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Credits

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Why Teach Poetry?

Poetry is a small world where figurative language is most easily seen and observed. We must be aware of the power of figurative language, especially when used as persuasion, so that neither our minds nor our wallets are emptied. Understanding the meaning and also the effect of figurative language is an important skill, and poetry is a good vehicle for teaching it.

Students often receive psychological and intellectual rewards from poetry. They must be aware of grammar and syntax, which ultimately strengthens reading comprehension. “Students are often intrigued by the ideas as well as the forms of poetry. Topics such as identity, discovery, family relationships, survival, change, mortality, hopes and dreams are of primary interest to young people searching for self-awareness in an uncertain world.” — Why Teach Poetry?, Carol Clark [http://www.epsbooks.com](http://www.epsbooks.com)

Poetry is using carefully selected words to create a specific emotional response. This project helps students in grades 7-12 learn about the structure, usefulness and power of poetry. Topics covered include the following:

- What is poetry and why is it important?
- What are the tools used to create poetry?
- Can you apply the tools by writing a poem of your own?

Common Core Standards in Reading Literature, Grades 7-12 are addressed at the top of each lesson. A complete listing of the standards addressed is available at [http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry/standards-addressed.htm](http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry/standards-addressed.htm).

Six videos are available at [http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry/watch.htm](http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry/watch.htm). Three are student-directed and teach the concepts described above, and three are teacher-directed and are used to explain the videos and the teacher guide. The topics covered include the following:

Video 1 and Video 4: Introduction to Poetry (student), and Professional Development (teacher)

Video 2 and Video 5: Poetry Tools: Double Denotation, Connotation, Sound, Repetition and Enjambed Lines (student), and Professional Development (teacher)

Video 3 and Video 6: Poetry Tools: Imagery, Simile and Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification and Types of Poems (student), and Professional Development (teacher)

There is also a website at [http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry](http://westernreservepublicmedia.org/poetry), which includes the following:

- The accompanying teacher guide in a .pdf format, as well as each lesson in Web format
- Resource materials including vocabulary, a student note form and a poetry hotlist
- Links to the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University
Resources

http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org/poetry
Poetry Notes

Your task: Keep this handout in your notebook. You will be using it each time that a new poetry tool is introduced.

1. What is my definition of poetry?

2. What is the teacher’s definition of poetry?

3. How would you explain the teacher’s definition of poetry?

4. Why do you think that you should care about learning poetic tools?

TOOLS

1. What is double denotation and what makes it powerful?

2. What is a connotation? Where do connotations begin? What makes them powerful?

3. What is a sound device? Examples? What makes them powerful?
4. What is repetition in poetry? What are several reasons for its use?

5. What are enjambed lines? What power can enjambed lines and word placement have?

6. What is imagery? Why is it powerful?

7. What are three poetic comparisons? Why are any of them powerful?

8. What is the danger in using a comparison?

9. What are hyperbole and understatement? Why are they powerful tools?

What is my definition of poetry now? Is it different from when I started this unit?
**Poetry Vocabulary**

**alliteration**: The repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words (e.g., “winter wind”).

**allusion**: A reference in a literary work to a person, place or thing in history or another work of literature.

**assonance**: The close repetition of middle vowels (e.g., “rain” and “plain”).

**blend**: To combine the sounds represented by two or more letters to pronounce a word, such as “gr” in grow; to combine two or more words, creating a new word such as brunch (e.g., combining “breakfast” and “lunch” to form the word “brunch”).

**cadence**: A term borrowed from music that refers to the audible features of speech.

**concrete image**: When a speaker or writer uses words that induce audiences to call up “pictures” in their minds by appealing to their senses of taste, smell, hearing, touch and sight.

**connotation**: The image and feeling unstated but associated with a word. For example, calling a bar of soap “Dove” is much more pleasing than “Pigeon.”

**construct meaning**: The process of understanding what is read through the interaction with text.

**context clues**: Information a reader may obtain from a text that helps confirm the meaning of a word or group of words.

**denotation**: The literal meaning or dictionary definition of a word.

**double denotation**: A word that has more than one meaning, e.g., fly, heart, sweater.

**editing**: A step in preparing a written work for publication or review that focuses on clarity and correctness.

**enjambed line**: When a line physically ends before its meaning ends (e.g., “The dancers go round, they go round and around”).

**figurative language**: Language enriched by word images and figures of speech

**figurative meaning**: A symbolic interpretation of written work.

**genre**: An established class or category of artistic composition or literature, including poetry, drama and novel.

**hyperbole**: A figure of speech which uses a deliberate exaggeration (e.g., “I have told you a million times”).

**idiom**: A combination of words that is not strictly in accordance with grammatical rules and often possesses a meaning other than its grammatical or logical one (e.g., an easy test might be described as “a piece of cake”).

**imagery**: Words and phrases that create vivid sensory experience for a reader.

**implicit**: To be assumed by not directly expressed.

**inference**: A general conclusion drawn from information that is given.

**irony**: The recognition of the difference between reality and appearance; includes situational irony, in which there is a contrast between what is intended or expected and what actually occurs; verbal irony, in which there is a contrast between what is said and what is actually meant, and dramatic irony, in which words or actions are understood by the audience but not by characters.

**literal meaning**: The actual meaning of a word or a phrase.

**metaphor**: A figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things (e.g., “he’s a tiger”).

**nuance(s)**: A delicate shade of difference.

**onomatopoeia**: Words whose sound imitates their suggested meaning, (e.g., “buzz,” “hiss” and “clang”).

**parody**: A literary or musical work in which the style of an author or work is closely imitated for comic effect or in ridicule.

**personification**: Suggesting that an inanimate object has human-like qualities (e.g., “War rearranged my brain to her satisfaction and settled in to live forever”).
resources

**poetry:** Purposely powerful words chosen to cause a reaction. May have rhyme and rhythm (e.g., “It’s startling how much it can enhance when one finally sees an exit as an entrance”).

**point of view:** The perspective or attitude of a narrator of a piece of literature.

**pun:** The usually humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more of its meanings or the meaning of another word similar in sound; a play on words. (e.g., the substitution of the slogan “visualize world peace” with “visualize whirled peas”).

**repetition:** Using a word, phrase or clause more than once in a short passage; dwelling on a point.

**revision:** The stage of the writing process in which one considers and improves the meaning and underlying structure of a written draft.

**rhyme:** The repetition of an identical or similarly accented sound or sounds in a work.

**simile:** A figure of speech in which a comparison is made between two unlike things using the words “like” or “as” (e.g., “she’s as sly as a fox”).

**sound device:** A resource used by poets to convey and reinforce the meaning or experience of poetry through the skillful use of sound.

**stanza:** A group of lines in a poem.

**symbol:** A concrete thing used to suggest something larger and more abstract.

**theme:** A topic of discussion or writing; a major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary work or work of art. Note: A theme may be stated or implied, but clues to it may be found in the ideas that are given special prominence or tend to recur in a work.

**thesis:** The basic argument advanced by a speaker or writer who then attempts to prove it; the subject or major argument of a speech or composition.

**understatement:** Saying less than is emotionally appropriate and thereby drawing attention to the statement.

**viewpoint:** The stance or vantage point from which a story is narrated.
Types of Poetry

**acrostic poem**: To create an acrostic, follow these five easy steps:

1. Decide what to write about.
2. Write your word vertically on a piece of paper.
3. Brainstorm words or phrases that describe your idea.
4. Place your brainstormed words or phrases on the lines that begin with the same letters.
5. Fill in the rest of the lines to create a poem.

**bio-poem or biosimile**

(Line 1) First name
(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe the person
(Line 3) Important relationship (daughter of ..., mother of ..., etc.)
(Line 4) Two or three things, people or ideas that the person loved
(Line 5) Three feelings the person experienced
(Line 6) Three fears the person experienced
(Line 7) Accomplishments (who composed ..., who discovered ..., etc.)
(Line 8) Two or three things the person wanted to see happen or wanted to experience
(Line 9) His or her residence
(Line 10) Last name

**cinquain**: A group of five; a short poem consisting of five, usually unrhymed lines containing, respectively, two, four, six, eight and two syllables; any stanza of five lines.

