions: Answer the following questions about the poem on the lines provided.

1. What is happening in this poem?

2. Explain the purpose of this poem.

3. How would you describe the diction of this poem? (Remember that diction is word choice.)

4. Based on what you know about Native Americans, why is this poem important?

5. Contrast how this poem is different from other poems you’ve read.

6. Formulate a theory about the difficulty someone might have trying to translate poetic language.

7. What information about the Native American culture can you infer from the poem?

Part II: Definitions

Directions: Define the following terms. Write your answers on the lines provided.

8. Chant

9. Oral tradition

10. Translation
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“The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson
Author Biography and Historical Context

Emily Dickinson lived from 1830 – 1886. She was born in Amherst, Massachusetts and except for a few trips out of town, spent all her life there. She was raised in a very religious and well-educated family. Her father, a lawyer, was strict and wanted her to only read the Bible or religious books. Emily’s father, along with the church he belonged to, believed that “reading joggled the mind.” Emily loved to read and, in spite of her father’s wishes, she read all kinds of literature. She and her brother hid the books they were reading from their father. She and her friends would trade books by leaving them in the bushes by her house.

Emily went to school, including some college. She began writing poetry as a teenager, and throughout her life she was a prolific poet and letter writer.

Emily was close to her family. In that time period, girls either got married or lived at home with their parents. Emily and her younger sister, Vinnie, both lived at home, taking care of their parents and household chores. Emily loved to bake, and her father only wanted to eat the bread that she had baked! Emily also loved gardening and observing nature.

Emily responded to life through writing. Her love of nature is evident in many of her poems. Emily also wrote about death. In the 1800s, death was not uncommon—medicine wasn’t able to cure many illnesses; catching a cold could sometimes lead to death. Emily lost friends and family to sudden illness, and she responded to that loss through writing poetry.

Scholars believe that Emily Dickinson suffered from anxiety attacks. In some of her letters, she talks about the overwhelming fear she had when she was away from home. Regardless of her reasons, Emily was a recluse. She spent most of her life at home, and she rarely interacted with strangers or left her home. She did, however, maintain many relationships through letters.

In her lifetime, only a handful of Emily’s poems were published. After her death in 1886, Vinnie discovered a locked chest in Emily’s room. It was filled with her poems. Some were written on scraps of paper, envelopes, or the backs of recipe cards. Vinnie wanted to share her sister’s poems, and eventually a collection of 116 poems was published. They were well received by the public, and more collections followed. Finally, in 1958, all 1,775 of Emily Dickinson’s poems were published. Over 1,050 of her letters were published as well.

Today, Emily Dickinson is considered one of the greatest American poets. Her poems are enjoyed for their creative images and fresh perspectives of life and nature.
The Railway
The major mode of transportation for people and merchandise during the early 1800s was either along canals and rivers or with horse-drawn coaches. Railroad transportation grew rapidly during this time period, and by the beginning of the Civil War, 30,000 miles of railroad track had been laid. In 1869, the first transcontinental railroad was completed – allowing people and products to travel by rail from one coast of the United States to the other. Expanding railroads meant that towns could be connected with each other, and manufacturers could transport goods around the country.

Emily Dickinson’s father worked hard to get a railway line in Amherst. In keeping with her reclusive nature, on the day the town was to celebrate the new train line, Emily went to a neighbor’s woods where she could watch the celebration in private and be away from the crowds and festivities of the town.

Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. List three facts about Dickinson.
2. What was Dickinson’s family like?
3. What do you think Dickinson’s father meant by the belief that “reading joggled the mind”?
4. How did Dickinson use her poetry to help her deal with problems?
5. What can you infer about her writing by the trunk filled with poems that Vinnie found after Dickinson’s death?
6. Determine how the railway might have been important in Dickinson’s life.
7. Why do you think it is surprising and fascinating for people to learn that Emily Dickinson was a recluse?

Comparing Literature
8. Compare Emily Dickinson to another poet you have studied. How were their lives similar?
9. Contrast Emily Dickinson to another poet you have studied. How was her life different?
“The Railway Train”
Vocabulary and Notes

Vocabulary

**prodigious** – extraordinary; wonderful; extremely large
**supercilious** – haughty; disdainful; feeling vastly superior
**peer** – to look carefully
**shanties** – poorly built houses or shacks that house poor people
**quarry** – a pit created when digging rock
**pare** – to cut away; to cut off the outer layer
**Boanerges** – loud, outspoken preachers
**punctual** – on time
**docile** – calm; harmless
**omnipotent** – all knowing and powerful; unlimited power; god-like
**stable** – a building for animals, usually horses

Notes

*extended metaphor/controlling image* – an image or metaphor that is used throughout the entire poem. The entire poem functions as a metaphor for something else.

*simile* – a comparison using *like* or *as*. There is one simile in the poem. What is it?

*alliteration* – the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. For example, “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” How many instances of alliteration can you find in the poem? What effect might the use of this sound device have on the overall feeling of the poem?


**“The Railway Train”**

**Comprehension Check**

**Part One**

**Directions:** After you have read through the poem at least once, paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

| Stanza One | The speaker likes to watch the train...
The train is...
|------------|----------------------------------------|
| Stanza Two | The train is traveling...
And “looking”...
The train then goes past a...
| Stanza Three | The speed of the train is...
The noise the train makes ...
Finally, the train then ...
| Stanza Four | The train reminds the speaker of...
It returns ...
When it stops, it is...

**Part Two**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Briefly explain what is happening in the poem. __________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

2. Identify a quality the speaker notices in the train. What line of the poem makes you think that? __________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
3. What inference can you draw about the shanties based on the poem? Explain your answer.

4. Why do you think the speaker likes to watch trains?

5. What do you think the speaker means in stanza three by the line: “Complaining all the while”?

6. What does the train remind the speaker of?

Comparing Literature

7. Compare “The Railway Train” to another poem you’ve read. How are the poems alike?

8. How is the subject matter of “The Railway Train” different from the other poems you’ve read?
“The Railway Train”
Standards Focus: Personification and Point of View

If you read a copy of “The Railway Train” without the title, what might you think the poem was about? What part of the poem makes you think that?

Emily Dickinson uses a form of figurative language (also called figure of speech) to create the poem. Figurative language means writing with the intention of creating a new way of looking at something. You’re probably already familiar with similes and metaphors. They are categories of figurative language that allow you, as a reader or a writer, to understand something in a new way.

In “The Railway Train,” Emily Dickinson uses a type of figurative language called **personification**. **Personification** is giving human qualities to a non-living item.

**Part One**
1. Look back at the poem. List the words that the speaker uses that are words we would reserve to describe human activities: ________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Look through your list. Can any of the words be used only for humans? Explain your answer. ________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. Is the speaker comparing the train to a human or an animal? Explain your answer using evidence from the poem. ________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. What kind of animal does the speaker think the train is like? ________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

A **simile** is a comparison between two unlike things using the words like or as. For example: Her literature notebook looked like a kangaroo had used it for a trampoline.

A **metaphor** is a comparison of two unlike things without using the words like or as. For example: Her English book was a snarled bird’s nest.

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Part Two
Directions: Read through the poem again. Use the four boxes below to describe the location of the train in each stanza. Be sure to accurately describe the location based upon the information you are given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of the train?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. From what you know about trains and the location of this train, where would the speaker of the poem need to be in order to observe the action of the poem? Explain your answer.

How the speaker “sees” something is called the point of view. Point of view allows readers to experience something in a new way – through the perspective of someone else. In the case of “The Railway Train,” the point of view is omniscient because the speaker is able to see everything about where the train is going.

2. Imagine how the poem would be different if the speaker weren’t omniscient. What might be different about the way the speaker would describe the train?

Comparing Literature
3. Can you think of another poem you’ve read that has an omniscient point of view? Explain why you think it does.
4. When you read “Jabberwocky” you learned about scanning poetry. Scan “The Railway Train” below.

**The Railway Train**  
by Emily Dickinson

*I like to see it lap the miles,*  
*And lick the valleys up,*  
*And stop to feed itself at tanks;*  
*And then, prodigious, step*

*Around a pile of mountains,*  
*And, supercilious, peer*  
*In shanties, by the sides of roads;*  
*And then a quarry pare*

*To fit its sides, and crawl between,*  
*Complaining all the while*  
*In horrid, hooting stanza;*  
*Then chase itself down hill*

*And neigh like Boanerges;*  
*Then, punctual as a star,*  
*Stop--docile and omnipotent--*  
*At its own stable door.*

5. Use the information from “Jabberwocky” to help you evaluate the type of meter Emily Dickinson used to write the poem.

What meter is “The Railway Train”? ________________________________
“The Railway Train”
Assessment Preparation: Writing from Different Points of View

In the Personification and Point of View activity for this poem, you examined the point of view of the speaker. In writing, the way a speaker or narrator shares information with the reader is called the point of view. When you are reading, ask yourself, “Who is telling the story?”

There are several basic ways to describe the point of view of a piece of literature:

*Omniscient* – an all-knowing speaker. This point of view is also known as “third person omniscient” because it is told from a third person point of view. Third person means the speaker uses he, she, it, they, etc. to describe the action of the story. An omniscient narrator knows what all the characters are doing and thinking. The reader has a bird’s eye view of the story.

*Limited omniscient* – the speaker has limited knowledge. This is sometimes called “third person limited” because the story is told from a third person point of view. The narrator may only know what one of the characters is thinking, or the narrator may only be reporting the events of the story.

*First person* – the speaker is “I” and can only tell the story through what the “I” can see. The first person point of view is limited because the speaker is only telling the story from his/her viewpoint.

*Objective* – this point of view is a recording of the events of the story without interpreting the events through the speaker’s thoughts.

**Part One**
1. Explain why it is important to understand the point of view of something you read. _____

2. When reading nonfiction, why is it important to know the point of view? _____

Have you read the children’s book *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith? The wolf tells the story of the three little pigs from his point of view. Because the wolf controls the story, he is able to put his own “spin” on the tale in which he is a victim of circumstances and not the horrible wolf that is portrayed in the traditional story.
3. As a writer, how can choosing a point of view improve your writing?


Part Two
You are probably familiar with the nursery rhyme “Humpty Dumpty.”

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.*
*Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.*
*All the king’s horses and all the king’s men*
*Couldn’t put Humpty together again.*

1. From what point of view is this written? Explain your answer.


2. Rewrite the nursery rhyme from the first person point of view in which you are Humpty. Your rewrite doesn’t have to rhyme. You may add more information to help tell your story.


3. Rewrite the nursery rhyme from the first person point of view in which you are one of the king’s men.


4. Rewrite the nursery rhyme from the third person omniscient point of view. You have access to all the information of the story. You will use pronouns he, she, or it, etc.

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

5. Compare the different points of view. How do they change the way you interpret the nursery rhyme? ________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

6. Evaluate the different versions. Which one do you like the best, why? ______

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

7. Evaluate the “voice” of each version. How does it change depending on who is narrating? ________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
Part Three  
Vocabulary

Directions: Write the correct vocabulary word that could be used to replace the italicized word or words in the sentence. Write your answer on the line provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>prodigious</th>
<th>supercilious</th>
<th>peer</th>
<th>shanties</th>
<th>quarry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pare</td>
<td>Boanerges</td>
<td>punctual</td>
<td>docile</td>
<td>stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omnipotent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___________ 1. Franklin will *look* through the microscope.

___________ 2. The wild cat was *calm* after she had been fed.

___________ 3. The dictator had *limitless* power over the people.

___________ 4. The city council visited the *shacks* that were built on the outskirts of town.

___________ 5. This fall, we had a *large* harvest of apples from our orchard.

___________ 6. The spokesman on the commercial sounded like a *loud preacher* as he told about the wonderful product.

___________ 7. The school bus was *on time*, as usual.

___________ 8. We will *cut off the outer layer* of the potatoes before cooking them.

___________ 9. I felt *superior* when I got an A+ on the literature test.

___________ 10. I’d like to visit the *pit* where you found that diamond.

___________ 11. The *building for the horses* was located at the edge of the farm.
“The Railway Train”
*You Try—Write a Personification Poem*

“The Railway Train” is a poem that is a bit like a riddle. Without the title, the reader may not be sure what the poem is about. Look over the poem again. Do you see any clues that the poem is about a train?

Write a “riddle” poem that is an extended metaphor using personification of an object.

**Part One**
Choose an object to personify and create a list of verbs that can be used to describe the object. Then decide what your object will be doing in the poem. In “The Railway Train,” the train is traveling down and through hills. An example has been done for you.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbs</td>
<td>yells, chirps, sings, calls, lights up, flashes, vibrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the object doing?</td>
<td>the phone is ringing until someone finally picks it up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part Two**
Decide how you will personify that object. Will it be an animal or a person? Write your ideas in the space below. *Example: Telephone = bird*
Part Three
What will be the tone of your poem? How do you feel about your object? Do you like it or dislike it? It is fascinating or irritating? Write your tone below.

Part Four
Draft your poem. Remember to include a beginning, middle, and end to your poem. For a challenge, try writing your lines in the same meter as “The Railway Train.”

Part Five
Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Are there enough clues to help your friend understand what your poem is about? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

Part Six
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.

Sample Student Poem

The Telephone

I hate to hear it sing its song
It chirps the whole day through
It won’t be quiet when ignored
Or silenced at the dusk.

It quiets when I pick it up
And rests within my hand
Back on its perch it sits alone
Then squawks and yells again.

Relentless it calls and begs an answer
Not stopping when I respond
Then silence for a golden moment
and starting up – crying once again.
“The Railway Train” Quiz

Part I: True or False

Directions: Answer true or false for the following statements. Write out the word “True” if true; “False” if the statement is false.

_____ 1. This poem is written in stanzas.
_____ 2. The poem is really about a runaway horse.
_____ 3. The author used very little figurative language in this poem.
_____ 4. It is clear that the speaker is frightened in the poem.
_____ 5. The poem takes place in a wide range of areas.
_____ 6. This poem is written in free verse.

_____ 7. Personification is the removal of human characteristics from characters to make them appear animal-like.

Part II: Matching

Directions: Match the word and its definition. Write the letter of the correct word on the line provided.

_____ 8. a comparison that is used throughout the entire poem

_____ 9. calm, harmless

_____ 10. poorly built houses or shacks

_____ 11. to look carefully

_____ 12. a pit created when digging rock

_____ 13. to cut away; to cut off the outer layer

_____ 14. a loud preacher

_____ 15. on time

_____ 16. all knowing and powerful; unlimited power; god-like

_____ 17. haughty; disdainful; feeling vastly superior

_____ 18. a building for animals, usually horses

_____ 19. extraordinary; wonderful; extremely large

_____ 20. a comparison using like or as

A. boanerges
B. docile
C. extended metaphor
D. omnipotent
E. pare
F. peer
G. prodigious
H. punctual
I. quarry
J. simile
K. shanties
L. stable
M. supercilious
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“The Song of Wandering Aengus” by W.B. Yeats
Author Biography and Historical Context

William Butler Yeats lived from 1865 – 1939. He was born in Ireland, but soon afterward his father left his law practice to pursue a career as an artist in London. As a result, William’s family moved between London, England and Dublin, Ireland for much of William’s childhood. Although his early education took place at home, Yeats eventually went to school in both England and Ireland, and as a young man, he attended art school in Dublin.

