INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING STUDENTS’ POETRY
COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION IN ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)
ENGLISH LITERATURE & COMPOSITION

by
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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Education

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PROJECT SUMMARY

My capstone project focuses on identifying and explicating instructional techniques that improve comprehension and interpretation of poetry for students in Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature & Composition. Thus, my research question is: “What instructional techniques improve comprehension and interpretation of poetry for students in Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature & Composition?”

These instructional techniques were thoroughly researched in a literature review and then integrated into a two-week unit. The purpose of the two-week unit is to introduce senior AP English Literature & Composition students to poetry at the beginning of fall semester; this unit will then serve as a solid foundation for deeper poetry analysis that should happen throughout the rest of the school year. As such, this project should be a useful tool for high school English teachers, particularly those who are new to teaching this specific AP course.

The unit plan is based on Wiggins & McTighe’s Understanding by Design (2005). On the first page of the unit plan is the “view from 30,000 feet”: Stages One, Two, and Three. Stage One details what I want students to learn in the unit, both in terms of academic skills and enduring understandings students will carry with them outside of my classroom and after graduation. Stage Two describes the unit (summative) assessment as well as identifies smaller, formative assessments. Stage Three indicates that the learning plan can be found on the subsequent pages.

The learning plan consists of a unit overview and individual lessons; each lesson has distinct learning targets and follows the same format: warm-up, lesson, and wrap-up. Research-based instructional techniques for teaching poetry have been integrated
throughout. All unit resources (e.g. copies of poems, handouts, etc.) can be found at the end of this document; they have been pre-formatted so that the teacher can simply print them.
# Project

## Introduction to Poetry

AP English Literature & Composition, grade 12

Two weeks

### Stage 1 - Desired Results

**Established Goal(s):**

- “CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).
- “CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2: Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).
- “CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors)” (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).
- Analyze how poetic devices and other choices (e.g. structure) contribute to the meaning of the work.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding(s):</th>
<th>Essential Question(s):</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students will understand that...</strong></td>
<td>1. What is poetry?</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Poetry is a literary genre primarily defined by its goal of conveying a human experience in a condensed form.</td>
<td>2. How do poets create meaning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Poets convey human experiences by using a variety of writing techniques, which create meaning.</td>
<td>3. What strategies can readers use to identify potential meanings of poems?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Readers must use a variety of strategies to unfold potential meanings of poems.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skill</th>
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<td><strong>Students will know...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Students will be able to...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Definition of poetry.</td>
<td>1. Identify various literary terms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Definitions of various literary terms: diction, denotation, connotation, imagery (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, organic, kinesthetic), stanza, structure, shift, euphony, cacophony, alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhythm, meter, foot, iamb, trochee, anapest, spondee. (listed at the left) in poems.
2. Analyze how various literary terms (listed at the left) work to create meaning in poems.
3. Use a variety of strategies to unfold potential meanings of poems.

**Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence**

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<thead>
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<th>Performance Task(s):</th>
<th>Other Evidence:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem annotation and analysis assignment (see Unit Resources).</td>
<td>1. Verbal responses to a variety of questions (warm-up, review, large-group analysis, etc.).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Poem annotations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Written responses to poems.</td>
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<td>4. Imitation writing.</td>
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**Stage 3 - Learning Plan**

**Learning Activities:**
A unit overview and individual lesson plans are detailed on subsequent pages.
Unit Overview

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<td>Annotation practice</td>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>Imitation writing</td>
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<td>Day 6</td>
<td>Day 7</td>
<td>Day 8</td>
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<td>Sound</td>
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<td>Peer review</td>
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Individual Lessons

LESSON #1 - INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

Learning Target(s):
- Define poetry (as separate from prose).
- Evaluate approaches to reading poetry.
- Identify strategies for reading poetry.

Lesson Timeline:
- **Warm-up:**
  - (As homework, have students find and bring in ~10-20 lines from a song in which the lyrics are meaningful.) Prompt students to share their lyrics with one another and discuss what, exactly, makes those words meaningful. Also discuss how the other components of the song (e.g. rhythm, key, structure, etc.) emphasize that meaning.
  - Transition: Explain that poetry has its roots in song; the earliest poems were likely epic/lyrical poems that were sung. Things that make songs meaningful are oftentimes similar to what makes poems meaningful, e.g. sound and meaning that are seamlessly united. There are also different criteria for what makes a good song, just as there are different criteria for poetry’s effectiveness.