**diamante poems**: Diamante poems are also known as diamond poems, as they are comprised of seven lines and take the shape of a diamond. Each line in a diamante poem serves a specific purpose. The first line is a one-word noun or subject, the second consists of two adjectives, the third consists of three verbs, the fourth contains four nouns, the fifth contains three verbs, the sixth contains two adjectives and the seventh uses a word that contrasts with the word in the first line, thus creating a parallel structure.

**lament poems**: A lament poem is a literary piece that bemoans or bewails about an event that has occurred. This type of poem is filled with deep emotion and regret over the loss of something or someone that is dear to the poet’s heart. In the old days, laments were performed or recited by women.

**limerick**: A five-line poem written with one couplet and one triplet. If a couplet is a two-line rhymed poem, then a triplet would be a three-line rhymed poem. The rhyme pattern is a a b a with lines 1, 2 and 5 containing three beats and rhyming, and lines 3 and 4 having two beats and rhyming. Limericks are meant to be funny. They often contain hyperbole, onomatopoeia, idioms, puns and other figurative devices. The last line of a good limerick contains the punch line, or “heart,” of the joke.

**haiku**: A verse form of Japanese origin having three lines containing five, seven and five syllables respectively; also a poem written in this form.

**quinzaine poem**: A poem where the first line has seven syllables. The second line has five syllables but is the beginning of a question. The third line has three syllables and is the end of the question.

**septet poem**: A septet is a poem consisting of seven lines, and of any form or meter.

**sonnet**: A distinctive poetic style that uses resources that are used by poets to convey and reinforce the meaning or experience of poetry through the skillful use of sound system or pattern of metrical structure and verse composition, usually consisting of 14 lines arranged in a set rhythm scheme or pattern. Usually written in iambic pentameter, it consists first of an octave, or eight lines, which asks a question or states a problem or proposition and follows the rhyme scheme a-b-b-a, a-b-b-a. The last six lines offer an answer and follow the rhyme scheme c-d-e-c-d-e.
Poetry Hotlist

Writing Poetry

• 5 Tips for Writing Poetry – From “Poetry for Dummies”
  http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/writing-poetry.html

• How to Write Poetry – Lesson plans, prompts and other information information
  http://www.creative-writing-now.com/how-to-write-poetry.html

• Poetry Worksheets – Hundreds of worksheets for grades K-12
  http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=poetry&media=worksheets&rating=4&gclid=CMXflZaC7bMCFeIDMgodBmYAZw

• Poetry Writing Tips: How to Write a Poem –
  http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative1/poetry-writing-tips-how-to-write-a-poem

• Writing With Writers: Poetry – Professional authors offer tips and lessons for grades 1-8
  http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry

• Writing Poetry – Definitions and different types of poetry
  http://www.famousliteraryworks.com/writing-poetry.htm

• Acrostic Poems – Tool helps with the writing process
  http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/acrostic

• Diamante Poems – Tool to help writing a diamante poem
  http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/diamante

• Instant Poetry Forms – Templates for creating poetry
  http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/poemlist.htm

• Poets.org – Has the biographies of 500 poets, 1,400 poems and 100 audio clips
  http://www.poets.org/

• Poetry Express –
  http://www.poetryexpress.org

• Poetry Idea Engine – It tells you what you need to create four kinds of poems
  http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/poetry_engine.htm

Writing Poetry Using Templates

• Acrostic Poems – Tool helps with the writing process
  http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/

• Diamante Poems – Tool to help writing a diamante poem
  http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/

• Instant Poetry Forms – Templates for creating poetry
  http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/poemlist.htm
• Poets.org — Has the biographies of 500 poets, 1,400 poems and 100 audio clips
  http://www.poets.org

• Poetry Express
  http://www.poetryexpress.org

Publishing Student Poetry

• Anthology of Poetry — Selected poems are printed in a yearly book
  http://www.anthologyofpoetry.com

• Cyber Kids.com — Students submit and site determines whose poetry are put online

• How to Publish Poetry
  http://www.famousliteraryworks.com/writing-poetry.htm

• Poetic Power — Hosts poetry contests and publishes winners
  http://www.poeticpower.com

• Publishing Online — From Scholastic; students submit with a chance of being published online
  http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/jack_form.asp

• Publish Your Work Online — Gives a hotlist of sites the publish student poetry
  http://www.cln.org/themes/publish.html

• Young Poets.com — A panel of educators reviews the poetry submitted and selects poems to be published
  http://youngpoets.com

Poetry Analysis and Comprehension

• How to Analyze a Poem (ThinkQuest) — One sheet that offers a beginning for grades 6-12
  http://library.thinkquest.org/23846/writing_guide/poetry.html

• How to Write a Poetry Analysis — Gives step-by-step directions for high school students
  http://academichelp.net/academic-assignments/review/write-poetry-analysis-paper.html

• Poetry Analysis Fact Sheet — One handout that gives information about what to look for when analyzing a poem
  http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/analysis.html

• Poetry Analysis Sheet — One worksheet from Read, Write, Think; for grades 6-12

• Poetry Analysis Worksheets — 45 worksheets for grades K-12
  http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=poetry&media=worksheets&rating=4&gclid=CMXfI7aC7bMCFeIDmgodBmYAZw

Poetry Contests

• Kids Can Publish — Contests students can enter plus the opportunity to create your own contest
  http://www.fivestarpublications.com/kidscanpublish/contests.html

• Poetry Power! — Ideas and resources for teaching poetry
  http://www.kristinegeorge.com/poetry_power.html
Common Core Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature

Craft and Structure

Grade 7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

Grade 8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4b Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4b Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4c Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.4d Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
Level of Text Complexity

Grade 7

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

Grade 8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.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.

Standard of Complexity—Range, Quality and Complexity

Grades 9-10 and Grades 11-12

• Measuring Text Complexity: Three Factors
• Range of Text Types for K-5
• Texts Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, & Range of Student Reading K-5
• Staying on Topic Within a Grade & Across Grades
• Range of Text Types for 6-12
• Texts Illustrating the Complexity, Quality, & Range of Student Reading 6-12
More Than Rhyme: 

Introduction to Poetry

http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org/poetry
Introduction of Poetry Unit and Definition of Poetry

Overview

This is an introduction to what poetry is. Students will taste a variety of foods that cause a powerful reaction. They will then discuss the idea of whether or not humans tend to enjoy powerful experiences. Using information they have learned about poetry, they will attempt to define it.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson
- One or more of the following concentrated flavor sources:
  - Sour gumballs
  - Concentrated lemon juice and cups
  - Condensed sweetened milk (plus a can opener, spoons and cups)
- Visual aid such as chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking

Procedure

1. Pass out note-taking materials and explain their purpose.

2. Have students answer the first question on their note sheets: What is my own definition of poetry?

3. While students are writing, set up food materials in front of the class to build interest. For example, you can make a huge, dramatic deal of lifting the lid off the can of condensed milk, stretching out the gooey concoction. Also be thinking about which students to call upon for the best results. You won’t want someone too “cool” to react.

4. After students write out their own definitions of poetry, ask for volunteers to read theirs. Are there negative ones? Take a short moment to discuss why poetry might leave a negative impression. Agree without going into a great deal of explanation.
5. Write out your own definition for students to copy: *purposely powerful words chosen to cause a reaction*. Explain that you’ll make sense of that shortly.

6. Call up students to the front and ask everyone to watch carefully as your volunteers either chew the sour candy, drink a swallow of the concentrated juice or taste a spoonful of the condensed milk.

7. Point out that the reactions were powerful and that all except the volunteers seemed to enjoy them. Raise the question of whether or not humans tend to enjoy powerful experiences and discuss.