William loved hearing his mother tell stories about Irish fairies and legends. And consequently, he developed a love for the folktales and mythology of the Irish people.

In 1885, he published his first poem and essay. Then in 1889, at the age of 23, he published his first collection of poetry. While critics praised his poetry, the collection wasn’t a financial success – only thirty-five copies of the first edition were sold. Yeats continued to write, however, and he was able to support himself financially through his poems, essays, plays, novels, articles, and reviews.

In 1889, he met a young woman named Maud Gonne. Yeats fell in love with her, but in spite of at least four marriage proposals, Maud refused to marry him. Yeats eventually married later in life, but his infatuation with Maud never died, and his love for her had a definite influence on his writing.

Throughout Yeats’s life, he maintained his interest in Irish folktales, history, mysticism, and spiritualism. He worked to create Irish literature through poetry and theater. He established the Irish Literary Society and was influential in the Irish National Theater.

In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. Yeats accepted the award as an honor to both him and Ireland.

Today, Yeats is considered an important modern poet. Readers enjoy his poems for their symbolism, mythical references, and insight into life.

Historical Context
During William Butler Yeats’ life, the country of Ireland was engaged in a struggle for independence from Britain. Yeats was in favor of independence for Ireland, but he took a less radical stand than many others took. The Irish War of Independence (1919 – 1921) resulted in the creation of the Irish Free State. While most of Ireland became independent, six counties became Northern Ireland and remained a part of the United Kingdom.
Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

**Directions:** Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. When and where did William Butler Yeats live?

2. How did he make his living?

3. What facts or ideas show that Yeats was a well-respected writer?

4. What events from his life may have influenced his poetry?

5. How did the historical events of Yeats’ life influence his work?

6. How can you tell that Yeats was interested in the culture of Ireland?

7. What judgment can you make about what kind of person Yeats was? What personality traits can you infer by what you read about him? Explain your answer.

**Comparing Literature**

8. Compare Yeats to another poet you’ve read. How are their lives or writing goals similar?

9. Contrast Yeats with another poet you’ve read. How are their lives or writing goals different?
“The Song of Wandering Aengus”

Notes and Vocabulary

Aengus (pronounced *een-guhs* or *ayn-guhs*) is the Celtic god of love. In a dream, Aengus sees a girl and falls in love with her. In his waking hours, however, he cannot find her. He spends years searching for her and finally finds her; her name is Caer (similar pronunciation to *care*). Because her father doesn’t want Caer to marry Aengus, the father turns her (and 149 of her friends) into swans. If Aengus can pick Caer out of the group of swans, they can marry. Aengus is eventually able to do this after he promises Caer that he will turn himself into a swan. He does so, and the two of them fly away together. Their song is so sweet, that people who hear it fall asleep for three days.

Who were the Celts?
People often think of the Celtic people as living only in Ireland. Archeologists believe the tribes originated in central Europe and migrated throughout Europe and eventually moved into Ireland around 500 B.C. The Celtic people had their own laws, language, art, and mythology. The story of Aengus is only one of the stories from their mythology.

**hazel wood**: A forest of hazel trees. Hazel wood was believed to be a fairy tree and to have magical powers. It was used to make magic wands.

**golden apples**: In Greek mythology, Hera (Zeus’s wife) had a tree in her garden that produced golden apples that gave immortality.

Vocabulary

**rustled** – made the sound of something moving through dry leaves
**glimmering** – shining faintly or shimmering
**dappled** – having different shades of color
**hollow lands** — used as a noun, hollow means *a valley*. Used as an adjective, hollow means *empty*.
**“The Song of Wandering Aengus”**  
**Comprehension Check**

**Part One**  
**Directions:** Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

| Stanza 1 | The speaker went into the woods  
|          | Because there was ...  
|          | He made a fishing rod and ...  
|          | Then at night, he ... |

| Stanza 2 | He laid the fish ...  
|          | But something ...  
|          | The fish had ...  
|          | She ... |

| Stanza 3 | Now ...  
|          | Trying ...  
|          | He wants ...  
|          | And ... |

**Part Two**  
**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. What is the speaker's name?  
   ____________________________________________________________

2. What is the speaker searching for?  
   ____________________________________________________________
3. Which stanza explains what Aengus is looking for? 

4. Describe the girl. 

5. What events from the poem would you use to show Aengus’s feelings about the girl? 

6. Analyze why you think Aengus wants to find the girl. 

7. What conclusion can you draw about why the speaker went out to the wood in the first place? What does he mean by “a fire was in my head”? 

8. Infer the speaker’s attitude in the last stanza. What clues from the poem tell you he plans to continue his search? Explain your answer. 

9. Contrast the speaker with the girl. Based on what you know, how can you explain her feelings toward the speaker? 

10. If you could give the speaker some advice, what would you tell him?
Poets use many tools to create images in their poems; some are diction, similes, and metaphors. After reading “The Song of Wandering Aengus,” you probably noticed that it follows a distinct pattern and rhythm.

In this poem, Yeats also uses alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of the first consonant of a word. A tongue twister like “Sally sells seashells by the seashore” is an extreme example of alliteration. The poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” contains alliteration in the second stanza: “when white moths were on the wing.” The first consonant w is repeated.

A poet may use alliteration to call attention to an image or to create a particular sound when the line is read. Read the line “when white moths were on the wing” aloud. When you hear the repeated sound of the w you may think of the nearly silent soft sound of the wings of a moth. By using alliteration in that line, the quiet night scene of the stanza becomes stronger for the reader.

**Part One**

1. Reread the poem. What other examples of alliteration can you find?

2. Why do you think the speaker uses alliteration in those places in the poem?
   What kind of contrast might the speaker be trying to point out to the reader?

3. As you know from reading “Twelfth Song of Thunder,” poets use repetition.
   Look through “The Song of Wandering Aengus” and identify any lines, phrases, or images that are repeated.
4. In stanza two, how are the lines “someone called me by my name” and “who called me by my name” different in meaning? Explain your answer.

Part Two

Writers often use symbolism in poetry to give the poem greater depth. The flag in “The Star-Spangled Banner” isn’t just a piece of fabric. It represents everything that the United States believes in and aspires to become.

Look back at the “Notes” page for “The Song of Wandering Aengus” and reread the information about Celtic and Greek mythology.

Directions: Use the chart to identify some of the symbols in the poem. The chart has been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Might Symbolize…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hazel wood</td>
<td>magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>berry</td>
<td>something sweet, special (as opposed to a worm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white moths</td>
<td>angels, stars, magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Called me by name</td>
<td>She knows who the speaker is, perhaps she was aware of the speaker before he knew about her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three
5. How does the symbolism of the fishing pole change when you know what hazel wood is?

6. Why is the symbolism of the name “Aengus” important in understanding the meaning of the poem?

7. In the last two lines of the poem, the speaker states “the silver apples of the moon,/the golden apples of the sun.” What might those lines symbolize?

8. What might the images in the last stanza symbolize? Explain why you think that.

9. Explain how examining symbols in a poem can add to your understanding and enjoyment of the poem.

Comparing Literature
10. Choose another poem you’ve read. Find an example of alliteration. Explain how you think it adds to the interest, meaning, or experience of the poem.
11. Choose another poem you’ve read. Find an example of a symbol. Explain what you think it means in the poem. 

12. The titles of the poems “I, Too Sing America,” “Twelfth Song of Thunder,” and “The Song of Wandering Aengus” all include a reference to singing. How is the use of singing different in each of the poems?

13. How is the repetition used in this poem different from the way repetition is used in “Twelfth Song of Thunder”?

Part Four
Directions: Scan the poem “The Song of Wandering Aengus” on the next two pages. (This includes marking stressed and unstressed syllables and the rhyme scheme) Review the Standards Focus activity from “Jabberwocky” if you need help.

What is the meter of “The Song of Wandering Aengus”? 

What is the rhyme scheme?
The Song of Wandering Aengus
by W.B. Yeats

I went out to the hazel wood,

Because a fire was in my head,

And cut and peeled a hazel wand,

And hooked a berry to a thread;

And when white moths were on the wing,

And moth-like stars were flickering out,

I dropped the berry in a stream

And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor

I went to blow the fire a-flame,

But something rustled on the floor,

And some one called me by my name:

It had become a glimmering girl

With apple blossom in her hair

Who called me by my name and ran

And faded through the brightening air.
Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,
I will find out where she has gone,
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.
“The Song of Wandering Aengus”
Assessment Preparation: Showing Not Telling

Do you remember preschool when you had “Show-and-Tell” day? Wasn’t it fun to show off your new lunch box or favorite beanie baby?

When we write, we don’t have the luxury of holding up whatever we’re writing about; consequently, most students end up “telling” more in their writing than “showing.” Writing in a way that shows allows your reader to experience what you as the writer experienced.

Part One
Read through “The Song of Wandering Aengus” again. What do you see when you read the poem? Draw a sketch in the box below of one scene from the poem that you think is particularly vivid.

1. List some of the words or phrases Yeats uses in the poem to show the events of the poem.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
By using sensory details, Yeats is able to help the reader experience what Aengus experienced. Use the chart below to classify words and images as they relate to the senses. Try to find at least one for each sense. The chart has been started for you. Some of the words can apply to more than one sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Smell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hazel wood</td>
<td>hooked</td>
<td>apples</td>
<td></td>
<td>apple blossoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fire</td>
<td>fire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>blossoms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. How does sensory language make a difference between *showing* and *telling*? ____________________________________________________________________________

3. Rewrite the last stanza with all *telling* statements. ____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Compare the last stanza as written with the last stanza written in telling statements. What do you think the primary differences are? Explain your answer. ____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

5. In the last stanza, the speaker tells the reader something directly. What is it that he tells? ____________________________________________

6. Why do you think the speaker chooses to *tell* the reader this directly? ________
**Part Two**

**Directions:** Practice writing with sensory language. Before writing, create a word bank using the chart; then write a short paragraph in a way that shows rather than tells. The first one has been started for you.

**Ex. Prompt:** *Franklin is a slob.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Smell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>spilled soda on the floor; dirty clothes piled on the sofa; popcorn on the rug</td>
<td>sticky coffee table</td>
<td>sour</td>
<td>crunchy carpet from spilled chips</td>
<td>sour milk; dirty gym shoes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paragraph: *The last time I visited Franklin, my shoes crunched across the carpet, littered with stale corn chips. I pushed aside the pile of dirty laundry on the couch and sat down, trying to clear the smells of sour milk and stinky feet out of my head...*

1. **Prompt:** *Flora loves to read.*

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<th>Sight</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Smell</th>
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Paragraph: ____________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
2. Prompt: *Yolanda is a terrible tuba player.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Smell</th>
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</table>

Paragraph: __________________________________________________________
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“The Song of Wandering Aengus”
You Try—Write Your Own Poem of Longing

“The Song of Wandering Aengus” is a poem about a lifetime of longing. The
speaker is not going to give up his search for the “glimmering girl” and no other
girl can be substituted.

We all can relate to the experience of wanting something – longing for something
that we can’t have. In the space below, write down some ideas of something
you’ve longed for. They can be real (like a computer, video game, or plate of
spaghetti) or abstract (like true love, world peace, or quiet). Write as many ideas
as you can.

Choose one of your “longings.” Pick one that you think no one else in the class
will have. You can probably tell by what you chose that your poem might turn
into a parody of the original poem. After all, a lifelong yearning for the perfect
plate of spaghetti can’t be taken too seriously!

Part One
Directions: Use the graphic organizer on the next page to gather ideas for
your poem. An example has been done for you below.

| The beginning: When I first found out/learned/experienced the object of my longing | Example: I was invited to have dinner at my friend’s house |
| The middle: My experience with the object of my longing | Example: His mother served the best spaghetti I’ve ever had! Then, my friend moved away. |
| The end: The search for the object of my longing | Example: To this day, I’ve tried the spaghetti in every Italian restaurant I’ve found, but none of it is as good as that first spaghetti dinner at Larry’s house. |
The beginning: When I first found out/learned/experienced the object of my longing

The middle: My experience with the object of my longing

The end: The search for the object of my longing

**Part Two**
Write a draft of your poem. If you like, you can use the same rhyme scheme and meter as “The Song of Wandering Aengus.” Make sure your poem has a beginning, middle, and end. Be sure your poem shows and doesn’t just tell about your experience. Use sensory language.

**Part Three**
Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Are there enough clues to help your friend understand what your poem is about? Have you used enough sensory language? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

**Part Four**
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.
“The Song of Wandering Aengus”
Sample Student Poem

The Song of Longing for Good Pasta

I went to dinner at Larry’s house
Because my empty tummy ached.
And sat at his table while his mother served
A bowl of spaghetti – boiled, not baked.

The sauce was rich and spicy and hot
Steam drifted to caress my longing nose
Each noodle a tender and delicate bite –
The noodles and sauce dripped from my chin to my toes.

Though I’ve sampled the pasta from New York to Rome
From the northern-most Rockies to the depths of the sea
I cannot find another dish like it
But I won’t stop ‘til that pasta is inside of me.
“The Song of Wandering Aengus” Quiz

Directions: Write the letter of the best response on the line provided.

_____ 1. At the beginning of the poem, the speaker is
   a. making a fire.
   b. running away from home.
   c. going fishing.
   d. chopping firewood.

_____ 2. The speaker is enchanted by a _______ that turns into a girl.
   a. fish
   b. moth
   c. fairy
   d. butterfly

_____ 3. The girl
   a. sings a song to the speaker.
   b. runs away.
   c. flies away.
   d. agrees to stay with the speaker.

_____ 4. The speaker then
   a. spends the rest of his time fishing.
   b. forgets about the girl and goes back to his life.
   c. searches for the girl.
   d. catches the girl.

_____ 5. The poem is written
   a. in free verse.
   b. using rhymed stanzas.
   c. in unrhymed stanzas.
   d. using repeated lines.

_____ 6. What do you learn about the girl in the poem?
   a. She wants the speaker to catch her.
   b. She is bold and outgoing.
   c. She is magical.
   d. She wants to spend more time with the speaker.

_____ 7. This poem
   a. tells the story of real events that happened to the speaker.
   b. refers to mythology.
   c. is about how the speaker learns to live with nature.
   d. is historically accurate.

_____ 8. This word means made the sound of something moving through dry leaves:
   a. rustled
   b. glimmering
   c. dappled

_____ 9. This word means shining faintly or shimmering:
   a. rustled
   b. glimmering
   c. dappled

_____ 10. This word means having different shades of color:
   a. rustled
   b. glimmering
   c. dappled
“The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost

Author Biography and Historical Context

Robert Frost believed in the power of poetry. In an essay titled “Education by Poetry,” he wrote: “The person who gets close enough to poetry, he is going to know more about the word belief than anybody else knows.” Robert Frost must have been speaking about his own experiences with poetry, as it was a central part of his life.

Robert Frost lived from 1874 – 1963. Though he was born in San Francisco, he moved back to his family’s home in England after his father died when he was a young boy. Both his mother and grandfather were teachers who made sure Robert read a wide variety of materials.

