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emotion  
**More** words  
language **Than**  
**Rhyme:** verse  
creative  
thoughts  
hopes sound lyric **Poetry** imagery  
dreams identity **Fundamentals**  
inspiration  
discovery

**WESTERNRESERVE**  
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<http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org/poetry>

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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>

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>.

Six videos are available at <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>, 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

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## Resources





Name \_\_\_\_\_

# 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

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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?

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## student handout

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?

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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.

**enjambéd 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 it’s 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”).

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## 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.

**satire:** A literary technique in which ideas, customs, behaviors or institutions are ridiculed for the purpose of improving society.

**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 b 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

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## 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=CMXflZaC7bMCFelDMgodBmYAZw>
- **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](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/poetry_engine.htm)

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## 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>

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## 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  
<http://www.cyberkids.com/he/html/submit.html>
- **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](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>

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## 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](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  
[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1160/poetry\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1160/poetry_analysis.pdf)
- **Poetry Analysis Worksheets** – 45 worksheets for grades K-12  
<http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=poetry&media=worksheets&rating=4&gclid=CMXflZaC7bMCFelDMgodBmYAZw>

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## Poetry Contests

- **Kids Can Publish** – Contests students can enter plus the opportunity to create your own contest  
<http://www.fivestarpublish.com/kidscanpublish/contests.html>
- **Poetry Power!** – Ideas and resources for teaching poetry  
[http://www.kristinegeorge.com/poetry\\_power.html](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).



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## Level of Text Complexity

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### 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

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## Standard of Complexity—Range, Quality and Complexity

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### 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](#)



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# Introduction to 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.

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## 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# 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.

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emotion  
**More** words  
language **Than**  
**Rhyme:** verse  
creative  
thoughts  
hopes sound lyric **Poetry** imagery  
dreams identity **Fundamentals**  
inspiration  
discovery

# Tools Used in 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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 may 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.

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## 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.

Kay Ryan, “Things Shouldn’t Be So Hard.” Reprinted with permission from Grove Press in [The Best of It](#).

# Samples of Double Denotation

The ring is worn on my finger.



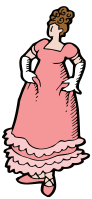
(Does this suggest sadness and age, or is it neutral? Does the picture destroy the ambiguity?)

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?



# Connotation

## 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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.

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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 student 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# 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 H<sub>2</sub>O 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

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### 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 sohhelpmegod 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.

Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Richard Cory.” Public Domain.

# Sound

## 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 poofer. Have them decide if poofer 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





## **“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.

Carl Sandburg, "The Harbor." Reprinted with permission, Barbara Hogenson Agency, Inc. New York, NY.

# “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 whiffing 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.

# Repetition

## 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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.

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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**

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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.

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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.



# Enjambéd Lines and Word Placement

## 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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 enjambéd 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.

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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

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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.



Pieter Breughel's "The Kermess"

## "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.

# Imagery

## 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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.

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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**

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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 break\* 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.

William Stafford, “Traveling Through the Dark” from *The Way It Is: New and Selected Poems*. Copyright © 1998 by the Estate of William Stafford. Reprinted with the permissions Company, Inc. on behalf of Graywolf Press, Minneapolis, Minn., [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

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# "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,  
Curled round a bough of the  
Cinnamon tall....  
Now to get even and  
Humble proud heaven and  
Now was the moment or  
Never at all.

"Eva!" Each syllable  
Light as a flower fell,  
"Eva!" he whispered the  
Wondering maid,

Soft as a bubble sung  
Out of a linnet's lung,  
Soft and most silverly  
"Eva!" he said.

Picture that orchard sprite;  
Eve, with her body white,  
Supple and smooth to her  
Slim finger tips;  
Wondering, listening,  
Listening, wondering,  
Eve with a berry  
Half-way to her lips.

Oh, had our simple Eve  
Seen through the make-believe!  
Had she but known the  
Pretender he was!  
Out of the boughs he came,  
Whispering still her name,  
Tumbling in twenty rings  
Into the grass.

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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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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.

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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

Well you walk into a restaurant,  
 Strung out from the road  
 And you feel the eyes upon you  
 As you're shakin' off the cold  
 You pretend it doesn't bother you  
 But you just want to explode

Most times you can't hear 'em talk,  
 Other times you can  
 All the same old cliches,  
 "Is that a woman or a man?"  
 And you always seem outnumbered,  
 You don't dare make a stand

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've 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've still goin', honey,  
I've still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.



# Hyperbole and Understatement

## 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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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

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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**

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

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luv'e am I:  
And I will luv'e 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 luv'e thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only Luv'e  
And fare thee well, a while!  
And I will come again, my Luv'e,  
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.

# Juliet's Lines From "Romeo and Juliet"

By William Shakespeare

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

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

1. Pass out note-taking materials.
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 16<sup>th</sup>-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**

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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.

Carl Sandburg, "Fog." Reprinted with permission from Barbara Hogenson Agency, Inc. New York, NY.

# **“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.

Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death." Public Domain.

# **“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.



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emotion  
**More** words  
language **Than**  
**Rhyme:** verse  
creative  
thoughts  
hopes sound lyric **Poetry** imagery  
dreams identity **Fundamentals**  
inspiration  
discovery

# Applying the Tools



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# 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.

<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Poetic tools</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Extension</b>
Paper is neat, grammatically sound, and mechanically correct.	Tools are identified correctly.	Reasoning is fully explained and correct.	The attempt to be very clear is made by giving original examples or correlations to other areas.
Paper makes the attempt to be all of the above.	Most tools are identified correctly.	There are some holes in the reasoning or some incorrect thoughts.	There is some attempt to clarify through additional examples.
Paper does not show effort in presentation.	Few tools are identified correctly.	Not enough explanation is present to determine student understanding.	No attempt to extend thinking beyond immediate assignment is obvious.

---

# 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# 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

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## student handout

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 enjambéd 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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