8. The class may come to the conclusion that people do like powerful experiences, but only when they’re safe. There is a difference between riding a rollercoaster and riding in a school bus with a drunken driver. Have students create a list of safe, powerful experiences that are enjoyable. Possibilities include novels, movies, video games, haunted houses, gossip, reality shows, amusement parks and costume parties.

9. Help the class reach the conclusion that humans actually enjoy reacting to safe, powerful experiences.

10. Explain that people who make foods more powerful use artificial flavorings or boil out the weaker elements. Ask the students how to make language more powerful. When they can’t answer specifically, explain that writers use tools to do that, and that this unit will be teaching them those tools. Also explain that knowledge of the poetic tools allows people to manipulate the emotions of others and to know when someone is trying to manipulate theirs.

11. Instruct the students to keep a notebook of the projects they do in this unit.

---

**Formative Evaluation**

Use this question as an exit ticket or, if time permits, a discussion with a partner and report to the group activity: Considering what you just learned in today’s class, why do movies such as “Titanic,” “The Notebook” and “Independence Day” have so many repeat viewers? Students must be able to justify their answers.

It is to be hoped that your students will realize that humans enjoy safely experiencing powerful scenes that evoke emotional responses, and that they will then mention specific scenes from those movies as examples.
The Power of Emotion

Considering what you just learned in today’s class, why does a movie such as “Titanic,” “The Notebook” or “Independence Day” have so many repeat viewers? Please explain and justify your answer with specific scenes from the movie(s) you mention.
More Than Rhyme: Poetry Fundamentals

Tools Used in Poetry

http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org/poetry
Denotation and Double Denotation

Overview

This lesson requires the students to think about the meaning of words and whether those words give you positive or negative denotations. The exit ticket requires them to discuss whether the risk of being misunderstood is worth the power of the double denotation.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials
- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems for this section

Procedure


2. Review the previous lesson by asking why someone other than a poet would want to know the poetic tools. (They can be used to manipulate one’s emotions, and that is power that can be used for or against causes.)

3. Share the definition of denotation: the specific meaning of a word without any suggested positive or negative feelings.

4. Ask students if words can have double denotations. Start by giving them an example, such as the word “see.” It can mean to have visual acuity or to understand. Invite the class to share additional examples.

5. Conduct a partner discussion and report to the group using this question: What is the problem with a word that has more than one meaning? What is the advantage? (Possible confusion is the problem and forcing a reader to stop, think and make sense of a point is the advantage.)

6. Conclude together that double denotative meanings do have risks, but because they force a reader to stop and ponder, they also have power.
7. As a solidifying activity, write “Did you ever see a kitchen sink?” on the board, asking students why this question is relative to the discussion. (It can be taken two ways—a place to wash dishes or a room in one’s home dropping into a sinkhole.)

8. Put several more examples on the board and encourage students to come up with their own. This may also be done as a separate activity in small groups or singularly. Students should be able to explain the double denotative meanings. Here are some examples to get the students started:
   - Microwave
   - Toothbrush
   - Dragonfly
   - Bedspread
   - Eyelash
   - Earring
   - Meatloaf
   - Square dance
   - Necktie

9. Share the poem “Love Song” by Samuel Hoffenstein to the students. Ask them to determine why, considering the day’s lesson, you chose this poem. (The word “little” changes denotative meaning from “delicate and feminine” at the beginning to “insufficient” by the end.)

10. Some students may think the poem is about a baby instead. (It may be, although the author’s other poetry suggests that it isn’t.) Use this discussion as a means to repeat the danger of double denotative meanings in causing misunderstanding.

11. Read the poem again to the class, then hand out copies for them. The other poems included in this section may be used to spark conversation. They may also be used as evaluation devices or discussion topics because each of their endings contains double denotation.

12. Distribute the student handout Samples of Double Denotation. Have the students work with a partner or a group of three to answer the questions. Give them about 10 minutes and then discuss their opinions. Alternatively, this could be done by dividing the class into groups and having each group take one example and explain the double denotation to the class.

Formative Evaluation

Question to be used for an exit ticket, partnered discussion and reporting, or extended response written assignment: Is the risk of being misunderstood worth the power of the double denotation? Students must justify their answers with logical argument and examples.
“Love Song”

By Samuel Hoffenstein

Your little hands,
Your little feet,
Your little mouth –
Oh, God, how sweet!

Your little nose,
Your little ears,
Your eyes, that shed
Such little tears!

Your little voice,
So soft and kind;
Your little soul,
Your little mind!

Samuel Hoffenstein, “Love Song.” Public Domain
“Throw Away”

By Unknown

The women in my apartment building
Are so pretentious.
Refuse must be sorted they say
Wash the recyclables
Stack the newspaper
Separate the plastics.

Sometimes it’s easier
Just to take myself off to the neighboring town
There’s a trailer park there
With an unlocked dumpster
The girls wear short shorts
And tiny little tanks
And want to talk to me about things other than
What’s in my bag.
Yeah, there can be joy in
Taking out the trash.
“Things Shouldn’t Be So Hard”

By Kay Ryan

A life should leave
deep tracks:
ruts where she
went out and back
to get the mail
or move the hose
around the yard;
where she used to
stand before the sink,
a worn out place;
beneath her hand,
the china knobs
rubbed down to
white pastilles;
the switch she
used to feel for
in the dark
almost erased.
Her things should
keep her marks.
The passage
of a life should show;
it should abrade.
And when life stops,
a certain space
– however small –
should be left scarred
by the grand and
damaging parade.
Things shouldn’t
be so hard.

Samples of Double Denotation

The ring is worn on my finger. (Does this suggest sadness and age, or is it neutral? Does the picture destroy the ambiguity?)

He waves me on. (Is he being encouraging or discouraging? Does the picture destroy the ambiguity?)

I love her because she is so fair. (Is she a beautiful person or a just person? Does the picture destroy the ambiguity?)

Should poems be illustrated?
Overview

After students review double denotation, they will learn about connotation. They will then look at two poems and discuss the terms used. There is a formative evaluation at the end.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12

- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students: Connotative Sets, Rich or Poor
- Teacher copies of the poems “Richard Cory” and “Hazel Tells Laverne”
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Worksheet or transparency for connotative pairs

Procedure


2. Review the Double Denotation lesson by asking students to make a “one-word-at-a-time” sentence on the board that explains why double denotation can be described as “purposely powerful.” Hand the chalk to one student and allow that person to write only one word. The student must then pass the chalk. The class must work together and separately at the same time to review their thoughts and come up with one complete and coherent sentence. (Double denotation can be thought of as purposely powerful because it causes momentary confusion and thereby forces the reader to stop, examine and think.)

3. Pass out plain paper. Tell the students that they will be drawing a picture that must be large enough for everyone in the class to see from the front of the room. Details are not largely important because they will only have two minutes to draw. They must also be completely silent so that nothing they say will influence the pictures of their classmates. They cannot look at each other’s work, nor are they allowed to ask questions. Then, when all are prepared, instruct them to draw a floozy. After two minutes, collect the papers. Quietly select the pictures that best represent a trashy woman, followed by the nonconforming ones. Then show the pictures that work well for your lesson, simply stopping without explanation when you get to those that don’t. Ask for students’ comments and lead them into a definition for connotation: the pictures and feelings that go beyond the denotative meaning.
4. Continue discussion with pairs of words such as ma and pa vs. mother and father. Discuss the differences. The Connotative Sets worksheet can be used to guide discussion.

5. Continue the discussion with product names. Ask the class if they would wash their faces with a soap that the manufacturers called Pigeon instead of Dove. (Probably not — a dove connotes something pure and white; a pigeon connotes something dirty.) Have students list products that are named solely for the word’s connotation. (Examples include White Rain shampoo, Snuggle fabric softener, Ford Mustang, Country Blend butter, Dodge Ram trucks.)

6. Review the poem “Throw Away.” Why did the author use the dumpster in a trailer park rather than a town house, condominium or apartment building?