As a young man, Frost attended Dartmouth College and Harvard, but he didn’t graduate from either. Instead, he worked as a farmer, an editor, and a schoolteacher. As a young man, he wrote in his spare time, but his poems were rejected for publication. When his first poem was published in 1894, he was paid $15 for it.

In 1911, he decided to move to England in hopes of getting his poetry published there. By this time, he was married and had children. In England, he met other poets. His first book of poetry was published in England in 1913, and it was well received. When he returned to the United States, he was surprised by the favorable American reviews of his poems. The same publishers who had rejected his poems years before were now asking him for his poetry! He continued to teach and received invitations to lecture and read his poetry throughout the country.

In 1924, 1931, 1937, and 1943, he won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. He was appointed the Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress (which is called the Poet Laureate today). Additionally, throughout his life, he received forty-four honorary degrees and numerous awards including a Congressional gold medal in 1960 for his poetry. There is even a mountain in Vermont named after him. In 1960, he was asked to read at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy – the first time such an invitation had been extended to a poet.

Robert Frost’s work is still extremely popular today. His poems deal with simple events and rural settings. Often the topics and dialect are unique to the New England region. While the topics of his poems may be simple, like a road in the case of The Road Not Taken, they contain insight into human nature and life.

Historical Background

What is the Pulitzer Prize?

Joseph Pulitzer was a man who embodied the American dream. He was born in Hungary, moved to America, and through hard work and determination, built a successful newspaper that created standards in journalism. In his will, he established the Pulitzer Prize. The prize would be awarded each year for journalism, history, and biography. Later, awards were added for poetry, music and photography. The Pulitzer Prize is considered a great honor by all who receive it.
A Poet at the Presidential Inauguration
John F. Kennedy invited Robert Frost to speak at his inauguration on January 20, 1961. Like many people of the time, Frost was excited by the energy and enthusiasm the new president promised to bring to the country. Frost wrote a poem for the occasion called Dedication. However, Inauguration Day was bright and sunny, and an elderly Frost had difficulty reading the printed copy of the poem. After an attempt to read his new poem, Frost instead recited the poem The Gift Outright from memory.

Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

Directions: Use the information you learned in the article about Robert Frost to answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. When and where did Robert Frost live?
2. What kinds of careers did Robert Frost have in order to support his family?
3. How do you know that Robert Frost was dedicated to writing poetry?
4. What do you think might have been one of the best awards or honors Robert Frost received in his lifetime? Why do you think that?
5. Why do you think he chose to write about topics such as rural life and life in New England?
6. Read the quote at the beginning of the article. How do you think Frost felt about poetry? Why do you think that?
7. Analyze what you think the word belief in the quote at the top of the article means. Explain your answer.
“The Road Not Taken”

**Vocabulary**

diverged: branched off; moved in a different direction
undergrowth: small trees and plants growing beneath larger trees
fair: promising; favorable
claim: demand or right
trodden: walked on
hence: from this time

**Comprehension Check**

**Part One**

**Directions:** Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

| Stanza 1 | The speaker is in the woods and comes to a spot in the road where the road is forked  
The speaker is sorry ...  
He ...  
Until ... |
|---|---|
| Stanza 2 | The speaker takes the other road which is ...  
He chooses this road because ...  
Because grass is growing on it, and the road seemed ...  
Though ... |
| Stanza 3 | Both roads were...  
The leaves...  
The speaker saves the first road for...  
But, the speaker knows that ...  
And the speaker doesn’t think ... |
Part Two

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. What is the speaker in the poem doing? ________________________________

2. What does the speaker encounter? ________________________________

3. What decision does the speaker have to make in the poem? ____________

4. Infer the season. How do you know? ________________________________

5. Describe the conflict the speaker feels. ________________________________

6. Explain why the reader doubts he’ll ever come back to travel the first road. ________

7. Analyze the last stanza. What does the speaker mean by “Somewhere ages and ages hence”? ________________________________
8. Formulate an idea of what you think the road may symbolize. Explain why you think that.

9. Propose a reason for the “sigh” the speaker has at the end of the poem. What are some of the reasons he may be sighing? Explain your answer.

10. Propose a meaning for the line “And that has made all the difference.” What are some other meanings of that line?

11. Which interpretation of the last line do you prefer? Why?
“The Road Not Taken”
Standards Focus: Setting and Extended Metaphor

When is a road not a road?

What setting are you in right now? Share your answers with a classmate.

Did you write more than the physical space in which you are sitting? Setting includes:

- **Geographical location** – where in space the story takes place. Does the story take place in a town, a classroom, a soccer field?
- **The time period** – when in time the story takes place. This can include the year, era, or actual time.
- **The emotional setting** – what are the emotions associated with the setting? How are the emotions of being at a party different from the emotions experienced at a visit to the dentist?
- **The occupations or daily living conditions of the characters.** What is the character’s occupation or where does the character live each day? If the character is a farmer, the living conditions of being on a farm are part of the setting.

**Part One**

**Directions:** Using the scenes below, write a short description of each setting. Try to include the geographic location, the time period, the occupation/daily life of the character, and an emotional condition. The first one has been done for you. (You may wish to fill in the geographic location, time period, etc. before you write your scene.)

*Example:* School: It is 8:30 a.m. and the halls of Happy Valley School are crowded on the first day of school. Students are hurrying to class but are still excited to see the friends they’ve missed during the break.

a. Geographic location: Happy Valley School
b. Time period: 8:30 a.m., first day of school
c. Emotional condition: excited; glad to see friends
d. Occupation/ daily life: students at school

1. The mall:

   a. Geographic location:______________________________
   b. Time period: _________________________________
   c. Emotional condition: __________________________
   d. Occupation/ daily life: __________________________
2. The library, the week before exams:

   a. Geographic location:
   b. Time period:
   c. Emotional condition:
   d. Occupation/ daily life:

3. Opening night of the school play:

   a. Geographic location:
   b. Time period:
   c. Emotional condition:
   d. Occupation/ daily life:

4. The dentist’s office:

   a. Geographic location:
   b. Time period:
   c. Emotional condition:
   d. Occupation/ daily life:

Part Two
When you are writing your own setting, it’s easy to create all the elements of setting. When you are reading, it is sometimes more challenging to detect what the setting is. Go back to “The Road Not Taken.”
Directions: Use the graphic organizer below to help you find clues about the setting of the poem. After looking over the clues, what can you infer about each stanza? You may not find an answer for each column, but you should be able to make an inference in the last column. Some answers have been filled in for you.

What does it mean to infer? Use the information you learn from the text and add your own thoughts about that information. What conclusions can you draw? That is inference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Geographical location</th>
<th>Time period</th>
<th>Emotional condition</th>
<th>Occupation/daily life</th>
<th>What I can infer from this stanza?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 1</td>
<td>A yellow wood Two roads diverged</td>
<td></td>
<td>sorry</td>
<td>Traveler</td>
<td>It is fall because the leaves are yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It wanted wear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>He is in the future</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Part Three
Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. What is the time setting of the poem? How do you know this? ________________

2. What is the emotional state of the traveler? ___________________________

3. Compare the time of the poem in stanzas 1 – 3 and the time in stanza 4. What is happening in stanza 4? ________________________________

4. What conclusions can you draw by looking at the setting of the poem? _____________
5. What items of the setting might be symbolic of something else? 


6. Look back at the first stanza and the last stanza. What line does the speaker repeat? 


7. Infer why you think the speaker repeats that line. Explain your answer. 


8. Analyze the last line of the poem. What do you think the speaker means by the last line? 


**Comparing Literature**

9. Both “The Road Not Taken” and “The Railway Train” are extended metaphors. How would you compare the tone of the two poems? 


10. Review the other poems you’ve read. Compare the setting of “The Road Not Taken” with the setting of another poem. How are the settings alike? 


11. Contrast the setting of “The Road Not Taken” with another poem. How are the settings different and why is the setting important in each poem? 


Part Four

Directions: Scan “The Road Not Taken.” Be sure to indicate the meter as well as the rhyme scheme.

The Road Not Taken
by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1. What is the meter of “The Road Not Taken”? __________________________

2. What is the rhyme scheme? __________________________
“The Road Not Taken”
Assessment Preparation: Writing with Purpose—Extended Metaphor

What decisions have you made this week? Did you choose to stay up late one night to watch a movie? Did you go to bed earlier than usual? Did you get homework done or did you put it off? Did you pack your lunch or buy it?

You can probably think of hundreds of decisions and choices that you’ve made this week. What choices had a consequence – big or small? Staying up late may have left you tired in English class. Buying your lunch may have meant you had to spend your allowance. Talk about a recent choice and consequence with another student.

Choices have consequences whether they are big or small. The poem “The Road Not Taken” is about making choices. As a matter of fact, the entire poem can be read as a metaphor about a choice the speaker makes – it is a comparison between two things. Metaphorically speaking, what are those two things?

When a poet uses a metaphor throughout an entire poem, it’s called an extended metaphor.

Part One
Directions: Robert Frost created the extended metaphor by using diction (word choice). Go back to the poem. Take a look at the diction. Use the graphic organizer below to identify each time Frost uses a word or phrase related to travel and the road. The chart has been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza 1</th>
<th>Two roads, diverged, travel, one traveler, it bent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Contrast what you think of as a road with what the speaker of the poem experiences as a road. What do you imagine a “road” to be like in your experiences? What is the speaker’s road like?
2. Do you think the road in this poem is an appropriate metaphor for life? Explain your answer. __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

3. Analyze the use of the word “diverged.” What other words could the speaker have used? __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

4. Interpret why the speaker might have used the word “diverged.” Explain your answer. __________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

5. Analyze the use of the word “fair.” What other words could the speaker have used? How do you think Frost wanted us to interpret the word? Explain your answer. __________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

6. Analyze the use of the word “difference.” What other words could the speaker have used? How do you think Frost wanted us to interpret the word? Explain your answer. __________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________

7. Why do you think Frost specifically chose diction that could be interpreted several different ways, rather than more precise or deliberate wording? __________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
**Part Two**
In his essay "Education by Poetry" Frost writes about metaphors. He states, "Poetry begins in trivial metaphors, pretty metaphors, 'grace' metaphors, and goes on to the most profound thinking that we have. Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another."
Try your hand at creating an extended metaphor. You’ll write a paragraph in which you explain your metaphor.

**Section I:** Use the chart below to help you come up with an original metaphor for life. Jot down your ideas about why you think your metaphor is accurate in the “because” column. The more ideas you have in the last column, the easier your paragraph will be to write. An example and ideas have been given to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Is</th>
<th>Because</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Lots of excitement&lt;br&gt;Fun to be with friends&lt;br&gt;“presents” from teachers (homework!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Beware the cliché!**
When writing metaphors, it may be tempting to use a cliché. Clichés are overused expressions, which have lost their meaning over time. Some common clichés include: *as clear as mud, as slow as molasses, stop and smell the roses, every cloud has a silver lining.* The list goes on and on.

**Section II:** Choose a metaphor and create a metaphor word bank. Think about verbs, nouns, and adjectives that you associate with the metaphor you’ve created. Write those words in the space below. An example has been done for you.
Example: happy, presents, favors, cake, laughing, playing games, friends, music, surprises
Section III: Use the outline to jot down your ideas for your paragraph. As you write your ideas, you may find that you need to focus on ideas, narrow your thoughts, or be more specific. Feel free to add more sentences. Try to include a few words from your word bank.

Sentence 1: Topic sentence (your metaphor)
Sentence 2: First big idea (an idea from your – because column)
Sentence 3: Explain, give an example, or provide details about your first big idea
Sentence 4: Second big idea
Sentence 5: Explain, give an example, or provide details about your second big idea
Sentence 6: Third big idea
Sentence 7: Explain, give an example, or provide details about your third big idea
Sentence 8: Closing sentence

Example outline:
Sentence 1: School is a party.
Sentence 2: There is always something surprising happening.
Sentence 3: For example, my friend Sandy is always in the middle of a crisis – usually involving her latest boyfriend.
Sentence 4: It’s like a daily party when I’m with my friends every day.
Sentence 5 & 6: At lunch we spend more time talking and laughing than eating. The funniest lunch ended up with us laughing so hard that I got water up my nose.
Sentence 7: At school, just like at parties, we get presents from our teachers.
Sentence 8: The – presents! we get at school are homework!
Sentence 9 & 10: I love going to school, and I love going to parties. For me, school is a party.

Section IV: Once you have the draft of your paragraph written, add transition words. Transition words help the reader navigate the sequence of when something is happening in your writing. Some common transition words include: first, then, next, since, however, after.

Example paragraph:
School is a party. First off, there is always something surprising happening. For example, my friend Sandy is always in the middle of a crisis – usually involving her latest boyfriend. Since I’m with my friends every day, it feels like a party. At lunch we spend more time talking and laughing than eating. The funniest lunch ended up with us laughing so hard that I got water up my nose. Finally, at school, just like at parties, we
get presents from our teachers. The “presents” we get at school are homework! It’s true for me: I love going to school, and I love going to parties. For me, school is a party.

Section V: Prepare the final draft of your paragraph by checking spelling and sentence structure. You may want to ask a friend to proofread it for you. Be sure to add a title to your extended metaphor.

Part Three Vocabulary

Directions: Choose the correct vocabulary word to complete the paragraph below.

| diverged | undergrowth | fair | claim | trodden | hence |

Last weekend, we went to the mall. The sales looked ____________________, and Ezra and I headed to the discount store. Ezra and I ________________ once we got in the store because he was looking for socks and I was in search of a notebook. It was obvious that shoppers had been here. The aisles were littered with clothing. Walking through the store was like struggling through the ________________ of a jungle. I found the notebook and made my ________________ on it before any other shoppers could grab it. After searching through the store, I finally found Ezra who had ________________ through the store with no success in finding socks. We left the store – Ezra was discouraged, and vowed that in the weeks ________________, he would only wear sandals.
“The Road Not Taken”
You Try—Write a Poem About Choices

As you’ve discovered in your study of “The Road Not Taken,” the poem is about choices that change a life. You’re going to write a poem about a choice you’ve made. Your poem can be serious or silly. You may even want to write a parody of the original poem.

Part One: Brainstorm ideas. What choices have you made that made an impact on your life? Write as many ideas as you can in the space below. Some examples have been done for you.

Examples: take a drama elective, become a vegetarian, quit piano lessons, join the soccer team, ask the librarian for a challenging book, wear my roller blades to school

Part Two: Share your ideas and expand them by talking about ideas with another student. Add any new ideas to your brainstorming.

Part Three: Choose an idea for your poem, and an “inciting” incident. An inciting incident is something that happened that forced you to make a choice. For example, in “The Road Not Taken,” the speaker had to make the choice. He had to choose a road if he wanted to continue on his travels.

Then, create a list of consequences of your choice. In “The Road Not Taken,” the speaker tells the reader that the choice “made all the difference,” but he doesn’t explain what he means by “difference.” In your poem, explain the results of your choice. An example has been done for you.

Example:
1. Choice: becoming a vegetarian
2. Inciting incident: choosing at lunch between meatloaf and a salad
3. Consequences: my family thought I was weird, my friends teased me, people tried to trick me into eating things with meat in them, I felt healthier, I was doing something to help the earth, I had trouble finding a variety of meals in the school cafeteria, I started to do more cooking, I’m interested in becoming a nutritionist.
Part Four: Write a draft of your poem. If you like, you can use a similar rhyme scheme and meter as “The Road Not Taken” or you can write your poem in another rhyme scheme, or in free verse.