- **Lesson:**
  - Provide a definition of poetry as separate from prose (see Understanding #1), and address misconceptions that arise (e.g. that poetry is just defined by line breaks, it always rhymes, etc.).
  - Read “Introduction to Poetry” by Billy Collins (see Unit Resources) out loud as a large group. Conduct a think-aloud that demonstrates how Collins provides advice on how to read poetry. Connect this back to the “poetry as song” metaphor: explain that some songs have great beats and are meant to be enjoyed on the dance floor, just as some descriptive or narrative poems are meant to be enjoyed on more of a “surface” level; some songs, in contrast, have deeper meanings hidden in the lyrics and song components, just as other poems are meant to have richer, more profound concepts and technical features. Transition into discussing how to “discover” meaning within poetry. Generate a quick verbal list of reading strategies.
○ Read through the “How to Read Poetry” (see Unit Resources) handout as a large group.
○ Application (start in class and finish as homework): conduct a close read “Discovery of the New World” by Carter Revard and apply some of the strategies detailed on the handout in preparation for a large-group discussion next class period.

● Wrap-up:
  ○ Exit ticket: write down one thing you learned today about poetry and one question you still have about poetry or reading poetry.

● Homework:
  ○ Read through the unit final assessment assignment sheet. Bring in any questions to class.

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**LESSON #2 - ANNOTATION PRACTICE**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Describe appropriate methods of annotation.
- Annotate a poem, tying literary techniques to meaning.
- Interpret the poem for meaning, based on annotations.

**Lesson Timeline:**

● **Warm-up:**
  ○ Address any questions about the unit final assessment.
  ○ Small group discussion:
    - Review answers to the questions below the poem.
  ○ Transition: “Today we will learn about a practice that will help you analyze the poem as you read. How many of you have gotten to the end of a page of reading and have no idea what you just read? This is largely because your eyes are going over the words, but you are not actively processing the words and thoughts you are reading. This technique can help prevent that.”

● **Lesson:**
  ○ Describe annotation, tying it back to forms of annotation they practiced in their previous course, AP English Language & Composition. Explain that, instead of describing the rhetorical strategies writers/speakers use to fulfill a purpose, they will focus on how authors use poetic techniques to create meaning.
  ○ Read through “How to Annotate Poetry” handout (see Unit Resources). Discuss the features of the annotations on the model poem. Through this discussion, set expectations for the annotations students will complete both in and out of class.
  ○ Conduct a collaborative annotation session as a large group; the think-aloud strategy can be used as needed. Students should follow along with the large group while adding their annotations to their copies of “Discovery of the New World” by Carter Revard.

● **Wrap-up:**
Discuss the value of the annotation exercise (e.g. close reading helps readers notice new details within poems, identifying literary techniques helps readers describe how writers create meanings, etc.).

- **Homework:**
  - Choose a poem for the unit final assessment.

### LESSON #3 - DICTION

**Learning Target(s):**
- Define diction.
- Contrast denotation and connotation through examples.
- Analyze a poem for multiple denotations and connotations, explaining how these nuances add to the poem’s total meaning and overall effect.

**Lesson Timeline:**
- **Warm-up:**
  - Have students create a thirty-second skit that demonstrates the difference between denotation and connotation. The skit should involve showing the same situation or scenario, but changes one key word to another with matching or overlapping denotations but different connotations. (For example, “party” and “affair,” or “fingers” and “phalanges.”)
  - Transition: explain to students that they will read a poem today that makes skillful use of multiple denotations and connotation.
- **Lesson:**
  - Break into small groups. Hand out a copy of “Sonnet 138” by William Shakespeare (see Unit Resources). Allot ~20 minutes for them to close read/annotate/prepare for a large-group discussion on the poem.
  - Review answers as a large group. Emphasize how the multiple denotations and connotations add richness to the poem and nuance its potential meanings.
- **Wrap-up:**
  - Have students compose a one-sentence thesis statement that answers the prompt, “Identify a potential thematic meaning of ‘Sonnet 138’ and which poetic devices Shakespeare uses to communicate that meaning.”
- **Homework:**
  - Read *Perrine’s Literature: Structure, Sound & Sense* (AP edition) chapter 4. Take notes on the different types of imagery and be able to summarize the analyses of Browning’s two poems: “Meeting at Night” and “Parting at Morning.”
  - Work on the unit final assessment.