7. Instruct the class to add the definition of connotation to their Poetry Notes handout.

8. Discuss the origins of connotations. Sample lead questions: Why would someone think twice before naming a child Adolf (historic connotation)? How has the name Homer changed (literature and popular media)? Why aren’t any parents naming their children Judas anymore (Biblical reference)?

9. Read “Hazel Tells Laverne” to the class. Discuss why the word “bowl” couldn’t have been “commode.” (It is too dignified and classy of a word in this application.)

10. Use the handout Rich or Poor? as a means to solidify the understanding of connotation and to teach indirectly the vocabulary necessary for the next poem. Have students discuss and report which phrases they would chose if they were writing about a poor and homeless person. They should justify their answers by explaining any connotations.

11. Read the poem “Richard Cory” to the class. Allow the students to speak freely at the end of the reading; they’ll probably begin to propose reasons why Mr. Cory kills himself. After some time, point out that you don’t know why he did, but you do know that the author was able to reach out from the grave and manipulate their emotions because they are showing obvious concern. Then have them decide whether or not they’d care as much if the author hadn’t set Mr. Cory so high with connotative phrases in the first three stanzas that his fall in the last was such a surprise.
Formative Evaluation

Examine the following four sentences. First, to prove your knowledge of connotation, tell what person might say that sentence. (For example, the first might be said by a weatherman and the last by someone who is depressed.) Then attempt to change the word “covered” so that its connotation matches the end of the sentence. (For example, in the fourth sentence, “covered” could be changed to “drowned.”)

1. Everything was covered in precipitation.

2. Everything was covered in snowflakes.

3. Everything was covered in H₂O at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

4. Everything was covered in drizzle and sleet.
Connotative Sets

Ma and Pa
Mom and Dad
Mother and Father
Mommy and Daddy
Mum and Da
Ma and Pop

Mongrel
Dog
Puppy
Hound
Mutt
Canine
K9

Freedom fighters
Protesters
Rabble rousers
Mob
Dissidents
Marchers

Which would you date and why?

Girl
Female
Lass
Woman
Broad
Lady
Dame
Chick
Gal

Boy
Male
Lad
Man
Hunk
Dude
Gentleman
Chap
Guy
“Hazel Tells Laverne”

By Katharyn Machan Aal

last night
im cleanin out my
howard johnsons ladies room
when all of a sudden
up pops this frog
musta come from the sewer
swimmin aroun an tryin ta
climb up the sida the bowl
so i goes ta flushm down
but sohelpmegod he starts talkin
bout a golden ball
an how i can be a princess
me a princess
well my mouth drops
all the way to the floor
an he says
kiss me just kiss me
once on the nose
well i screams
ya little green pervert
an i hitsm with my mop
an has ta flush
the toilet down three times
me
a princess

“Rich or Poor?”

On the pavement
Sole to crown
Good appearance
Imperially slim
Dressed
Admirably schooled
Grace
Waited for the light
Displeased with the menu

In the city
Head to toe
Clean favored
Skinny
Arrayed
Taught
Proper behavior
Slept soundly
Cursed the bread
"Richard Cory"

By Edwin Arlington Robinson

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
‘Good-morning,’ and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich — yes, richer than a king —
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Overview

Students will briefly review the concept of connotation. They will then look at their “floozy woman” pictures and talk about how the sound of the word affects their perception of the picture. They will then look at the sounds used to create an effect in three poems.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board
- Copies of poems included with this lesson plan
- Soundtracks that include a few moments of calliope music and a few moments of the theme from the television show “Gunsmoke”

Procedure

1. Have the students take out their Poetry Notes handouts.

2. Review the connotative lesson by asking students to imagine a 19-year-old male playing the guitar on the front porch of his house. Have them picture the male, what he’s wearing, his music, the house décor visible through the window, the landscaping, the mailbox, the car in the driveway, etc. Then when they have a clear picture, tell them that you are going to change one thing — the guitar for a banjo. Many will chuckle. Ask them why. You may get answers such as “the guy lost teeth and IQ points” or “the car is now up on blocks.” Discuss the connotations and why a writer should be aware of them. (Awareness of connotations can be thought of as purposely powerful because entire pictures and feelings can be created with a single word.)

3. Tell the class that we are beginning study of the next poetry-writing tool and that it’s called sound. It means being aware of the sound a word makes. Then explain that your sister wouldn’t allow her daughters to say the word fart when they were growing up. Instead, the sister taught them to say pooper. Have them decide if pooper is a worthwhile word and in some ways more appropriate than fart. After you calm the class back down, enforce the idea that a word has a meaning but it also has a sound and sometimes that sound can strengthen or detract from the meaning. As an example, ask the class why the word ugly is
well-sounded. (One uses an “ugh” sound in order to say it.) Then ask them if they know what pulchritude means. It sounds ugly, but it means beauty.

4. Ask the class to do another imagining exercise. They are going to film a scene of a first kiss. Set the scene for them — perhaps under the football bleachers on a Friday night. Freeze them just as their characters are about to kiss, then tell them you’ll add the soundtrack. Then play or sing some calliope music. (A variety of calliope music is available at SoundSnap at http://www.soundsnap.com/tags/merry_go_round.) The students will probably laugh or complain. Tell them to try again, but this time play cowboy music or the opening theme to “Gunsmoke” (readily available on Youtube). Make them determine that the proper sound is necessary to set the tone.

5. Read “The Harbor.” Discuss that in the first stanza, the author is passing through a run-down, ghetto-like area. The second stanza is a sudden break in the surroundings and the third is an open and long beach. Tell them that liking the poem isn’t necessary (few students do) but ask them to judge whether or not the author supported his imagery with sounds. (First stanza: repeating “ugh” and “ha” sounds that are ugly; second stanza: repetitive “b” sounds that explode out suddenly; third stanza: long, lazy sounds like the double L’s, double G’s and sets of double E’s.)

6. Read “Jabberwocky.” Were students able to form a picture even though many of the words were nonsense? Discuss what slithy means and the idea that the toves were gyring and gimbling. What do the sounds suggest? What does the sound of galumphing suggest? Is the boy slouching? Riding some great beast?

7. Have the students add to their notes that an author’s awareness of sound can emphasize his meaning and tone. Because of that, an aware author can influence a reader subtly and control him without his knowledge.

8. Discuss the meanings of alliteration and onomatopoeia as specific sound devices.


Formative Evaluation

Pronounce some onomatopoeia words for the class in an exaggerated way, writing them on the board:

- Drrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
“The Harbor”

By Carl Sandburg

Passing through huddled and ugly walls
By doorways where women
Looked from their hunger-deep eyes,
Haunted with shadows of hunger-hands,
Out from the huddled and ugly walls,
I came sudden, at the city’s edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

“Jabberwocky”

By Lewis Carroll

`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.

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

Students will learn how repetition can either make something unending, stress it or set up a pattern and break it to draw attention.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12

• 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
• 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
• 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
• 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

• Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
• A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
• Copies of the poems
• Video of Kathy Mattea singing “455 Rocket” (available at http://www.cmt.com/videos/kathy-mattea/33694/455-rocket.jhtml)

Procedure


2. Review the lesson about sound by asking students to listen to Kathy Mattea singing “455 Rocket.” Discuss what Mattea does with her voice when she sings the words “455 rocket.” (She uses her voice to mimic an engine revving and going through its gears.) Review that the sound of the words can emphasize the meaning.

3. Begin discussion of today’s device or tool: repetition. Explain that repetition means exactly what it sounds like — that something repeated can be emphasized or seemingly go on forever. But also explain that repetition can become a norm and breaking that norm draws attention. Use the example of a teacher talking nonstop and then being quiet suddenly. Everyone in class looks up to see who’s in trouble. Or explain that Japanese cultures once kept crickets as watchdogs. The chirping from the tiny cage on the hearth would become a constant and when it stopped, either someone was in your living room or your cricket died. Have students add the notes that repetitions can either make something unending, stress it or set up a pattern and break it, which would draw attention.
4. Ask students if they remember the song that never ends. It was in “Lamb Chop’s Play-Along” where it was sung at the end of each show. It went:

“This is the song that doesn’t end. Yes, it goes on and on, my friend. Some people started singing it not knowing what it was, and they’ll continue singing it forever just because ...”