Part Five
Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Does your poem include enough about your choice? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

Part Six
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.

Sample Student Poem

Two meals on the cafeteria menu that day:
Meatloaf or salad
And I was hungry, so I looked at that meatloaf ...
Then I looked at the salad as well.
It looked fresh and crisp and most kids had passed it by
Because it was green,
But really the meatloaf didn’t look all that bad –
So I could have chosen either meal.
But I decided to choose the salad
Because I decided that day that I didn’t want to eat meat.
And I knew I would be teased by my friends,
My family – will they think I’m weird?
But I had two choices that day, and I chose to
Become a vegetarian
I am healthier and happier with my new choice.
I became a vegetarian
And that has made all the difference.
“The Road Not Taken” Quiz

Part I: Short Answer

Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

1. Briefly explain what is happening in the poem.

2. Explain how the speaker feels about the two roads.

3. Why doesn’t the speaker think he’ll ever go back and travel down the other road?

4. Explain why this poem is considered an extended metaphor.

Part II: Matching

Directions: Match the vocabulary word and its definition. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line provided.

5. from this time
   A. claim

6. walked on
   B. diverged

7. promising; favorable
   C. fair

8. branched off; moved in a different direction
   D. hence

9. small trees and plants growing beneath larger trees
   E. trodden

10. demand or right
    F. undergrowth
“Chicago” by Carl Sandburg
Author Biography and Historical Context

Like other American poets, Carl Sandburg wanted to use his writing to express what he felt it meant to be American. Sandburg was a friend to the worker and distrusted the motives of businesses that made their money from cheap labor.

Carl Sandburg lived from 1878 – 1967 and was born and raised in Illinois. He quit school after eighth grade to help support his family by working various jobs – including harvesting ice and shining shoes. As a young man, he traveled around the country as a hobo. Through this experience, he saw the working conditions of laborers – conditions that often took advantage of them. In 1898 he joined the U.S. Army for a short time and served in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War.

After his military experience, he went to college. He joined the “Poor Writers Club” in which he practiced writing and was encouraged by his peers. Though he never finished college, he worked as a journalist and was eventually recognized as a writer in 1914 when his poems were published in a magazine. He wrote two more books of poetry and a book of stories for children. Then his publisher asked him to write a biography of Abraham Lincoln for children. Sandburg researched his topic and wrote a two-volume biography of Lincoln – for adults.

Sandburg went on to write four more books about Lincoln. One of the volumes won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940. His books are still considered some of the comprehensive biographies of Lincoln ever written.

Sandburg won three Pulitzer Prizes – two for his books of poetry and one for his biography of Lincoln. He is remembered today for his range of writing – from children’s books to poetry to research.

Historical Context
What do you know about the city of Chicago? Share your experiences and knowledge with a classmate.

Today, Chicago is the third largest city (in population) in the United States. When Carl Sandburg wrote his poem “Chicago” in 1914, the city of Chicago had already earned itself a reputation. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the city was rebuilt, reorganized, and proud of its accomplishments.

The word hobo is an American word that came into our language in the late 19th century. The term means a migratory worker, someone who travels from job to job without a stationary home. During the Great Depression, hobos traveled by hitching rides on trains. They moved from city to city in search of work. Hobo may also be used to describe a vagrant – someone who doesn’t work.
Because of its location on the Great Lakes and centralized location in the nation, Chicago was important in transporting goods around the country. The meat packing industry, the railroad, and other industries flourished in Chicago. Immigrants to the United States moved to Chicago to find jobs in search of the American dream. But the city had another reputation as well: crime. Chicago was a tough city of gangsters and dishonest politicians. During Prohibition in the 1920s, gangsters like Al Capone were powerful forces in the city.

Chicago, along with other industrial cities at the time, relied on cheap labor – often from immigrants and children. Businesses grew wealthier and the workers struggled to survive. Sandburg’s poem honors the determination and toughness that the working class people had and their importance in making the city strong.

Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. Where and when did Carl Sandburg live?
2. Analyze events that happened in Carl Sandburg’s life that may have influenced his writing.
3. Infer how Sandburg felt about Lincoln. Explain your answer.
4. What facts or ideas show that Sandburg was a good writer?
5. Why do you think it was important to Sandburg to write about the American experience?
6. What facts about the city of Chicago do you think are important?
7. Why do you think people were proud of the city of Chicago?
8. In what ways do you think the city of Chicago is different today? Explain your answer.

Comparing Literature

9. Compare Carl Sandburg to another poet you’ve read about. How are they alike?
10. Contrast Sandburg with another poet. How is he different?
“Chicago”
Notes and Vocabulary

Notes

Turn – just like the physical movement from one direction to another when you “turn,” the literary definition of turn means a shift or change in the direction, emotion, or thought in a poem. As you read a poem, you may notice that the tone present at the beginning of the poem changes as the poem progresses – sometimes more than once. By the time you reach the end of the poem, the tone may be completely different. That is the “turn” of the poem.

Vocabulary List

butcher – a person who slaughters meat and prepares it for sale
freight – cargo; goods that are transported
husky – big; strong
brawling – fighting
luring – attracting; tempting
crooked – slang term for dishonest
brutal – vicious; cruel
wanton – unjustifiable
sneer – to look at with disdain or disgust; scowl
coarse – rough; unsophisticated
cunning – clever
amid – around; within
toil – work
slugger – a person who hits hard – specifically a boxer or a baseball player
vivid – bright; clear
savage – an uncivilized person
pitted – set against; in battle against
destiny – what is meant to be; the future
“Chicago”
Comprehension Check

Part One
Directions: Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza 1</th>
<th>The speaker is listing:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 2</td>
<td>“They” tell the speaker the city is:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The speaker responds by saying...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>But the city is also ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 3</td>
<td>The speaker describes the city as being like a ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some of the things the city does includes ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The city is proud to be ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two
Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. List some of the “jobs” the city has.
2. What do these jobs have in common?
3. In the first half of the second stanza, what kind of “conversation” is the speaker having?
4. How does the conversation change in the second half of the stanza?
5. In the third stanza, what does the speaker compare the city to?
6. In the third stanza, what word do you notice the speaker repeats?
7. What can you infer about the city based on the poem?

8. Contrast the first stanza with the last four lines of the poem. How are they different?

9. Identify some of the verbs (action words) in the poem. What do you notice about them?

10. Suppose you were to visit the Chicago the speaker of the poem is describing. What would you expect it to be like?

11. What might it mean to call Chicago “City of Big Shoulders”?

Comparing Literature

12. Compare this poem to another one you’ve read. How are they alike?

13. Contrast this poem with another one you’ve read. How is this poem different?
“Chicago”
*Standards Focus: Hyperbole, Figures of Speech, Turns*

**Part One**
How would you describe your town? List some adjectives you’d use below.

1. People often say a town has a personality. What do you think that means? Write your thoughts in the space below.

Read through “Chicago” again. Use the graphic organizer below to help you decide what kind of personality the town has. The first stanza has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images, words, phrases that paint a picture for me</th>
<th>Makes me think the personality of the city is...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog butcher, freight handler, big shoulders,</td>
<td>Hard working, strong. It can handle physical labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speaker of the poem uses a figure of speech called hyperbole to describe the personality of Chicago. Hyperbole is extreme exaggeration. The line, “Hog Butcher for the World” is an example of hyperbole. While Chicago might be responsible for a large portion of hog production, it is not the only place in the world that slaughters hogs. By using hyperbole, the speaker calls attention to the line.

2. Why do you think the speaker uses hyperbole? _________________

3. Choose another line that you think is a hyperbole. Explain why you think it is an example of hyperbole. ____________________________

4. Explain what you think the hyperbole you chose for question number three means. ____________________________
Hyperboles, like similes, metaphors, and personification, are figures of speech that help the reader experience the poem. Use the graphic organizer below to list some of the metaphors and similes found in the poem. Put a star next to those you think are hyperboles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simile</th>
<th>Stanza #</th>
<th>Compares ... to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fierce as a dog</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>City to a vicious dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunning as a savage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughing as ...</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughing as ...</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>Stanza #</th>
<th>Compares ... to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Big Shoulders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here is a ...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personification</th>
<th>Stanza #</th>
<th>Compares ... to ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City with lifted head singing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>City to a singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud to be alive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinging magnetic curses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City is laughing the laughter of...</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Choose one of the comparisons from the graphic organizer above that you think is a hyperbole. Explain why you think it’s a good example of hyperbole. 

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Part Two
When the meaning of a poem changes directions, it’s called a turn. It is a shift or change in the direction, emotion, or thought in a poem. Use the following questions to help identify the turns in the poem.

1. What is the speaker doing in the first half of the second stanza? ___________

   Use the continuum below and mark an X where Chicago stands at this point.

   negative          neutral            positive

2. What is the speaker doing in the second half of stanza two?

   Draw a circle on the continuum where Chicago stands at this point in the poem.

3. Why is this an example of a turn? ________________

4. By the end of the second stanza, how has the turn changed the tone of the poem?

   Draw a star on the continuum of where you think Chicago stands at the end of the poem.

5. Notice that the beginning of the poem and the end of the poem are nearly identical, however the tone is different. Explain the difference. ___________

   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
“Chicago”

*Assessment Preparation: Nouns, Prepositions, and Sentence Combining*

**Part One**
Look through the poem for nouns the speaker uses. **Nouns** are persons, places, things, and ideas.

1. List the nouns you found: ____________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

2. Look over your list. What do you think the speaker of the poem thinks the age of the city is? Explain your answer. ____________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

3. If the city were a person, what would that person look like? _______________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

**Part Two**
The poem uses **prepositional phrases** to show relationships between elements of the poem. For example, the line: “Come and show me another city with lifted head singing.” The prepositional phrase *with lifted head* tells what the city looks like. The preposition *with* begins the phrase and the object of the preposition is *head*.

1. **Underline** the prepositional phrases in the stanza below.

   *Hog Butcher for the World,*
   *Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,*
   *Player with Railroads and the Nation’s Freight Handler;*
   *Stormy, husky, brawling,*
   *City of the Big Shoulders;*

2. Read the stanza again without any of the information in the boxed phrases. How do the prepositional phrases add meaning to the poem? _______________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________

Some common **prepositions**: about, after, at, before, behind, below, down, for, in, of, out, over, through, to, under, with
3. Evaluate how the tone or the poem would be different if the speaker didn’t use prepositional phrases in the first stanza.

One of the definitions you may hear when people try to define poetry is “condensed language.” That means that the writer carefully chooses every word. There are no extra words or padding in the poem. Each word works to create meaning, theme, and images.

When you are writing, you probably are focusing on the specific nouns and verbs you use. Pay attention to how prepositional phrases can add interest and meaning to your writing.

A common preposition is “to.” When you are identifying prepositions, be careful to notice that “to” is not always a preposition, and can be part of an infinitive – a verb. An infinitive is the base form of a verb, for example: to run, to laugh, to buy.

5. Choose another line of the poem that contains prepositional phrases. Rewrite the line in the space below and draw a box around the prepositional phrases.

6. Evaluate how the information from the prepositional phrases adds meaning to the poem.

**Part Three**

Combine the following sentences by using prepositional phrases. Feel free to omit words you don’t need and add words that will help your sentence make sense. Underline the prepositional phrases you use.

1. There is a box. The box contains candy bars. Edith must sell the candy bars. The candy bars have almonds.

2. It is May. We are having a fundraiser. Our club needs money. Our club is the Kazoo Club. Our club needs new kazoos.
3. Edith sold thirty boxes last year. She was the top seller. She won a prize.

4. This year we’re buying kazoos. The kazoos are new. The kazoos are gold. The kazoos have glitter. The glitter is sparkly.

Part Four

Vocabulary

Directions: Match the word and its definition. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line provided.

_____ 1. butcher A. a person who slaughters meat and prepares it for sale
_____ 2. freight B. slang term for dishonest
_____ 3. husky C. bright; clear
_____ 4. brawling D. clever
_____ 5. luring E. vicious; cruel
_____ 6. crooked F. a person who hits hard – specifically a boxer or a baseball player
_____ 7. brutal G. an uncivilized person
_____ 8. wanton H. cargo; goods that are transported
_____ 9. sneer I. work
_____ 10. coarse J. rough; unsophisticated
_____ 11. cunning K. around; within
_____ 12. amid L. big; strong
_____ 13. toil M. to look at with disdain or disgust
_____ 14. slugger N. fighting
_____ 15. vivid O. attracting; tempting
_____ 16. savage P. unjustifiable
_____ 17. pitted Q. what is meant to be; the future
_____ 18. destiny R. set against; in battle against

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“Chicago”
You Try—Write a Poem About a Place

“Chicago” is a poem about a city that someone looks at through his own eyes. The speaker defends his city by praising it, but also acknowledges its faults and looks at it realistically.

For your poem, think about some place that you think is special. Some possible places include: your town, a town you used to live in, your school, your house, your neighborhood, a place you’ve visited, or even your bedroom. Try to choose a place that you love, but that others may not feel the same way about.

Part One
Directions: Use the table below to generate some ideas about the place you want to write about. Try to be as specific as possible. What exactly might someone say about your place? How do you respond to that? An example has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The place</th>
<th>Negative things others say about it…</th>
<th>My response to the negatives things said…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My bedroom</td>
<td>Mom says it is a pigsty and disgusting</td>
<td>I say I like it that way—that things are where I can find them. It’s an organized mess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two
“Chicago” is divided into three sections: an initial description, criticism and response, and a description of the power of the city. Use the chart below and on the next page to help you organize your poem.
Criticism and response

They tell me...

And I believe them...

And they tell me ...

And I answer...

And they tell me...

And my reply is ...

Description (personification) of the place

Proud to be...

Repeat the initial description

Part Three
Write a draft of your poem. Look at the word choices you made. Are they vivid? Do the nouns capture the image of the place? Did you include prepositional phrases? Did you try to personify the place?

Part Four
Read your poem to a friend. Does the poem make sense? Are there enough clues to help your friend understand what your poem is about? Have you used enough sensory language? If not, revise your poem so others can enjoy it.

Part Five
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish the final draft.
“Chicago”  
Sample Student Poem  

Bedroom  

Dirty laundry collector for the house  
Paper shredder, hoarder of junk.  
Storehouse of Frisbees and basketballs.  
Smelly, cluttered, messy  
Bedroom of the Big Junk Pile. 

They tell me you are a mess and I believe them because there is a lot of garbage in here.  
They tell me you are a bio hazard and I answer: Yes, there are several science experiments involving mold and fungus going on under the bed.  
And they tell me you are appalling and my reply is: On the face of my mother, I have seen horror and the fear of the wanton laziness of her son. 

Tangled like a mop of hair that isn’t afraid to blow free in the wind,  
Laughing, nestling, burrowing, and scattering more.  
Under the trash, tossing the paper and clothes like a happy mouse making a nest  
Laughing even at the dirty dishes covered with crumbs like a cheerful clown ready to entertain an audience. 