Another similar song is “The Song That Gets on Everybody’s Nerves.” It is sung to the tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

“I know a song that gets on everybody’s nerves, everybody’s nerves, everybody’s nerves. I know a song that gets on everybody’s nerves, and this is how it goes ...”

Explain that the repetition in these songs is maddening but also reinforcing. It makes it seem as if they’ll truly never end. If you were to stop singing mid-lyric, it would draw attention merely by breaking the pattern.

5. Read “Strong Iron Hands” to the class. Discuss the only line without the words strong iron. Is that the line that should be emphasized?

6. Next explain a bit about the Crimean War in the 1800s and tell what a light brigade is. Then read “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” Have students discuss the reasons for repetition here. (Stressing a point or perhaps making many attempts and battering at an enemy as they did.)

Formative Evaluation

As an exit activity, ask student why commercials put in a repeating “call-back” phrase such as the following:

“Red Robin — Yum!” or “You say Hillshire; I say Farms, go meat!”

We can hope they mention that the repetition is powerful because it stresses a point.
“Strong Iron Hands”

By Unknown

Strong iron hands
Grip the strong iron hammers
And pound the strong iron spikes
Into strong iron rails
That stretch for strong iron miles
For the strong iron cars
That follow strong iron engines
In a strong iron rocking
Through the strong iron night.

They match the strong iron promise
In my strong iron soul
Of my strong iron love
for only you.
“Charge of the Light Brigade”

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
“Charge for the guns!” he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”
Was there a man dismay’d?
Not tho’ the soldier knew
Someone had blunder’d:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley’d and thunder’d;
Storm’d at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.
Flash’d all their sabres bare,
Flash’d as they turn’d in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder’d:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro’ the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel’d from the sabre stroke
Shatter’d and sunder’d.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley’d and thunder’d;
Storm’d at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro’ the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made,
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred.
Overview

Students will look at a poem with altered word placement and determine if the alteration changes the poem’s meaning.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12

- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems

Procedure


2. Review the lesson about repetition by reminding students of “The Highwayman.” Ask them to explain the effect of the repeated beginning and closing stanza. (Suggests the meeting continues to happen in a haunting way.)

3. Define enjambed lines as lines that end physically before the meaning ends. Show a simple rhyme on the board such as the following:

   Roses are red
   Violets are blue
   Sugar is sweet
   And so are you.

   Point out that each line physically ends at the end of that line’s meaning. Then write the rhyme as follows:

   Roses are
   Red violets are
   Blue sugar is
   Sweet and so
   Are you.
Does it make the meaning less clear? Can it be interpreted in a different way now? Does the reading of it change in beat and rhythm? That is the effect and power of an enjambed line.

4. Explain that word placement can work in the same way. Reread the poem “Strong Iron Hands.” What is the assumed purpose of the placement of the last line? (We cannot be sure. Answers are good when students can justify them with reason.)

5. Read “The Dance” by William Carlos Williams to the class. Explain that Pieter Breughel was a great painter who made dry color on stretched cloth actually seem to move. Williams wanted to make the words describing the dried color on stretched cloth so good that they seemed to move, too. Show a picture of the painting, then read the poem. Have students pick out words chosen specifically for their connotations (example: bellies adds and the word abdomen takes away) and sound qualities (example: tweedle and blare). Have students also comment on the purpose of the repeated line. (Continuation – when you reach the bottom you’re already at the top and dancing again.) Then discuss the purpose of the enjambed lines. (Speed – try to read it dropping the voice and pausing at the end of each physical line to see the point.)

6. Read “L(a” by E. E. Cummings. Have students explain the placement of the various letters. (Answers must be justified in order to be considered correct.)

7. Read “Funeral Blues.” Discuss why this poem would not work if the lines were enjambed.

Formative Evaluation

Have students work in pairs to try to write a pattern poem similar to “L(a.” They must use an emotional situation such as “my crush” or “responsibility” or “weekend begins.” The placement of the letters and the comparison within the parenthesis must support the emotion they are trying to convey. Pairs should share and explain results to the class.

or

Have students rewrite the rhyme “Jack and Jill” in a way in which the word placement emphasizes and supports the meaning, then explain their results.
“The Dance”

By William Carlos Williams

In Brueghel’s great picture, The Kermess, the dancers go round, they go round and around, the squeal and the blare and the tweedle of bagpipes, a bugle and fiddles tipping their bellies (round as the thick-sided glasses whose wash they impound) their hips and their bellies off balance to turn them. Kicking and rolling about the Fair Grounds, swinging their butts, those shanks must be sound to bear up under such rollicking measures, prance as they dance in Brueghel’s great picture, The Kermess.
“L(a”}

By E. E. Cummings

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“Funeral Blues”

By W. H. Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood.
For nothing now can ever come to any good.
Overview

Students will review enjambed lines using the poem “Hazel Tells Laverne” and discuss imagery as the creation of purposely powerful pictures to create a mood or tone. They will then look for the uses of imagery in the poem “The Groundswell.”

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems

Procedure


2. Reread the poem “Hazel Tells Laverne” from the Connotation lesson plan. Discuss whether or not the author seems to have placed any of the words purposely. (The only answers acceptable are those that are justified. For example, “sohelpmegod” is written as one word, suggesting it is said quickly and as a single thought rather than separate words.)

3. Have the students take out their phones and take a single close-up picture of the classroom. They should concentrate on one image that defines the classroom and makes it seem very welcoming, warm and safe. Then they should take one close-up image that makes the classroom seem bleak, sad and depressing. Share and compare. Then discuss which the classroom is and whether or not a person choosing images wisely can change a person’s mind or mood.

4. Define imagery as “purposely picking powerful pictures” and discuss why a poet may want to use this element.

5. Read “The Groundswell.” Have students examine the chosen imagery and how it adds to the mood. Reread it, putting in a new stanza halfway through:

A mother and her daughters come to laugh the day away;

They sit and sun and laugh and run and eat and joke and play.
Have students determine why that stanza ruins the poem. Then discuss other tools found.

Are there any connotative words? Non-enjambed lines? Repetitions?

6. Read and discuss the other poems and the authors’ use of imagery.

**Formative Evaluation**

Have students name and describe commercials that purposely use imagery to create a mood in the reader. Car commercials often work best – especially luxury cars.
"The Groundswell"

By John Gould Fletcher

With heavy doleful clamour, hour on hour, and day on day. The muddy groundswell lifts and breaks and falls and slides away.

The cold and naked wind runs shivering over the sands. Salt are its eyes, open its mouth, its brow wet, blue its hands.

It finds naught but a starving gull whose wings trail at its side. And the dull battered wreckage, grey jetsam of the tide.

The lifeless chilly slaty sky with no blue hope is lit, A rusty waddling steamer plants a smudge of smoke on it.

Stupidly stand the factory chimneys staring over all. The grey grows ever denser, and soon the night will fall:

The wind runs sobbing over the beach and touches with its hands Straw, chaff, old bottles, broken crates, the litter of the sands.

Sometimes the bloated carcass of a dog or fish is found, Sometimes the rumpled feathers of a sea-gull shot or drowned.

Last year it was an unknown man who came up from the sea, There is his grave hard by the dunes under a stunted tree.

With heavy doleful clamour, hour on hour, and day on day. The muddy groundswell lifts and breaks* and falls and slides away.
“Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout”

By Shel Silverstein

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She’d scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones,
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crusts and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned buttered toast,
Gristly bits of beefy roasts.
The garbage rolled on down the hall,
It raised the roof, it broke the wall.
Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,
Globs of gooey bubble gum,
Cellophane from green baloney,
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,
Peanut butter, caked and dry,
Curdled milk and crusts of pie,
Moldy melons, dried-up mustard,
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,
Cold french fried and rancid meat,
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.
At last the garbage reached so high
That it finally touched the sky.
And all the neighbors moved away,
And none of her friends would come to play.
And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,
“OK, I’ll take the garbage out!”
But then, of course, it was too late...
The garbage reached across the state,
From New York to the Golden Gate.
And there, in the garbage she did hate,
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,
That I cannot now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!
“Eleanor Rigby”

By John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Ah, look at all the lonely people
Ah, look at all the lonely people

Eleanor Rigby picks up the rice in the church where a wedding has been,
Lives in a dream
Waits at the window, wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door
Who is it for?

All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people
Where do they all belong?

Father McKenzie writing the words of a sermon that no one will hear
No one comes near.
Look at him working, darning his socks in the night when there’s nobody there
What does he care?

All the lonely people
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people
Where do they all belong?

Ah, look at all the lonely people
Ah, look at all the lonely people

Eleanor Rigby died in the church and was buried along with her name
Nobody came
Father McKenzie wiping the dirt from his hands as he walks from the grave
No one was saved

All the lonely people (ah, look at all the lonely people)
Where do they all come from?
All the lonely people (ah, look at all the lonely people)
Where do they all belong?
“Traveling Through the Dark”

By William Stafford

Traveling through the dark I found a deer
dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.
It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:
that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car
and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;
she had stiffened already, almost cold.
I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason —
her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,
alive, still, never to be born.
Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;
under the hood purred the steady engine.
I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;
around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all — my only swerving —,
then pushed her over the edge into the river.

“Eve”

By Ralph Hodgson

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,
Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees.
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Mute as a mouse in a
Corner the cobra lay,
Curlèd round a bough of the
Cinnamon tall....

Now to get even and
Humble proud heaven and
Now was the moment or
Never at all.

"Eval" Each syllable
Light as a flower fell,
"Eval" he whispered the
Wondering maid,
Here was the strangest pair
In the world anywhere,
Eve in the bells and grass
Kneeling, and he
Telling his story low....
Singing birds saw them go
Down the dark path to
The Blasphemous Tree.

Oh, what a clatter when
Titmouse and Jenny Wren
Saw him successful and
Taking his leave!
How the birds rated him,
How they all hated him!
How they all pitied
Poor motherless Eve!

Picture her crying
Outside in the lane,
Eve, with no dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Haunting the gate of the
Orchard in vain....
Picture the lewd delight
Under the hill to-night–
"Eva!" the toast goes round,
"Eva!" again.
Comparisons

Overview
Students will begin with a review of imagery using “Turn the Page” by Bob Seger. They will then be introduced to simile, metaphor and symbol. They will write a bio-poem using double denotative meanings.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials
- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems

Procedure

2. Review the lesson about imagery by looking at the lyrics to the song “Turn the Page” by Bob Seger. What images does the author use to impart the feeling of being a band member on the road? Are they effective?

3. Introduce the idea of a poetic comparison by displaying the lyrics from TLC’s “Waterfall.” Make a list of the qualities of a waterfall (dangerous, fast-moving, beautiful) and rivers or lakes (slow, safe, calm). Decide which adjectives from the list are being used by the author of the song and what that author is probably telling his audience (be careful or don’t rush to grow up).

4. Look next at the lyrics from Smash Mouth’s “All That Glitters.” Do the same listings for “all star,” “rock star,” “shooting star” and “mold.” Can the class come up with a consensus about what the author was saying? Is it tougher?

5. Lead students to the idea that comparisons allow someone to say something in an interesting and powerful way, but that they have a danger: They can be misunderstood. Discuss whether or not the possibility of being misunderstood is worth the mind-stopping attention a good comparison can cause. Students can have any answer as long as it is justified with reason and example.
6. Review the three types of comparisons — similes, metaphors and symbols:

**Simile**: A direct comparison using like or as. Example: She’s as orderly as a telephone book.

**Metaphor**: An implied comparison. Example: That professor is a reference book.

**Symbol**: Means what it actually says denotatively, but means something else as well. Example: Don’t judge a book by its cover.

7. Look at the sample poems together. They can be presented one at a time or assigned to groups who will present them to the class after preparation time. (Note: song lyrics to “Drops of Jupiter” by Train are included as an example of confusing comparisons.)

**Formative Evaluation**

Look at the sample bio-similes included. Have students try their own following these steps:

- List adjectives to describe you.
- Think of an object with one or more of those adjectives.
- List out the qualities of the object chosen to see if there are any that also apply to you.
- Write out the bio-simile paying special attention to words with double denotative meanings.
- Share and compare.
Sample Bio-Similes

I am like a toothbrush.
People use me then they put me down.  

I am like a stroke.
You don't even know I'm here
Waiting to attack.  

My teacher is like bagpipes.
Noisy as anything
Stuff sticking out in unusual places
Scary and strange
But if you listen closely
Pure music.  

I am like a jack-in-the-box.
Just one more crank
And I'm bounced out of here
Out of the comfortable
Into the fear
Just one more crank
And you'll turn me loose
Into the high school
And its abuse
Just one more crank
Of this dumb life song
And this baby box school
Will be long gone
Just one more crank
Enough time to learn
That I don't much like it
When my crank gets turned.  

I am like the bottom of the ladder.
I never get a hand
But I'll always get the boot.  

I am like a tectonic plate
I do move very slowly
But I will change your world.  

I am like a knight of the olden days
I have a code
I do my duty
I protect
I serve
I don't belong in this world.  

I am a glass slipper
I will promise you everything
I will make you feel pretty
I will take you to the ball
And let you walk all over me
But remember
I break easily.
“Turn the Page”

By Bob Seger

On a long and lonesome highway
East of Omaha
You can listen to the engine
Moanin’ out his one-note song
You can think about the woman
Or the girl you knew the night before
But your thoughts will soon be wandering
The way they always do
When you’re ridin’ 16 hours
And there’s nothin’ much to do
And you don’t feel much like ridin’,
You just wish the trip was through

Here I am
On the road again
There I am
Up on the stage
Here I go
Playin’ star again
There I go
Turn the page

Out there in the spotlight
You’re a million miles away
Every ounce of energy
You try to give away
As the sweat pours out your body
Like the music that you play

Later in the evening
As you lie awake in bed
With the echoes from the amplifiers
Ringin’ in your head
You smoke the day’s last cigarette,
Rememberin’ what she said

Here I am
On the road again
There I am
Up on the stage
Here I go
Playin’ star again
There I go
Turn the page
Lyrics from TLC’s “Waterfalls”

Don’t go chasing waterfalls

Please stick to the rivers and the lakes

That you’re used to
Lyrics from Smash Mouth’s “All That Glitters”

Hey now, you’re an all star
Get your game on; go play
Hey now, you’re a rock star;
Get the show on; get paid
All that glitters is gold
Only shooting stars break the mold.
"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 wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
“The Rose”

By Amanda Mc Broom

Some say love, it is a river
That drowns the tender reed
Some say love, it is a razor
That leaves your soul to bleed
Some say love, it is a hunger
An endless aching need
I say love, it is a flower
And you, its only seed

It’s the heart, afraid of breaking
That never learns to dance
It’s the dream, afraid of waking
That never takes the chance
It’s the one who won’t be taken
Who cannot seem to give
And the soul, afraid of dying
That never learns to live

When the night has been too lonely
And the road has been too long
And you think that love is only
for the lucky and the strong
Just remember in the winter
Far beneath the bitter snow
Lies the seed
That with the sun’s love, in the spring
Becomes the rose
“Persephone, Falling”

By Rita Dove

One narcissus among the ordinary beautiful flowers, one unlike all the others! She pulled, stooped to pull harder — when, sprung out of the earth on his glittering terrible carriage, he claimed his due. It is finished. No one heard her. No one! She had strayed from the herd.