Happy, carefree, laughing. Proud to be  
Dirty laundry collector for the house  
Paper shredder, hoarder of junk.  
Storehouse of Frisbees and basketballs.  
Smelly, cluttered, messy  
Bedroom of the Big Junk Pile.
“Chicago” Quiz

Directions: Choose the best response. Write your answer on the line provided.

_____ 1. “Chicago” is a poem that
   a. points out all the bad qualities of the city
   b. praises all the good qualities of the city
   c. balances the good and bad of the city
   d. refuses to believe what anyone else says about the city

_____ 2. It is written
   a. in free verse
   b. with rhymed stanzas
   c. in unrhymed stanzas
   d. with a clear pattern of rhythm

_____ 3. Calling Chicago a “city of the big shoulders” is a good example of:
   a. metaphor
   b. simile
   c. personification
   d. repetition

_____ 4. Some of the great things about the city pointed out in the poem include:
   a. a great educational system
   b. proud, hard-working people
   c. a Beautiful natural setting
   d. the tallest buildings in the country

_____ 5. Some of the negative things about the city pointed out in the poem include:
   a. factories that pollute the air and water
   b. criminals who are set free
   c. a poor educational system
   d. trouble with unemployment

_____ 6. “Fierce as a dog” is a good example of:
   a. metaphor
   b. personification
   c. repetition
   d. simile

_____ 7. The speaker of the poem
   a. thinks Chicago needs to be reformed
   b. worries about what other people think of the city
   c. wants the world to know it is a city of great people
   d. believes that the city is in danger of losing its identity

_____ 8. a person who slaughters meat and prepares it for sale
   a. husky
   b. wanton
   c. coarse
   d. butcher

_____ 9. cargo; goods that are transported
   a. slugger
   b. freight
   c. amid
   d. slugger

_____ 10. big; strong
   a. husky
   b. brawling
   c. wanton
   d. sneer

_____ 11. fighting
   a. luring
   b. crooked
   c. brawling
   d. freight
12. attracting; tempting
   a. luring
   b. husky
   c. wanton
   d. crooked

13. slang term for dishonest
   a. wanton
   b. crooked
   c. toil
   d. savage

14. vicious; cruel
   a. slugger
   b. butcher
   c. pitted
   d. brutal

15. unjustifiable
   a. wanton
   b. husky
   c. luring
   d. crooked

16. to look at with disdain or disgust
   a. luring
   b. slugger
   c. savage
   d. sneer

17. rough; unsophisticated
   a. coarse
   b. wanton
   c. cunning
   d. vivid

18. clever
   a. destiny
   b. pitted
   c. cunning
   d. amid

19. around; within
   a. toil
   b. amid
   c. slugger
   d. crooked

20. work
   a. freight
   b. toil
   c. savage
   d. coarse

21. a person who hits hard – specifically a boxer or a baseball player
   a. brawling
   b. luring
   c. slugger
   d. pitted

22. bright; clear
   a. cunning
   b. vivid
   c. amid
   d. sneer

23. an uncivilized person
   a. husky
   b. butcher
   c. savage
   d. slugger

24. set against; in battle against
   a. pitted
   b. sneer
   c. cunning
   d. slugger

25. what is meant to be; the future
   a. destiny
   b. wanton
   c. amid
   d. luring
The Book of Questions by Pablo Neruda  
Author Biography and Historical Context

Neftalí Ricardo Reyes Basoalto (Pablo Neruda) lived from 1904 – 1973. He grew up in a small town in Chile, and as a boy was encouraged to write poetry by a teacher. His father, however, didn’t want his son to be a poet, so when he published his first poem at the age of thirteen, he used the pen name Pablo Neruda.

Neruda published his first book of poems at the age of twenty, and a year later he published another book of poems called Twenty Love Poems and a Poem of Despair. Even though this book was well received and popular, it didn’t bring Neruda financial stability. He accepted the position of consul as he traveled to different countries; he was poor and lonely, but continued to write.

Eventually, Neruda was appointed as a consul in Spain. There, he became involved in politics and interested in the communist party. When he returned to Chile in 1943, he joined the Communist Party. However, the political climate of Chile was unstable and just a few years later, he had to go into hiding and eventually escape Chile because of his criticism of the government.

Neruda spent many years in exile – writing poems. He eventually returned to Chile when the political climate changed again. By this time, his poetry had become internationally popular and had been translated into several languages. Neruda’s poetry included poems about love, politics, everyday things, and the history of the land and people of South America as they struggled to find their own identity. Neruda had obtained financial and popular success as a poet.

In 1971, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He died in 1973.

When Politics and Poetry Collide

Poetry can be dangerous. Like music and art, poetry has been used to call for change in our world. Throughout time, poets have used their writing to point out flaws in human nature, governments and the world. And often those being criticized don’t like it. Some poets have paid for their political views by being exiled, arrested, or even executed.

Some of the poetry Pablo Neruda was politically charged, and he was outspoken about the leaders of his country. As a result of a public protest against the president of his country, he was about to be arrested. He escaped on horseback—carrying with him a manuscript of poems.
At the end of his life, the government of Chile was overthrown, and Neruda was thought to be a traitor. When the armed troops came to search his home, Neruda said, “Look around—there’s only one thing of danger for you here: poetry.”

**Questions Without Answers**

Have you ever heard this question: What is the sound of one hand clapping?

While this feels like the punch line of a joke, it is really a type of questioning called *koan*. A *koan* is a Zen teaching tool that helps in meditation. Koans don’t have one answer, or even any answer at all.

How about this question: How many times have I told you ...?

Whoever was asking you that question probably wasn’t expecting an answer. This type of question is called a **rhetorical question**. A rhetorical question is similar to a koan in that it doesn’t have an answer, but it is different from a koan because a rhetorical question is used to set up an argument, a line of thinking, or some type of logic.

When you read the selections from *The Book of Questions*, you’ll read a series of questions that don’t have a clear answer. You can think of them as koans – questions that can guide you in thinking, or you may think of them as rhetorical questions – questions that don’t have an answer, but can lead to an argument for or against something.

*The Book of Questions* is seventy-four couplets that ask unanswerable questions. As you’re reading, don’t worry about being able to answer them.

**Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. When and where did Pablo Neruda live?
2. Why did he take a pen name?
3. List two qualities about Neruda that you can infer from the article.
4. Based on what you read, how can poetry be political?
5. Do you think poems, art, and music are powerful enough to bring about political change? Explain your answer.
Notes and Vocabulary

Notes

Couplets: The poems in The Book of Questions are written in couplets. A couplet is two lines of poetry. Sometimes a couplet rhymes. In the case of the poems in The Book of Questions, the couplets don’t rhyme, but they do fit together because each couplet asks a question.

Roman numerals: The poems in The Book of Questions are numbered with Roman numerals. I = 1, V = 5, X = 10, and L = 50. The poem numbered XLVI = 66. If a lower number is in front of a greater number, like IV, subtract the first number from the second: IV = 4.

Vocabulary

congenial – friendly
passion – strong feeling
declaration – a statement
**The Book of Questions**  
Poems XXXIII and XLIX  
*Comprehension Check*

**Part One**

**Directions:** Paraphrase the poems by using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence starters to help you. Some of the answers have been started for you.

### XXXIII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1:</th>
<th>If someone is in the desert, especially if they’re lost, they’re not happy the sun is shining down on them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td>If someone is in the hospital and goes outside to a garden, the sun feels …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td>At night the rays of moonlight look like a net – if the moonlight shines…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4:</td>
<td>When they lost me, I figured out…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### XLIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1:</th>
<th>Can the sea …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td>The waves are repetitive – they keep...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td>The energy of the waves seems...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4:</td>
<td>The waves never stop...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two

Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. In poem XXXIII, what does the speaker realize about the different roles of the sun? ____________________________________________________________________________

2. What are the primary images in poem XXXIII? ____________________________________________________________________________

3. What are the primary images in poem XLIX? ____________________________________________________________________________

4. Why might the speaker think of the moonlight as a net? ______________________________________________________________________

5. Why do you think the speaker thinks the waves are asking him questions? ________

6. Besides couplets that ask questions, what do the two poems have in common? _____

7. Who might the speaker be addressing as he’s asking these questions? ____________

8. Can you answer any of the questions? If so, which ones? How would you answer? ________________________________________________________________________
The Book of Questions
Poems XXXIII and XLIX
Standards Focus: Purpose in Poetry

Part One
The next time you turn on the radio or listen to a song, ask yourself, “What’s the purpose of this song? What was the writer’s goal in writing this song?” Your first thought may be that the purpose is to create a song that sounds good, makes money, or is great to dance to, but think a bit more about it.

1. Think about the “The Star-Spangled Banner.” What is the purpose of that song? ___

2. Think about some of the songs you sang as a child. What were they? What was their purpose? ___

Some of the reasons artists write songs might be to express deep emotions like being in love, feeling proud, or feeling a loss. Artists might also write a song of protest against something like war, poverty, drugs, or child abuse. Artists can also write songs to share experiences like a birth, a death, or a success.

3. Can you think of any other reasons someone might write a song? ___

4. Can you divide your favorite songs into categories or songs that are written for a particular purpose? List a few of your favorite songs and write what you think the purpose of each song is. ___

5. How are songs you listen to on the radio different from the songs that accompany advertisements? ___

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6. Songs that accompany ads are called **jingles**. Do you know any jingles by heart? What’s the purpose of that jingle? _________________________________

Why is it important to know the purpose of a piece of writing? Think about the amount of text you read and hear each day. Billboards, ads in magazine, ads on your computer, radio and TV commercials, and articles you may read in the newspaper or in textbooks. We are bombarded with information that tells us what to eat and what to wear, who to admire and where to live, and what to believe in.

Smart readers try to determine the purpose of any piece of writing. It helps readers understand what the writing means and what the writer is trying to do. If the writer is trying to manipulate the reader or convince him of something, readers should be aware of this. As you read, you should be questioning the writer’s purpose. If you think about the writer’s purpose and infer what the piece of writing is attempting to do to you as a reader, you will be a more thoughtful, critical, and deliberate reader.

While you may never know an author’s initial reason for writing a song, poem, or novel, you can determine its purpose to you as a reader.

**Part Two**

**Directions:** Read the following passages. Analyze the passage to determine its purpose. If there isn’t enough information to come to a clear conclusion, explain your analysis.

1. Highway workers struggled in below freezing temperatures throughout the night to patch the old, broken water pipe on Main Street. The pipes under the ground are over fifty years old and the city has refused to address the issue of replacing aging water pipes.

   Purpose of this passage: _________________________________

2. Everyone should plan to attend the Spring Dance. It will be the most talked about event of the year, and you are sure to have a great time dancing to your favorite music with your best friends.

   Purpose of this passage: _________________________________
3. Brussels sprouts make a delicious after school snack.

   Purpose of this passage: ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

4. Completing homework assignments is a delightful way for students to spend their time. There is nothing more rewarding than spending a Saturday afternoon with an algebra book.

   Purpose of this passage: ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

5. When I volunteer at the soup kitchen, I realize how lucky I am to have a good home and plenty to eat.

   Purpose of this passage: ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

**Part Three**

Just like songs are written with a specific purpose, poems are written with a purpose as well. Some poems are written to reflect on an experience a writer had, to question the world, to praise someone or something, or sometimes just for fun. Understanding the purpose of a poem can help you understand the meaning of the poem.

1. Look over the poems you’ve read. Why do you think the writer wrote them? Choose one or two poems and write their purpose. ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

2. Read through poem XXXIII again. Think about the first two couplets. What might the purpose of those two couplets be? ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________

3. What is the purpose of the third couplet? ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
   ________________________________________
4. What is the purpose of the fourth couplet? 

5. Read through poem XLIX again. How is the purpose of the first couplet different from the rest of the poem? 

6. What is the purpose of the last three couplets? 

7. *The Book of Questions* is an entire book of poems that ask questions. What might be the purpose of a book filled with questions that have no set answers?
The Book of Questions
Assessment Preparation: Answering Short Response and Essay Questions

As you’ve discovered, the questions asked in The Book of Questions aren’t easy to answer. While Pablo Neruda may not have expected his readers to come up with an answer to his seventy-four poems, your teacher may ask you to answer an essay question on a test. What are some strategies you should use when responding to a timed writing prompt or an essay exam?

1. **Read the entire question.** Make sure you understand what the question is asking. The causes of the Civil War and the results of the Civil War are two very different questions. Underline key words in the question before you begin to answer it.

Look for test question clues. What are the following test questions asking you to do? Complete the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key words from the test question:</th>
<th>What is the question asking me to do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Find ways two or more things are alike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Find ways two or more things are...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Create a short outline of what you want to say.** Many students want to start writing immediately, especially if the test is timed. Resist the temptation to jump right into the writing and make a mini outline of what you want to say first. If you take just one or two minutes to gather your thoughts, you’ll stay on the topic, answer the question, and cover all the points you want to make. Jot your essay outline down in the margin of your paper. It doesn’t have to be a true outline; you can focus on bullet points and big ideas.

3. **Show what you know.** The purpose of an essay test is for you to have the opportunity to show that you know the subject matter and you can discuss it. Give specific examples and details if you can. This is the time to use dates, statistics, people, and even trivia. Be careful, however, that your details and information apply to the question.
4. **Keep your eye on the clock.** Check the test to see how many questions you need to answer and how much time you have to answer them. Make a mental note of how much time you should be spending on each question. Work quickly and carefully.

5. **If you’re taking a timed test, remember to keep working.** Don’t stop and stare into space or out of the window! The clock is ticking. Keep writing.

6. **Save a few minutes to proofread and check.** Give yourself a few minutes to read the question again, and then check your response. You might discover spelling or grammatical errors; you may also realize you’ve left an important piece of information out of your answer.

**Part One**
Here is a sample test question and answer. Analyze both the question and the answer.

**Question:** Think about a time you accomplished something you were proud of. Explain what you did and why you were proud of it.

**Answer:** Everyone has something they’re proud of. What looks like a small accomplishment to one person may be a huge accomplishment to someone else. Some people are good at sports, so making a goal that wins the game is not a big deal, but other people can’t walk without tripping. For those people, learning how to jump rope or ride a bike is a big deal. People can be proud of lots of things. It just depends on what you’re capable of doing.

1. What is the question asking? ____________________________________________
2. What words in the question should the writer have underlined before starting to write? ____________________________________________________________
3. Does the writer answer the question? ______________________________________
4. What recommendation can you give the writer? ________________________________

**Question:** Compare two of your friends.

**Answer:** I have two best friends: Franco and Justin. Even though they aren’t related, they are a lot like each other. They both love sports and will watch any sporting event on TV. I think they would even watch a ping-pong match! They both love junk food. They bring chips and cookies to school every day for their after school snack. Even though they’re alike, they’re different as well. Justin is kind of a slob, and Franco is neat.
5. What is the question asking? 

6. What words in the question should the writer have underlined before starting to write? 

7. Does the writer answer the question? 

8. What recommendations can you give the writer? 

Part Two
Directions: Read and answer the following short response question. Be sure to practice using the six steps for answering short response and essay questions. Your teacher may decide to give you a time limit for your answer.

Question: What is a hero? Describe the qualities you think a hero should have.