(Remember: go straight to school. This is important, stop fooling around! Don’t answer to strangers. Stick with your playmates. Keep your eyes down.) This is how easily the pit opens. This is how one foot sinks into the ground.
“Drops of Jupiter”

By Pat Monahan

Now that she’s back in the atmosphere
With drops of Jupiter in her hair, hey, hey
She acts like summer and walks like rain
Reminds me that there’s a time to change, hey, hey
Since the return from her stay on the moon
She listens like spring and she talks like June, hey, hey

Tell me did you sail across the sun
Did you make it to the Milky Way to see the lights all faded
And that heaven is overrated

Tell me, did you fall for a shooting star
One without a permanent scar
And did you miss me while you were looking for yourself out there

Now that she’s back from that soul vacation
Tracing her way through the constellation, hey, hey
She checks out Mozart while she does Tae-Bo
Reminds me that there’s room to grow, hey, hey

Now that she’s back in the atmosphere
I’m afraid that she might think of me as plain ol’ Jane
Told a story about a man who is too afraid to fly so he never did land

Tell me did the wind sweep you off your feet
Did you finally get the chance to dance along the light of day
And head back to the milky way
And tell me, did Venus blow your mind
Was it everything you wanted to find
And did you miss me while you were looking for yourself out there

Can you imagine no love, pride, deep-fried chicken
Your best friend always sticking up for you... even when I know you’re wrong
Can you imagine no first dance, freeze dried romance five-hour phone
Conversation
The best soy latte that you ever had... And me

Tell me did the wind sweep you off your feet
Did you finally get the chance to dance along the light of day
And head back toward the milky way

Tell me, did you fall for a shooting star
One without a permanent scar
And did you miss me while you were looking for yourself out there
“Mother to Son”

By Langston Hughes

Well, son, I’ll tell you:
Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
It’s had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor —
Bare.
But all the time
I’se been a-climbin’ on,
And reachin’ landin’s,
And turnin’ corners,
And sometimes goin’ in the dark
Where there ain’t been no light.
So, boy, don’t you turn back.
Don’t you set down on the steps.
’Cause you finds it’s kinder hard.
Don’t you fall now —
For I’se still goin’, honey,
I’se still climbin’,
And life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.
Overview

Students will use hyperbole and understatement to draw attention to the topic.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12
- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems
- Optional: audio of “Five Hundred Miles” by The Proclaimers and “Grenade” by Bruno Mars (some lyrics in “Grenade” are not safe for school — make sure it is an edited version)

Procedure


2. Have students make a visual image of a new student walking into the class. The person’s gender is up to them. First, have them imagine the student looking like a normal, everyday teen in that building. Impressions? Then have them overdress the student in whatever way they deem appropriate (too many clothes or too fancy or too risqué). Impressions? Then have them underdress the student (too prim, too little, too mousy). Impressions? Discuss how going in either direction beyond the norm can draw attention. Then introduce hyperbole and understatement and their definitions. Stress that both draw attention to something and thereby fit as poetic tools.

3. Point out that often hyperbole can mean to be serious, but just end up being silly: “I’m so hungry I could eat a horse and then start looking for its rider,” or “I was so scared I was sweating buckets.” Use the lyrics of “I’m Gonna Be (500 Miles)” by The Proclaimers as an example. Realistically, what girl would want a man who’d just walked a thousand miles and then fell at her door? She’d have to pick up, wash, feed, doctor and administer to him, and then put him
to bed to sleep for two days. Examine the opening lyrics of “Grenade” by Bruno Mars for the same idea. Does anyone in the room want this man after he’s done all that? Determine that hyperbole is meant to catch attention but perhaps not be taken literally.

4. Examine the effect of understatement. Have students describe understated wedding bands as opposed to their opposite. Discuss the line “Houston, we have a problem” and its effect. What do perfume and understatement have in common? When a pro football player scores a touchdown, which is more effective in calling positive attention to himself: hyperbole or understatement in his celebration?

5. Read and discuss the poems together.

**Formative Evaluation**

Have pairs of students pick a product and create advertisements for it. Each pair must design one ad that uses hyperbole and one that uses understatement. Then they should share and compare, discussing the power of each.
Excerpt From “I’m Gonna Be (500 Miles)”

By the Proclaimers

When I wake up ...
Well I know I’m going to be I’m going to be the man who wakes up next to you
When I go out ...
Yeah I know I’m going to be I’m going to be the man who goes along with you
If I get drunk ...
Well I know I’m going to be I’m going to be the man who gets drunk next to you
And if I haver
Yeah I know I’m going to be I’m going to be the man who’s haverin’ to you

But I would walk 500 miles
And I would walk 500 more
Just to be that man who walks a thousand miles to fall down at your door
Excerpt From “Grenade”

By Bruno Mars

To give me all your love is all I ever asked
 ‘Cause what you don’t understand
  Is I’d catch a grenade for ya
Throw my hand on the blade for ya
 I’d jump in front of a train for ya
You know I’d do anything for ya

I would go through all this pain
Take a bullet straight through my brain
Yes I would die for ya, baby
But you won’t do the same
"A Red, Red Rose"

By Robert Burns

O my Luve’s like a red, red rose
That’s newly sprung in June;
O my Luve’s like the melodie
That’s sweetly play’d in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a’ the seas gang dry:

Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o’ life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only Luve
And fare thee well, a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Tho’ it were ten thousand mile.
"The Constant Lover"

By Sir John Suckling

Out upon it, I have lov’d
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall molt away his wings
Ere he shall discover
In such whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on’t is, no praise
Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.
“Useless Things”

By Richard Edwards

A spout without a hole
A Swiss without a roll
Ladders without rungs
Taste without tongues,

A shepherd without sheep
A horn without a beep
Hockey without sticks
Candles without wicks,

A pier without the sea
A buzz without a bee
A lid without a box
Keys without locks,

A harp without a string
A pong without a ping
A broom without its bristles
Refs without whistles,

A glacier without ice
Ludo without dice
A chair without a seat
Steps without feet,

A hat without a head
A toaster without bread
A riddle without a clue
Me without you.
"The History Teacher"

By Billy Collins

Trying to protect his students’ innocence
he told them the Ice Age was really just
the Chilly Age, a period of a million years
when everyone had to wear sweaters.

And the Stone Age became the Gravel Age,
named after the long driveways of the time.

The Spanish Inquisition was nothing more
than an outbreak of questions such as
“How far is it from here to Madrid?”
“What do you call the matador’s hat?”

The War of the Roses took place in a garden,
and the Enola Gay dropped one tiny atom on Japan.

The children would leave his classroom
for the playground to torment the weak
and the smart,
mussing up their hair and breaking their glasses,

while he gathered up his notes and walked home
past flower beds and white picket fences,
 wondering if they would believe that soldiers
in the Boer War told long, rambling stories
designed to make the enemy nod off.
Personification

Overview

Students learn about personification and that it helps to create a picture in their mind.

Standards Addressed

Reading Standards for Literature 7-12

- 7th/8th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 7th/8th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Craft and Structure, number 4
- 9th/10th and 11th/12th grade Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity, number 10

Materials

- Class sets of note sheets to help students follow lesson (distributed earlier)
- A chalkboard, overhead transparency, Elmo or Smart Board to help with note-taking
- Copies of the poems

Procedure


2. Review the previous lesson by writing “hyperbole is the absolute very best thing in the whole universe” on the board and then having students come up with a similar example to define and illustrate understatement.

3. Write Horatio’s line 166 from Shakespeare’s “Hamlet,” Scene 1 Act 1, on the board:

   But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
   Walks o’er the dew of yon high eastward hill:

   Have students do the necessary work to decide what a mantle is and what color russet is. Then have them discuss why Shakespeare may have decided to make morning “walk” in a reddish cloak. Is the image, which is admittedly grand, worth the confusion for the modern reader? Ask them if saying “she is hot” would be worth the confusion for the 16th-century reader. Discuss the idea of morning being able to rise out of bed, throw on a cloak or robe and then walk outside. Is the image compelling?