1. How much time do you have to complete your task? 

2. What is the question asking you to do? 

3. Create your outline in the space below:

4. What other details would you like to include in your response? 

Write your response on the lines on the next page. Be sure to take the time to proofread your writing when you are done.
Part Three
Directions: Answer the following questions based on your work in Part Two.

9. How do you know that you answered the question? Underline the words you used to describe the qualities of a hero. Did you come up with three or more qualities? _____

10. Did you use specific examples to answer the question? List your examples here, using only one or two words for each one. ____________________________

11. Did you take the time to proofread before time was up? If not, why not? ________

12. How can you improve your essay writing skills? ____________________________
The Book of Questions  
You Try—Write Your Own Questions

As you read and studied the selection of poems from The Book of Questions, you discovered that even though the questions don’t have clear answers, the questions gave you an opportunity for thought. Neruda looked at the natural world and everyday things and asked questions. He used personification by imagining the waves were asking questions and the sun was being friendly.

Part One: Write your own poem of questions. It can be serious or silly. You can play with words like Neruda did with see and sea. Start by looking around your world and choosing an everyday item or something from the natural world. List those items in the chart below. Try to choose something your classmates won’t choose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyday items</th>
<th>Natural world</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My pencil</td>
<td>Clouds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My shoes</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clock</td>
<td>Birds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part Two: Choose one of the items from your list and write some questions that item might have. Remember that there isn’t an answer for the questions. Use the chart below to help you expand your ideas. Try to write several questions for each item on your list. It may be helpful to use question words like who, what, where, when, why, how, which, does, do, can, will.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The item</th>
<th>The Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clock</td>
<td>Who tells the clock what time it is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When is the clock late for an appointment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How will time rest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the clock ever wonder if it’s late?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The item</td>
<td>The Questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Part Three: Draft your poem. Write your poem as a series of couplets. You may have three or more couplets. Can you make them relate to each other?

Part Four: Share the draft of your poem with a friend. Is there enough detail in your poem? Can your reader imagine what is happening in your poem? Were you successful in asking an unanswerable question?

Part Five: Revise your poem. Look at word choice. Remember that when you write poetry, each word is intentional. Take the time to choose the words carefully.

Part Six: Add a title. If you like, you can use Roman numerals, or you can use words.

Part Seven: Publish your poem.

Sample Student Questions

A Question of Timing

And who will chastise the clock when it is late for a dentist appointment?

Or who could be so bold to challenge the clock demanding to know why he is late for school?

Does knowing how to read the clock mean I understand time?

Will the relentless ticking even have a second of rest?
**The Book of Questions Quiz**

**Part I: True/False**

*Directions:* Answer true or false to the following questions about the poem. Write your answer on the line provided.

1. This poem contains factual information about the topic.
2. The speaker of the poem is confident and seems to have all the answers.
3. The speaker is curious about how he and the natural world fit together.
4. The poem makes use of personification.
5. This poem is written in a particular structure.
6. The word “passion” means a strong feeling.
7. The word “congenial” mean to congeal or turn a liquid into a solid.
8. The word “declaration” means a statement.

**Part II: Short Answer**

*Directions:* Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

9. What is the structure of the poems?

10. Contrast this poem with other poems you’ve read. How is it different?
“Oranges” by Gary Soto
Author Biography and Historical Context

In an autobiography written for Scholastic, Gary Soto writes, “To me the finest praise is when a reader says, I can see your stories. This is what I'm always working for, a story that becomes alive and meaningful in the reader's mind.”

Gary Soto was born in 1952 in Fresno, California. As a kid, he didn’t grow up dreaming of becoming a great writer; he wanted to be either a priest or a paleontologist. His life growing up was difficult. His parents worked as laborers, and his father died when Gary was only five. Following his death, his mother struggled to make ends meet. School wasn’t a priority for Gary or his family. When he was in high school, Gary’s grades were less than ideal.

Still, Gary read books by great authors like Ernest Hemmingway and John Steinbeck. When he was in college, he discovered poetry, and he was hooked. He decided to become an English major. He eventually earned a Master of Fine Arts degree and taught at the University of California.

As a Mexican American, Gary Soto likes to write about issues and experiences he had growing up in the Mexican American culture, but he also likes to write stories and poems that all people can relate to and understand, regardless of where they grew up. His books for young people contain themes and events that all kids can understand. He has written all kinds of genres: plays, novels, poems, memoirs, and films.

Gary Soto has written many books for children, teens, and adults, and has received awards for his writing. Additionally, he has been a spokesperson for the United Farm Workers of America – an organization that promotes the rights of migrant farm workers.

Gary Soto still lives and writes in California.

Migrant Farm Workers
A migrant farm worker is someone who travels with the growing seasons – harvesting crops as they ripen. These laborers have historically been paid low wages, and have poor working and living conditions. The children of migrant workers often also work; their schooling is interrupted or incomplete as they travel from town to town with their parents.

Cesar Chavez was a farm worker who founded United Farm Workers. The organization works to improve working conditions for migrant workers. By encouraging boycotts of particular farm products, United Farm Workers has been successful in improving working conditions and wages for laborers.
Gary Soto has been the Young People Ambassador for the United Farm Workers of America. As he travels around the country speaking to schools, he shares stories of migrant farmers with them.

**Exploring Expository Writing:**

**Author Biography and Historical Context**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences on a separate piece of paper.

1. When was Gary Soto born?
2. What childhood experiences may have influenced him?
3. Why might Gary Soto be interested in helping migrant farm workers?
4. How can you tell that education is important to Gary Soto?
5. How can reading about someone else’s experiences of growing up in a different culture be helpful to you?
6. What is a function of an organization like United Farm Workers?
7. Gary Soto continues to write books for young people. Based on the quote used at the beginning of the article, what are his goals as a writer?
8. What does winning an award tell us about a writer?

**Comparing Literature**

9. Compare Gary Soto’s life with another author you’ve read about. How are their lives similar?

**What is a boycott?** A boycott is the refusal to purchase something or shop at a particular store because you disagree with the way a product is produced or how a store is run. A boycott is often effective when it impacts the profits a company or person earns.
“Oranges”

Notes

Free verse – as you recall, free verse poems don’t follow a particular pattern, rhyme scheme, or stanza pattern. However, as you look at this poem, you’ll notice that the poem is written with intention. Notice how the lines are written. Why do you think the speaker chooses to break the poem into stanzas where he does?

Poem Titles – Consider this poem’s title. The title of a poem gives the reader a hint about what is important in the poem or what the poem is about. As you read “Oranges,” ask yourself what is important about the oranges in the poem.

Comprehension Check

Part One
Directions: Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The speaker is remembering ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker has ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker is going ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A detail about the girl’s house is ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The girl ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker reacts to the girl by ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The two of them go...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They pass...

Their final destination is...

A detail from the store:

The girl reacted to the speaker asking what she wanted ...

The speaker pays for the candy by ...

The saleslady reacts to his form of payment by ...

The speaker and the girl ...

The weather is ...

The speaker ...

While the girl unwrap the chocolate, the speaker ...

The speaker thinks the orange looks like...

**Part Two**

**Directions:** Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. When does the poem take place? ____________________________

2. What is the speaker carrying in his pockets? ____________________________

3. How much money does the speaker have to spend? ____________________________
4. How much does the candy that the girl picks out cost? ________________________

5. How does the speaker pay for the candy? ________________________________

6. What do you think the speaker means when he says, “I walked with a girl”? ______

7. Infer why the speaker brought the two oranges. ____________________________

8. Evaluate what kind of person the speaker is. Explain your answer with evidence
    from the poem. ________________________________________________________

9. Explain why the orange might have looked like fire to someone. _______________

10. What could the orange as “fire” symbolize? _____________________________

**Comparing Literature**

11. Compare this poem to another poem you’ve read. What is the poem, and how are
    the two poems alike? _________________________________________________

12. How is the form of the poem different from other poems you’ve read? __________

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“Oranges”
Standards Focus: Details, Inference and Symbolism

Part One

Scene 1: Your friend marches into class, slams his books on his desk, sits down, crosses his arms across his chest, and stares at you with a frown.

1. What might you infer about your friend based on his behavior? Write down your thoughts.

2. What clues did you use to make your inference?

Scene 2: Your friend comes into class, sits down, and looks at you.

3. What can you infer about your friend in scene two?

4. Compare scenes one and two. Why do you have different interpretations of the two scenes?

You probably noticed that the first scene had details that made it easy for you to infer your friend’s mood. Words like marches, slams, stares help you understand that your friend is not happy. When a writer uses details, the reader can understand, infer, and visualize a poem, story, or essay. Specific details help communicate accurately. When you begin looking carefully at “Oranges,” you’ll see the importance of the details.

Part Two

1. What is happening in the poem? Write the plot in two or three sentences.
The plot of the poem is pretty simple, isn’t it? Let’s look at the details that make the poem come to life.

**Directions:** Use the chart below to analyze the details of the poem. In the left column, copy down the line(s) including specific details you think are important in helping you infer meaning. In the right column, write down what you infer from it. Some of the answers have been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Oranges”</th>
<th>My Inferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Cold, and weighted down</em></td>
<td>It is winter, the oranges were heavy – perhaps a burden because he realizes he doesn’t have any money. Or, he may be feeling nervous or unsure about going to the girl’s house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>the one whose Porch light burned yellow Night and day, in any weather.</em></td>
<td>The porch light is on all the time. Why don’t they ever turn it off? I can infer that maybe the parents are always working and don’t realize it’s on. Or maybe there is always someone home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Using your notes from the chart, answer the following questions using complete sentences.

2. What conclusions can you draw about the girl based on the inferences you made from the poem?

3. What conclusions can you draw about the speaker based on the inferences you made from the poem?

4. What conclusions can you draw about the setting of the poem?

Part Three

In other poems you’ve studied, you’ve looked at symbolism. As you recall, symbols stand for something greater than what they literally might be. In literature, there are often universally recognized symbols. For example, many colors have strong meaning attached to them. White generally symbolizes purity; black symbolizes death; red symbolizes love or life.

1. Go back into the poem and circle any words that refer to light. Copy the line(s) from the poem:

2. Formulate some ideas as to what the images of light used in the poem might symbolize.

3. What do you associate an orange with? What kind of place do you think of when you think of oranges?
**Directions:** Compare the oranges at the beginning, the middle and the end of the poem. Use the chart below to describe how the oranges change. In the column on the right, write about what you think the orange(s) might symbolize or mean at that point in the poem. The first one has been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines 1-4</th>
<th>The oranges are weighing him down. That might symbolize that he’s worried about being able to pay for the candy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines 35-38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines 51-end</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Looking at your notes from the chart, what do you notice about how the orange changes in the poem? ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

5. What kind of person might be able to make fire in his hands? ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

6. Draw a conclusion about the relationship between the orange and the speaker at the end of the poem. What might it mean about the speaker if he can make fire? ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

7. In your opinion, what does the orange as a ball of fire symbolize at the end of the poem? ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

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“Oranges”

Assessment Preparation: Writing with Attention to Detail

As you read “Oranges,” you can probably easily visualize what is happening in the poem. Choose one of the scenes from the poem to illustrate in the space below. After you’ve finished your illustration, share it with a classmate. Can your classmate figure out what scene from the poem you’ve illustrated?

Details from the poem probably made it easy for you to create an illustration. When you write, you should do the same. Use enough details to help your reader understand exactly what you are trying to say.

Where will you find details in writing? In the poem, Gary Soto sprinkled details throughout the poem. When you are writing a paragraph that will be included in an essay, your details will come after the topic sentence of your paragraph. It might be helpful for you to use transition words to help you focus on putting details into your writing.

Part One

Directions: Read the paragraph below, then answer the questions or complete the actions that follow on the next page.

The first time I went to Niagara Falls, I was amazed as I stood at the edge of the falls. The first thing I noticed was the power of the water; it poured over the edge of the falls. It was as if the water was in a race to leap over the edge and tumble down into the water below as fast as possible! The force of the water was so strong, that it would have been impossible to stop even a drop from tumbling down. The other thing I noticed was the noise. I couldn’t believe how loud the water was! The water thundered with a rumble that was difficult to talk over. Finally, as I stood at the edge of the falls, I felt a cool mist of water all around. The falls were so powerful that water droplets were forced into the air around us. It was like being in a misty cloud. I’ll never forget that first trip to the edge of the falls.
1. What is the topic sentence?

2. Underline the detail sentences.

3. What is the closing sentence of the paragraph?

Notice that the detail sentences are in the middle section of the paragraph. The writer gave you a topic sentence and a closing sentence for the paragraph; the interior of the paragraph contains detail sentences to help the reader understand the writer’s experience at Niagara Falls.

If you’ve practiced writing sensory sentences, you’ll notice that there are some sentences that use the senses to convey details as well.

**Part Two**

Practice writing your own detailed sentences. When you are finished with your paragraphs, you’ll trade with a partner. Will your partner have enough detail to illustrate your paragraph?

**Directions:** Write a paragraph using one of the topic ideas listed below. Fill in the blanks to personalize your paragraph.

- The ___________ vacation ever.
- My hobby, __________________ , is ___________ for three reasons.
- I am proud of __________________________.
- I am a good friend because ________________________.
- The most interesting lunch I’ve ever packed.

*Before writing your paragraph, use the graphic organizer below to help you gather the details. An example chart has been done for you.*

**My topic sentence is:** Example: I am proud of winning the school spelling bee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason 1: Example: I studied.</th>
<th>Details: Example: Every day after school, I went through the spelling bee booklet and practiced words I didn’t know. I made flashcards and had members of my family quiz me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reason 2: Example: My classmates were happy for me. | Details: Example: All the kids in my class made cards for me when it was time for me to go to the regional competition. They made a banner for our classroom door, and they made a morning announcement telling the
Reason 3: Example: I had never won anything before.

Details: Example: This was the first time I’d ever won a competition. I have been on teams and in contests before, but I never won. This time, I won all by myself.

Concluding sentence: Example: Even though I didn’t win the regional spelling bee, I am proud that I got as far as I did in the competition.

My topic sentence is:

Reason 1:

Details:

Reason 2:

Details:

Reason 3:

Details:

Concluding sentence:

Part Three
Put your paragraph together. Use transitions to move from reasons to details. Write your paragraph on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your chart.

Part Four
Trade paragraphs with someone in your class. Draw an illustration of part (or all) of their paragraph. Underline the details from the paragraph that you use in your illustration. Did you have enough detail in your paragraph?
“Oranges”  
You Try—Write Your Own “First” Poem

Now that you’ve analyzed the poem, you can see that this is a poem about a boy and his first girlfriend. He wanted to take her out to get candy, but he didn’t have enough money. He came up with a solution to his problem, and in the end, he felt happy and filled with hope for the future.

For your poem, think about something you accomplished that you’re proud of and that, perhaps, made you realize you were gaining more responsibility or maturity. Like Gary Soto, you may want to write about a “first.” It could be a first goal in soccer, a first “A” in a difficult subject, or a first competition in which you earned recognition. It could also be something that you remember from your childhood: the first time you tied your shoe, the first time you rode your bike, or the first time you went to school.

**Part One**
Write down some of your ideas in the box below. Try to write as many ideas as you can.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firsts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Part Two**
Choose one of your ideas. Begin thinking about how that event had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Did you feel differently when the event was over? How did the event change you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The event:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the beginning:</th>
<th>Details that I remember:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the middle:</th>
<th>Details that I remember:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the end:</th>
<th>Details that I remember:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Three
In “Oranges,” Gary Soto uses oranges as a repeating image. Is there an object or image you can use throughout your poem?

Part Four
Before you write a draft of your poem, look at “Oranges” again. Notice that it is written in free verse and that the lines are fairly short. One image or detail is stacked on top of another. Try using that same technique as you write your poem.

As you write your draft, try repeating some of the lines from “Oranges.” You could start your poem with the line “The first time” and end with “someone might have thought.”

Write a draft of your poem – be sure to include the repeated image.

Part Five
Share the draft of your poem with a friend. Is there enough detail in your poem? Can your reader imagine what is happening in your poem? Were you successful in incorporating an object like the oranges?

Part Six
Revise your poem, add a title, and publish it.

Sample Student Poem

Black Dots

The first time I looked at sheet
Music, all I saw was black dots.
Sprinkled across the page
Some secret code of dots, a treasure map
I couldn’t decode.
I walked to Mrs. Taylor’s house –
The piano teacher who smiled at everything
I played – all my wrong notes and jumbled tones.
But, I learned the notes, the sharps, and flats.
My favorite melodies by Rebikov, Sati, and Rollins.

When it was time for the recital, and I sat at the
Bench. A page of black dots on the piano. I placed
My hands on the keys and played.
Later, when the recital was over, I held the
music in my hands. The melodies were so clear that,
If someone had asked me, I could have taken
Them straight to the buried treasure.
“Oranges” Quiz

Short Answer

Directions: Answer the following questions on the lines provided.

1. Who are the characters in the poem? ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

2. Describe the speaker’s problem and how he solves it. _________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

3. What conclusions can you draw about the time period of the poem? ______
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. At the end of the poem, what does the speaker think the orange looks like? _____
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Explain why you think the poem is entitled “Oranges” rather than “First Date” or another title. ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
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“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” by Nikki Giovanni

Author Biography and Historical Context

Do you remember your first visit to your public library? Is there someone who introduced you to books or gave you books that made you love reading? Nikki Giovanni’s experiences at her public library as a child were so strong and so important to her that she wrote a poem dedicated to her librarian.

Nikki Giovanni was born into a divided world – a world separated by color. When Nikki Giovanni was born in 1943, black and white children were segregated; they went to different schools. It wasn’t until the 1950s that schools were desegregated. When you read “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” you’ll notice references to racial inequality that she recognizes as part of her life growing up.

Nikki Giovanni grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, but she and her older sister spent their summers with their grandparents in Knoxville, Tennessee. Nikki’s parents were both teachers though they both eventually moved from teaching to other jobs to better support their family. Shortly after Nikki’s college graduation, her grandmother died. She wrote poetry as a way to cope with her grief. Her first book of poems Black Feeling Black Talk was published in 1968 and was widely recognized as an important piece of literature. Shortly afterward, she published her next collection of poetry. Her poetry was so powerful and impressed so many readers that she earned the nickname the “Princess of Black Poetry.”

As an adult, Nikki Giovanni continues to write and teach. She writes about the things that are important to her – civil rights and equality. She’s written poems, plays, reviews, and stories for children; she has also made recordings of her poetry readings. She has received many awards, including being the first person to win the Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award. She also received the Langston Hughes Medal for poetry. Currently, she is a professor at Virginia Tech, but she also gives lectures around world.

Growing up in the 1940s and 50s

What were life like when Nikki Giovanni was growing up? When you read “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long,” you’ll discover that life was different than it is today.

When Nikki was born, the United States was involved in World War II. Radio was a primary source of entertainment. Families listened to radio shows not unlike soap operas and game shows on TV today. But television was gaining popularity, and after the war, there was a boon in TV sales. Of course, there were no computers, cell phones, microwaves, MP3 players, or video games.

Prior to the late 1950s, racial segregation was an accepted law of the United States. The phrase “separate but equal” was used to describe facilities for blacks and whites. Nikki went to a black school and would have visited the black library.
Other important events during those decades include Alaska and Hawaii gaining statehood, the end of racial segregation in schools, and a surge in the popularity of rhythm and blues music.

A Carnegie Library
You’ll read a reference in the poem to the Carnegie library. There were over 2,000 Carnegie libraries built around the world; the funds to build the libraries came from businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie was a Scottish immigrant who came to the United States and earned great wealth through the steel industry.

Carnegie always had a passion for books and donated much of his money to help build libraries and schools. The first library he built was in his Scottish hometown. Carnegie libraries were built between 1883 – 1929. Many towns have schools, libraries, and streets named after him.

Exploring Expository Writing: Author Biography and Historical Context

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper using complete sentences.

1. When was Nikki Giovanni born, and where did she grow up?
2. List two facts about Nikki Giovanni that you learned from the article.
3. From your reading, infer what childhood experiences may have been important to her.
4. What childhood experiences might have been important to what she chooses to write about as an adult?
5. Explain why Nikki Giovanni was called the “Princess of Black Poetry.”
6. Explain why you think she decided to write poems after the death of her grandmother.
7. Do you agree that writing can be a good outlet for strong emotions? Why?
8. Based on context clues, what might the word philanthropist mean?

Comparing Literature

9. Compare Nikki Giovanni’s life to another poet you’ve read about. How are their lives alike?
“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”
Notes, Allusions, and Vocabulary

Notes
Subtitles – The information contained in a smaller title just below a title is called a subtitle. Often a writer will use one to give the reader more information about the poem or book. You’ll sometimes see a subtitle following a colon. Check the title page of the book you are currently reading to see if it contains a subtitle.

Terms & Allusions

Jfg sign – JFG is company located in Knoxville, Tennessee that sells coffee, tea and other products

Stereoscope – a device that looks a bit like a pair of glasses. Viewers looked into the stereoscope and saw three-dimensional photographs. The stereoscope was invented in the 1840s; it was a popular form of entertainment and education until the invention of movies. Today, we watch 3D movies that use the same principles as the stereoscope.

“hat in hand” – a cliché or idiom that means someone humbles himself and asks for a favor from a more powerful person. If you have to ask your teacher for extra time to finish a project, you may feel like you’re going “hat in hand” to ask for a favor – knowing that your teacher has the power to allow you extra time or not. The expression probably comes from the time when people wore hats; a man would take his hat off to show respect to someone.

The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe – a novel by C.S. Lewis in which three children are able to travel to the imaginary country of Narnia by walking through the back of a wardrobe.

Vocabulary List

preference – first choice
corridor – a densely populated area that usually follows a route; a passage
humiliating – causing a loss of pride; embarrassing
glider – a porch swing that is like a bench
wardrobe – a cabinet or piece of furniture that’s used for storing clothing
“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”
Comprehension Check

Part One
Directions: Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer below. Use the sentence prompts to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The title</th>
<th>Something I learn from the title...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stanza 1  | The speaker lived in a time when...  
|           | People sat and discussed...  
|           | The songs the speaker listened to were... |
| Stanza 2  | The speaker goes to a bookstore and remembers... |
| Stanza 3  | At the library, Mrs. Long...  
|           | Mrs. Long shows the speaker a stereoscope which allows her to see... |
| Stanza 4  | Mrs. Long asks the speaker...  
|           | In order to get the speaker the books she wants, Mrs. Long must... |
| Stanza 5  | Mrs. Long's experience at the main library was... |
| Stanza 6  | The speaker's attitude toward books was... |
| Stanza 7  | The speaker feels this way about her world: |
| Stanza 8  | The speaker knows that ... |
Part Two
Directions: Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. When do you think this poem takes place? What details from the poem make you think that? ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. Where do you think the poem takes place? What details from the poem make you think that? ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. Who was Mrs. Long? ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. Infer the speaker’s feelings about the radio. Explain your answer. ______________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. What can you infer from the detail that her radio was under her pillow? __________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. How does the speaker feel about books and the library? _____________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

7. What kind of person is Mrs. Long? Explain your answer. ____________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

8. Contrast how the speaker feels about the world she’s living in and the world of books.
   Explain your answer. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

9. In the last stanza, do you recognize the piece of literature that the speaker compares her experience with books to? If so, what is it? How do you know that? __________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
Part One
Jesse comes running up to you in the hall, “Wait until you hear what happened last night!” he tells you. “We were sitting outside because my dad always likes to sit out in the backyard when it’s not freezing cold – you know like last fall when it was really warm – so, anyway we were sitting in the backyard talking, you know how much my dad likes to talk. He was telling me a story about the time he and his brother Max went to the mall for a gift for my grandmother. And, right in the middle of his story, right at the moment he was telling me about the crystal unicorn they were going to buy my grandmother, there was a huge explosion from the house next door.”

Underline the real story that Jesse wants to tell you. If you are patient enough to listen to Jesse’s story, you’ll notice that he takes awhile to get to the real events because he’s peppered his story with parenthetical explanations. The real story is that as Jesse and his dad were sitting outside, there was an explosion at the house next door.

As you read, “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” you’ll notice the speaker uses parenthesis several times in the poem.

1. List these: ____________________________

In literature, the term parenthesis is used to identify any interruption in a text that adds meaning, explanation, or background detail. Sometimes actual parentheses are used to separate the information, and sometimes dashes or commas are used. Sometimes no punctuation is used to identify the information as parenthesis.

2. Circle the parenthetical information in Jesse’s story above.

3. How did you know that these were parenthetical items? ___________

You probably think of the term parenthesis as being the two curved lines ( ) that are used to separate information. Parenthesis is the singular form, and parentheses is the plural form. It means either one or both of the curved brackets used to separate information.

The singular form, parenthesis, is also used as a literary term. You may also refer to the information as parenthetical information.
4. Use the chart below to “tease out” the parenthesis in “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long.” You won’t find them in each stanza. Some of the chart has been started for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The parenthesis is about...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanza 8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Propose a reason for using parenthesis in writing. Why might an author choose to use it?

6. In “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long,” there is a three-part connection: the reader, the speaker of the poem’s memories of childhood, and the speaker’s life today. How does the use of parenthesis connect all three?
Part Two: Voice
When a piece of writing has voice, it sounds like a real person is behind the writing. The personality of the writer comes through, and the reader feels a connection to the writer. Read “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” once again looking for the voice of the speaker.

1. Think about what kind of speaker wrote this poem. Was the speaker happy or sad? Were these good or bad memories? Describe the personality of the speaker of the poem. Explain your answer. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. Choose one example from the poem that you think illustrates good writing voice. Explain your answer. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

Part Three: Allusions
Review the last stanza of the poem. Did it sound familiar to you? The speaker is referring to the novel The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis. The novel is about children who travel to another world when they walk through a wardrobe. When the children travel to the other world, Narnia, it is winter and the evil White Witch has come to power. As the story progresses and good returns to the land, it is symbolized by the coming of spring. When a writer uses allusion, she believes that the reader will be familiar with the text or event that the writer is referring to.

You have probably noticed allusion in jokes or TV shows that refer to current events or historical events that everyone is familiar with. The TV show doesn’t explain the current or historical event; the show writers believe the viewers will “get” what they are alluding to.

1. Why do you think writers (TV and joke writers as well) include allusion in what they write? ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. How does it make readers feel when they “get” the allusion? Explain your answer. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
3. When you read the last stanza of the poem, what clues did the speaker give to let you know what her allusion was?

4. Analyze how your understanding of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* helps you understand the poem better. Explain your answer.

5. Explain the symbolism of the ending of the poem: “spring.” What do you think the speaker means by ending her poem by referring to spring instead of another season?
Everyone knows (or at least everyone should know) that interrupting someone is rude. Writers, however, can – and do – get away with it! As a matter of fact, there were three interrupting elements in the first two sentences of this paragraph. Can you find them?

You’ve already examined how Nikki Giovanni used parenthesis (or interruptions) in “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” to create voice and interest in her poem. By using parenthesis, it is almost as if you’re sitting down with the speaker of the poem and having a conversation.

Why is a conversational tone, rather than a formal one, appropriate for “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”? 

When writing parenthesis, you can make use of three different types of punctuation marks: the dash, the comma, and parentheses.

**Part One: The Comma**

You’re probably most familiar with the comma. There are many rules about comma use, but we’ll only focus on one: using the comma to set off parenthetical expressions.

The parenthetical expression rule: If there are elements in the sentence that clearly disrupt the sentence (interrupting the thought of the sentence, the speaker’s comments to the narrator, etc.), use commas to separate the expression from the rest of the sentence. For example: If you are in need of a new locker elf, as nearly everyone in our school is, you can fill out an application in the school office.

The writer separated the phrase *and nearly everyone in our school is* with commas on both sides of the phrase. This comma rule is similar to a nonrestrictive element. In both cases, you need to remember that you need to set the expression off with a set of commas.

**Directions:** Add commas to the following sentences to set off the parentheses in each sentence.

1. The winter months as you probably know since you’ve lived here your whole life are cold, long, and snowy.
2. Most locker elves are extremely mischievous and for a lack of a better word inventive in the ways they torture students.
3. If you have never been to a Locker Elf Convention, you’re in for a rare but often dangerous treat.

**Part Two: The Dash**

Use the dash when you want to create emphatic parenthetical expressions. When you’re typing, the dash is actually two hyphens typed next to each other. There should not be a space before—or after—the dash.

Unlike the comma, which is just a slight pause for the reader, a dash is a dramatic break in thought. Only use the dash when you mean it. If you want to add emphasis, call attention to sarcasm, or point out something particular you don’t want to the reader to miss. You should use the dash sparingly. Overusing the dash, like overusing the exclamation point, becomes tiresome for the reader, and the dash loses its effectiveness.

Use the dash in pairs, unless your parenthesis comes at the end of the sentence.

**Directions:** Practice using dashes to set off the parenthesis in the following sentences. Rewrite the part of the sentence that needs the dash.

1. Unlike most locker elves, my elf is tall two full feet!
2. Last night, I had a lot of homework a mountain of it waiting for me after soccer practice.
3. I brought my locker elf home with me yesterday to help me with my homework big mistake!

**Part Three: The Parentheses**

Use a pair of parentheses to set off parenthesis! If the parenthetical information you want to include is minor information or doesn’t require the drama of a dash, use the parentheses.

Like the dash, you don’t want to overuse the parentheses.

**Directions:** Practice using parentheses to set off the parenthetical elements. Add parentheses to the sentences below.

1. Freddy short for Fredericka enjoyed baking lima bean muffins for her friends.
2. The muffins often dozens of them have also been gifts to Freddy’s teachers.
3. Freddy couldn’t understand seriously! why no one wanted her muffin recipe.
Part Four: Look at “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”
Take a look again at the parenthesis that Nikki Giovanni uses in her poem. You’ll notice that she used only a few parentheses, and she didn’t use dashes or even commas. Look at stanza two of her poem and add dashes, commas, or parentheses to separate the parenthesis. Choose just one of the three types of punctuation.

There was a bookstore uptown on gay street
Which I visited and inhaled that wonderful odor
Of new books
Even today I read hardcover as a preference paperback only
As a last resort

1. Contrast the original stanza with the stanza that uses the punctuation marks. Does the stanza sound different to you? Explain your response. _____________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

By not using punctuation to separate her thoughts, Nikki Giovanni uses a literary technique called stream of consciousness. As you are reading the poem, it is almost as if you are inside her head, thinking all the random ideas and thoughts she’s thinking as she looks back on her memories.