4. Share the definition of personification: an inanimate object that has human-like qualities. Tell students that personification helps create a picture (which creates mood) in the mind. It can also help a reader connect with an abstract idea.
5. Have the students come up with examples of personifications in commercials. Are there cleaning products that talk? Do they know of the one where the discarded broom falls in love with a rake in the garage? What is the purpose and effect?

6. Read and discuss the poems together.

**Formative Evaluation**

Have pairs of students work together to find a short article about a recent athletic event. Then have them rewrite the article in a way that personifies the equipment being used in the sport. Share and compare.
“Death Stands Above Me, Whispering Low”

By Walter Savage Landor

Death stands above me, whispering low
I know not what into my ear:
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.
Fog

By Carl Sandburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

“The Gastronomic Gym”

By Sharon Hendricks

Pasta twirling and spinning,
peas do vertical jumps
mashed potatoes swimming.
meat doing bench press and pumps.
Food has begun to exercise
but it’s not in any gym.
My brother said it’s happening
right inside of him.
"Because I Could Not Stop for Death"

By Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove
At recess, in the ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;
The dews grew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then ‘tis centuries, and yet each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses’ heads
Were toward eternity.

“Root Cellar”

By Theodore Roethke

Nothing would sleep in that cellar, dank as a ditch,
Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark,
    Shoots dangled and drooped,
Lolling obscenely from mildewed crates,
Hung down long yellow evil necks, like tropical snakes.
    And what a congress of stinks!
    Roots ripe as old bait,
    Pulpy stems, rank, silo-rich,
Leaf-mold, manure, lime, piled against slippery planks.
    Nothing would give up life:
    Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath.
More Than Rhyme: Poetry Fundamentals

Applying the Tools

http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org/poetry
Final Exams

Below are the directions and the answers for three final exams. Each has its own difficulty level and each tests the student’s understanding of figurative language.

1. Writing a Poem
Students are assigned an original poem to be written on the topic of Emmett Till. This will require them to do a bit of research to find out who he was. They must include and explain at least five poetry-writing tools learned in the unit. Grading the quality of the poem is not necessary. The teacher will be grading whether or not the student understands the figurative language and tools. Each would be worth a fifth of the grade. A sample follows.

2. Taking a Test
The test is a multiple choice exam that requires both understanding and application. Answers are as follows:

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. C
8. D
9. B
10. D
11. D
12. D
13. C
14. B
15. C

3. Evaluating Poetry
The student will be given two poems and have to decide which is better. The grade would be based on the student’s ability to justify his answer by identifying and explaining the power of the figurative language included.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Poetic tools</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper is neat, grammatically sound, and mechanically correct.</td>
<td>Tools are identified correctly.</td>
<td>Reasoning is fully explained and correct.</td>
<td>The attempt to be very clear is made by giving original examples or correlations to other areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper makes the attempt to be all of the above.</td>
<td>Most tools are identified correctly.</td>
<td>There are some holes in the reasoning or some incorrect thoughts.</td>
<td>There is some attempt to clarify through additional examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper does not show effort in presentation.</td>
<td>Few tools are identified correctly.</td>
<td>Not enough explanation is present to determine student understanding.</td>
<td>No attempt to extend thinking beyond immediate assignment is obvious.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example: Writing a Poem

Sam Pull
Pull 1
Smith
Poetry
10 May 2013

Emmett Till Poetry Final

Emmett
The scrape of sharp metal
On bone
A fourteen-year old child
Alone
I will remember your picture
Till
I die

1. I purposely chose the word scrape over sound because scrape has sound that emphasizes the horror of the situation. It’s minor, but every word chosen purposely helps.

2. I chose the imagery of the removal of Emmett’s eye. It is one of the most graphic mental pictures of the torture.

3. I chose the word child over teen, guy or boy because the connotation of child adds a defenseless picture and feeling.

4. I chose to use his last name Till rather than until because it is a double denotation that means both words and adds information about the meaning of the poem.

5. I used word placement when I put Till alone on a line, calling attention to it so the reader would realize it was an important word and suggested more than just the conjunction’s meaning. I also put alone by itself to emphasize its meaning.

6. I purposely have only two words that rhyme because I wanted to avoid a sing-song, happy or light mood.
Poetry Exam

1. ______ “A cold, restless wind blew through the empty popcorn stand, and gray lonely icicles hung from the seats on the Ferris wheel.” This is an example of a writer using:
   A. Words that have a built in sound track
   B. Strong imagery
   C. Trite phrases
   D. None of the above

2. ______ “Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re going to get.” This is an example of a writer using:
   A. Strong imagery
   B. A trite phrase from Forrest Gump
   C. A comparison device
   D. Both B and C

3. ______ A poet would use a comparison to make his meaning clear. He might also use it because it:
   A. Puts a picture into the reader’s mind
   B. Confuses the reader purposely
   C. Gives the reader a trite image
   D. None of the above

4. ______ If an image or phrase is trite, it isn’t powerful because:
   A. No one can understand it anyway
   B. It doesn’t draw the reader’s attention
   C. Both A and B
   D. None of the above

5. ______ “The water dripping from the ceiling plinked and plopped into the bucket.” The words “plinked and plopped” are an example of a writer using:
   A. A sound device
   B. A strong picture or image
   C. A double denotation
   D. A comparison device
6. ______ “The basketball danced daintily around the rim, then fell to the floor.” This is an example of a writer using:
   A. Comparison
   B. Hyperbole
   C. Personification
   D. Irony

7. ______ A poet might use repetition to suggest that something is unending. He might also use it to:
   A. Give the reader a second meaning after some thought
   B. Put a stronger picture into the reader’s head with just one word
   C. Catch the reader’s attention by breaking a pattern
   D. Surprise the reader at the end of the writing

8. ______ A writer uses hyperbole to:
   A. Stress his point
   B. Be amusing
   C. Put a picture in the reader’s attention
   D. All of the above

9. ______ Poetry is:
   A. Rhyming words that are organized in a rhythm to be like a song
   B. Powerful words that are chosen purposely to cause a reaction
   C. Mostly about love and romantic themes
   D. Mostly about death and depressing themes

10. ______ Someone who might use the poetry tools to persuade you would be:
    A. A poet, teacher or politician
    B. A terrorist, preacher or writer
    C. A sportscaster, advertiser or storyteller
    D. All of the above

11. ______ An example of a product named purposely for persuasive connotation would be:
    A. Kahn’s frankfurters
    B. Lamborghini automobiles
    C. Folgers decaffeinated coffee
    D. Surf laundry detergent
12. ______ “Picking pictures purposely” is:
   A. The definition of poetry
   B. An example of alliteration
   C. A way to set a mood
   D. All of the above

13. ______ Understanding poetry cannot:
   A. Give you a way to express yourself
   B. Help you protect yourself against persuasive people
   C. Make you into a strange person
   D. Allow you to experience different emotions

14. ______ An enjambed line can cause a poem to seem:
   A. Slow
   B. Fast
   C. Stuffy
   D. Immature

15. ______ This phrase from one of the poems we read in class was chosen purposely by the writer because it had a strong connotation:
   A. The dancers go round
   B. Lifts and breaks and falls and slides away
   C. Clean favored and imperially slim
   D. Veering and wheeling free in the open
Evaluating Poetry Exam

Consider the two poems below. Decide which is the better poem and justify your answer. You will be graded on presentation (neatness, grammar, punctuation and spelling), knowledge of figurative language and poetic tools, your ability to explain the use of that tool and your effort to make yourself clear by extending your explanations with original examples or examples that could be found in other areas than poetry. By the way, there is no correct answer about which is better. There is only your ability to justify your answer that will make your selection “correct.”

“Ozymandias”

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
"Love Is Not All: It Is Not Meat Nor Drink"

By Edna St. Vincent Millay

Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;
Love can not fill the thickened lung with breath,
Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;
Yet many a man is making friends with death
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.
It well may be that in a difficult hour,
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,
Or nagged by want past resolution’s power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would.
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