2. Evaluate how you feel about the use of stream of consciousness in the poem. Do you like it? Do you find it challenging to read? Why or why not? _____________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

Part Five: Practice
Directions: Write a paragraph about a childhood memory you have. You may want to try writing in a stream of consciousness manner in which you just allow your thoughts to flow naturally. Of course, you want your paragraph to make sense, have a point, and describe something. Choose a memory that is vivid and interesting to you. As you write, try to make use of parenthesis. Use the comma, dash, and parentheses, but only use the dash and parentheses once.
Before writing, take a few minutes to complete the graphic organizer below. Organize your thoughts, and think of how your paragraph will begin and end. Remember that you are writing just one paragraph, so limit your topic.

| Possible ideas:                                  | 1. my first lost tooth                      |
|                                                | 2. the lunchroom disaster                   |
|                                                | 3.                                          |
|                                                | 4.                                          |
|                                                | 5.                                          |

| How will I begin the paragraph?                 | 1. with a dramatic sentence                  |
|                                                | 2. with description                          |
|                                                | 3.                                          |
|                                                | 4.                                          |
|                                                | 5.                                          |
|                                                | 6.                                          |

| What will I include in the middle of the paragraph? | 1. I’ll describe how the tooth came out |
|                                                    | 2.                                      |
|                                                    | 3.                                      |
|                                                    | 4.                                      |
|                                                    | 5.                                      |

| How will I end the paragraph?                   | 1. the lesson I learned                    |
|                                                | 2.                                        |
|                                                | 3.                                        |
|                                                | 4.                                        |
Part Six: Vocabulary Practice

Directions: Insert the following vocabulary words in the correct places in the paragraph below.

preference
corridor
humiliating
glider
wardrobe

Mark dug through his __________________ searching for his favorite shirt. He could have worn the red striped one, but his __________________ was the one with the penguins on it. How ____________________ to be invited to the Hoola Hoop Convention and not have a decent shirt to wear! He remembered that the last time he wore that shirt, he was swinging on the _____________ with his friend Barton. Where could it be? Finally, under a pile of gym clothes, he found his shirt. He quickly put it on and ran down the ________________ to the convention.
“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”
You Try—Write Your Own Memoir Poem

“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” is a memoir poem. She uses the poem to reflect on an important memory from her childhood.

Before you start writing your own memoir poem, take a few minutes to think about an important memory of something that happened to you. You may use the event you wrote about for the Assessment Preparation activity, or you may want to use an idea you had for another poetry writing activity. You may want your poem to focus on a person who was important to you in some way. Your poem can be serious or silly.

List some of those ideas in the space below.

**Part One:** Choose a memory to write about. Use the graphic organizer below to help you write parenthesis along with your memory. An example has been started for you.

**Example:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The memory</th>
<th>What it makes me think about in my life today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The memory: When I lost my first tooth</td>
<td>I think it’s funny that it was such a big deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning: First my tooth was barely wiggly</td>
<td>Today, I’d freak out if my tooth was loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle: I spent all my time wiggling that tooth around.</td>
<td>I don’t really pay too much attention to my teeth unless I’m going to go to the dentist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the end: Finally the tooth came out</td>
<td>How could that have been so important to me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The memory:**

**The beginning:**

**In the middle:**

**In the end:**
Part Two: Write a draft of your poem. Remember how “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” contained parenthesis? Try to include parenthesis in your own poem.

Part Three: As a challenge, try to add an allusion at the end of the poem. Choose something that your peers would understand.

Part Four: Share the draft of your poem with a friend. Is there enough detail in your poem? Can your reader imagine what is happening in your poem? Were you successful in incorporating parenthesis and allusion?

Part Five: Revise your poem.

Part Six: Add a title. Try to include a parenthetical expression or subtitle with your title. Notice how Nikki Giovanni uses additional information that helps the reader understand what the poem will be about.

Part Seven: Publish your poem.

Sample Student Poem

A Poem to My Lost Tooth
(I Never Got to Put You Under My Pillow)

At the time I was the only kid, surely not the only one
But it certainly felt that way to me, who had not lost a Tooth
Not a single tooth to mark on the chart in the corner of the classroom
It was a big chart not unlike the job chart my mother
Now hangs on the kitchen refrigerator to
Remind me of the jobs I must do every day

Then finally a tooth wiggled just a little bit at first
And then it was really loose like the way the cover of
My math spiral just hangs on by one or two bits of wire.

And I wiggled and wiggled it until it popped out while we
Were eating pretzels at snack time wasn’t snack time always
The best time of day it still is only the snacks are more exciting than pretzels

But I thought the tooth was a bit of pretzel and I swallowed it
All I had left was the space to show my teacher
But the sticker went on the chart

I had passed through platform 9 ¾ into a new part
Of my kindergarten world
And it was magical
“A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long” Quiz

Part I: Multiple Choice
Directions: Write the letter of the best choice on the line provided.

_____ 1. In this poem, the speaker is
   a. defending her librarian
   b. thinking back about her days as a child
   c. wondering what happened to Mrs. Long
   d. reflecting on the value of reading for all children

_____ 2. The speaker now realizes that Mrs. Long
   a. had many books that she could lend the children
   b. worked long hours in the library
   c. had to ask the white library to borrow books
   d. dedicated her whole life to the library

_____ 3. The speaker remembers her childhood as
   a. tragic
   b. lonely
   c. serious
   d. happy

_____ 4. The speaker believes that Mrs. Long is responsible for
   a. the speaker becoming a poet
   b. the speaker’s love of reading
   c. the speaker learning to read
   d. the speaker going to bookstores

_____ 5. This poem is written in
   a. free verse
   b. rhymed stanzas
   c. unrhymed, structured stanzas
   d. couplets

Part II: Matching
Directions: Write the letter of the best match on the line provided.

_____ 6. first choice
_____ 7. a densely populated area that usually follows a route; a passage
_____ 8. a cabinet or piece of furniture that’s used for storing clothing
_____ 9. causing a loss of pride; embarrassing
_____ 10. a porch swing that is like a bench

A. corridor
B. glider
C. humiliating
D. preference
E. wardrobe
**Final Test: Elements of Poetry**

**Part I:** The following terms deal with the structure of a poem. Identify the structure and its definition. Write the letter of the correct response on the lines provided.

_____ 1. free verse  a. a poem that tells a story  
_____ 2. stanza  b. the name given to a “chunk” of poetry, similar to a paragraph  
_____ 3. narrative poem  c. two lines of poetry  
_____ 4. line break  d. a rhyme that isn’t perfect; the words look like they should rhyme, but they don’t  
_____ 5. near-rhyme  e. a style of writing poetry in which there is no set structure, rhyme, or line length  
_____ 6. couplet  f. the portion of the poem in which there is an understanding about what the poem means to the speaker  
_____ 7. turn  g. the end of a line of poetry that may not necessarily be the end of a sentence

**Part II:** What is happening inside a poem? Write the letter of the correct response on the line provided.

_____ 8. the way the speaker sees the events of the poem  
   a. point of view  
   b. persona  
   c. allusion  
   d. irony

_____ 9. the use of an item that represents something else, often something greater  
   a. persona  
   b. speaker  
   c. allusion  
   d. symbolism

_____ 10. the “person” created by the author to tell the story of the poem  
   a. allusion  
   b. persona  
   c. speaker  
   d. point of view

_____ 11. the voice or person presenting a poem  
   a. personification  
   b. speaker

_____ 12. to retell the events of the poem, line by line, in your own words  
   a. point of view  
   b. allusion  
   c. symbolism  
   d. paraphrase

_____ 13. a technique in which a writer refers to a text that he or she believes the reader is familiar with  
   a. allusion  
   b. irony  
   c. point of view  
   d. symbolism

_____ 14. the difference between what is expected to happen and what actually happens  
   a. symbolism  
   b. point of view  
   c. irony  
   d. allusion
Part III: Poets use figures of speech to create strong imagery in poems. Match the example of a figure of speech with the correct term. Write the letter of the answer on the line provided.

_____ 15. After band practice, Nancie was as hungry as a starving wolf.  
   a. simile  
   b. metaphor  
   c. alliteration  
   d. hyperbole  
   e. personification

_____ 16. When we practice for the paper airplane contest, my paper airplane flew five miles.  
   a. simile  
   b. metaphor  
   c. alliteration  
   d. hyperbole  
   e. personification

_____ 17. When the rainstorm was over, the freeway was a swamp.  
   a. simile  
   b. metaphor  
   c. alliteration  
   d. hyperbole  
   e. personification

_____ 18. The old, rusted locker moaned and cried when Mr. Ridge pulled it open.  
   a. simile  
   b. metaphor  
   c. alliteration  
   d. hyperbole  
   e. personification

_____ 19. Teddy toasted Teresa’s tasty tofu tamale.

Part IV: Poets use language and figures of speech in original ways. Decide whether the following statements are true or false. If false, rewrite the statement to make it true.

________________  20. An extended metaphor is an image or metaphor that is used throughout an entire poem.

________________  21. A portmanteau is the combination of two familiar words to create a new word.

________________  22. Meter is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two unlike things.

________________  23. Rhyme scheme is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

________________  24. Diction is the choice of words an author makes in a work.

________________  25. Imagery is when something other than the expected occurs.
**Practical Poetry Final Test**

**Part I:** Matching. Match the title of the poem with the brief description of it.

1. The speaker in this poem is lamenting the death of the president.
   - a. “A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long”
2. This is a retelling of a historical event.
   - b. *The Book of Questions*
3. This poem is about a man who is waiting for racial equality.
   - c. “Chicago”
4. In this poem, the speaker is thinking about his first date.
   - d. “I, Too, Sing America”
5. This is a poem that was originally a Native American chant.
   - e. “Jabberwocky”
6. In this poem, the writer plays with language by inventing new words.
   - f. “O Captain, My Captain”
7. This poem uses Celtic mythology to explain a man’s longing for the woman of his dreams.
   - g. “Oranges”
8. The writer of this poem uses extended metaphor to describe what she sees.
   - h. “Paul Revere’s Ride”
9. The speaker in this poem is reflecting back on her childhood.
   - i. “The Railway Train”
10. The writer used couplets of questions without any answers to write these poems.
    - j. “The Road Not Taken”
11. The speaker of this poem wonders about how life would be different if he’d made different choices.
    - k. “The Song of Wandering Aengus”
12. This poem is about the people of a city and how they make it great.
    - l. “Twelfth Song of the Thunder”

**Part II:** Multiple Choice. Match the line from the poem with the poem title. Write the letter of the correct answer on the line provided.

13. “It had become a glimmering girl/with apple blossom in her hair/who called me by my name and ran/and faded through the brightening air.”
   - a. “Twelfth Song of the Thunder”
   - b. “Paul Revere’s Ride”
   - c. “Oranges”
   - d. “The Song of Wandering Aengus”
14. "Why do the waves ask me/ the same questions I ask them?"
   a. "The Song of Wandering Aengus"
   b. "A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long"
   c. "Oranges"
   d. The Book of Questions

15. "The voice that beautifies the land"
   a. "Twelfth Song of the Thunder"
   b. "A Poem for My Librarian"
   c. "Chicago"
   d. "I, Too, Sing America"

16. "Even today I read hardcover as a preference paperback only/ as a last resort"
   a. "I, Too, Sing America"
   b. "Oranges"
   c. The Book of Questions
   d. "A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long"

17. "Oh, I kept the first for another day!/ Yet knowing how way leads on to way,/ I doubted if I should ever come back."
   a. "The Road Not Taken"
   b. "Chicago"
   c. "The Railway Train"
   d. "I, Too, Sing America"

18. "He took his vorpal sword in hand:/ long time the manxome foe he sought"
   a. "The Song of Wandering Aengus"
   b. "Jabberwocky"
   c. "Twelfth Song of the Thunder"
   d. "The Road Not Taken"

19. "He said to his friend, 'If the British march/ By land or sea from the town to-night,/ hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch/ of the North church tower as a signal light'"
   a. "Paul Revere's Ride"
   b. "The Song of Wandering Aengus"
   c. "Chicago"
   d. "O Captain, My Captain"

20. "I am the darker brother."
   a. "Twelfth Song of the Thunder"
   b. "O Captain, My Captain"
   c. "I, Too, Sing America"
   d. "A Poem for My Librarian, Mrs. Long"
21. “The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won;/ the port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting”
   a. “I, Too, Sing America”
   b. “Chicago”
   c. “The Railway Train”
   d. “O Captain, My Captain”

22. “And neigh like Boenerges;/ Then, punctual as a star,/ stop – docile and omnipotent –/ at its own stable door”
   a. "The Book of Questions"
   b. “Paul Revere’s Ride”
   c. “The Railway Train”
   d. “Oranges”

23. “Hog Butcher for the World”
   a. “Twelfth Song of the Thunder”
   b. “Chicago”
   c. “I, Too, Sing America”
   d. “The Railway Train”

24. “Outside,/ A few cars hissing past,/ Fog hanging like old/ Coats between the trees.”
   a. “Chicago”
   b. “Paul Revere’s Ride”
   c. “Jabberwocky”
   d. “Oranges”

25. Choose any two poems we have studied and discuss how they are similar in content. Explain your answer by using examples from the two poems.
**Performance Activities or Alternative Assessment**

The following are activities that can be used to supplement the activities and lessons in this Guide, to spark interest in further creative writing, or as alternative assessment activities in place of or in addition to a final written test.

1. Have students revise the poems they wrote for their original “You Try” component. Students can publish and share their poems. As an alternative, students can choose a selected number of poems to revise and publish. Have students complete a self-evaluation on the writing process and the completed poem.

2. Allow students to write their own poems in their own style. Then challenge them to think about which poet their style of writing is closest to.

3. Have students research one of the poets studied. Students can create a PowerPoint, a poster, or a written report that shares what they learned.

4. Have students select a poet and find another poem written by the poet. Students can create a poster, illustration, PowerPoint, or video to share the poem. Challenge them to include a comparison between two of his/her poems.

5. Have students create a collection of favorite poems both from the unit and from other poems students may be familiar with. Their collection could be displayed on a classroom or hallway bulletin board. Students could write a short essay about what they love about the poems they’ve chosen.

6. There are several poetic forms that were not discussed this unit. Have students find out about haiku, sonnet, limericks, odes, or sestinas. Students can share poems written in these forms and try writing their own.

7. Assign students other famous poets. Have them research their lives and poems they’ve written. Students can share their information through a speech, podcast, PowerPoint, poster, or original website.

8. Have students categorize the poems they’ve read in this unit. They could create a “menu” for the poem with categories like “Poems You’ll Want to Read When You’re Doing Your History Homework” or “Poems for a Rainy Day.”

9. Give students a poem they aren’t familiar with and challenge them to paraphrase and analyze the poem on their own.

10. Have students arrange for and perform a poetry reading. If students have written the “You Try” poems, they can read the original poem and then their version of the poem. Additionally, students can read other poems they’ve written or poems they’ve found that they love.