### LESSON #4 - IMAGERY

**Learning Target(s):**
- Identify various types of imagery (visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactile, organic, kinesthetic) in poetry.
- Analyze how imagery impacts meaning in poetry.
Lesson Timeline:
- **Warm-up:**
  - Choose an upcoming holiday or the current month and have students generate at least two images of each type based on that holiday or month (e.g. for Halloween, a tactile image might be the slimy feeling of pumpkin guts).
  - Transition: Today we will read a poem that depends heavily on imagery as well as other literary devices you’re familiar with. Our poem is called “Harlem” by Langston Hughes, who was a poet from the Harlem Renaissance (which was a literary movement you studied last year).
- **Lesson:**
  - Review the historical context and features of the Harlem Renaissance, and introduce Langston Hughes.
  - Read “Harlem” (see Unit Resources) out loud. Have students focus on reading closely and annotating for imagery (identifying images, classifying them, and analyzing them for meaning).
  - Review their findings in a large-group discussion.
  - Introduce the “Harlem” imitation assignment (see Unit Resources). Give students time to work on it. Have them bring in a draft for the next lesson.
- **Wrap-up:**
  - Briefly review the various types of imagery.
  - Conduct a short Q&A session on the “Harlem” imitation assignment, if needed.
- **Homework:**
  - Draft a “Harlem” imitation poem for the next lesson. Come in with a printed copy.
  - Work on the unit final assessment.

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**LESSON #5 - IMITATION WRITING**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Compose a poem that imitates a professional model.
- Evaluate a peer’s poem and provide constructive feedback.
- Revise and edit the poem based on peer feedback.

**Lesson Timeline:**
- **Warm-up:**
  - On the bottom of the printed draft of your poem, jot down the main challenges you faced while writing and what writing problems you’d like to have your peer help you resolve.
- **Lesson:**
  - Review the tenets of an effective peer review.
  - Read through the peer review sheet together as a large group.
  - Students should then find a partner, swap drafts, generate comments, and hold constructive conversations. If they finish early, they should start the revising/editing process.
○ Address any patterns you notice, good questions, etc. that will help guide students toward better drafts.

● **Wrap-up:**
  ○ Exit ticket: Reflect on writing the poem. What was the experience like? How did this exercise affect your understanding of poetry?

● **Homework:**
  ○ Revise/edit your imitation poem. Submit the polished copy to the dropbox on Finalsite before the next lesson.
  ○ Work on the unit final assessment.

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**LESSON #6 - STRUCTURE AND SHIFTS**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Determine structures and identify shifts in poems.
- Analyze how structure and shifts contribute to the overall effect of the poem.

**Lesson Timeline:**

● **Warm-up:**
  ○ Play a song that contains a shift (key shift, another type, or both), such as The Beatles’ “Hey Jude.” Have students listen and try to identify the various shifts within the song, whether they are simply from the verse to the bridge to the refrain, or whether the shift presents a more major turn within the song. Discuss potential purposes for the shifts.

  ○ Transition: add to the “poetry as song” metaphor: just as songs contain shifts for various reasons, so do poems. Explain that, in small groups, they will be identifying the structure and shifts within the poems they have already read.

● **Lesson:**
  ○ Split students into small groups. Each group should work to identify the overall structure and any shifts within all four poems they have read so far (“Introduction to Poetry” by Billy Collins, “Discovery of the New World” by Carter Revard, “Sonnet 138” by William Shakespeare, and “Harlem” by Langston Hughes). Students should be prepared to explain where the shift(s) occur(s), how they were able to identify the shift(s), and what each section of the poem accomplishes rhetorically.

    ▪ Have each small group elect a leader to share out findings with the large group.

  ○ Discuss how 1) some structures/shifts are prescribed based on the poetic form while others are not, and 2) shifts can sometimes be identified by keywords (that typically indicate contrast, like “but” or “however) or other devices (e.g. stanza breaks, punctuation, rhyme scheme).

  ○ If there is any time remaining, students should work on identifying the structure and any shifts within the poem they chose for their unit final assessment.

● **Wrap-up:**
  ○ If not prompted before, encourage students to work on identifying the structure and any shifts within the poem they chose for their unit final
**LESSON #7 - SOUND**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Identify various components of sound within poems.
- Compare and contrast how various components of sound create different poetic effects in two poems.

**Lesson Timeline:**
- **Warm-up:**
  - Explain that you will play excerpts from two musical selections; while listening, students should jot down ideas on how sound/aspects of the music create mood. Play thirty seconds of “Morning Mood” and “In the Hall of the Mountain King” from Grieg’s *Peer Gynt*. Hold a brief discussion on the different musical aspects and moods.
  - Transition: Just like we can analyze the sounds within songs for mood, today we will be comparing and contrasting the sound qualities within two Walt Whitman poems: “I Hear America Singing” and “Beat! Beat! Drums!” Instead of just focusing on mood, we will analyze how sound underscores content and meaning.

- **Lesson:**
  - First, have students read the poem silently to get an idea for the poem and its content. Then play reading performances of both poems (or simply read them aloud). As students listen, they should follow along with their poem and mark anything they notice as significant in terms of sound.
  - Break students into small groups and have them collaboratively complete the graphic organizer (see Unit Resources).

- **Wrap-up:**
  - Debrief on students’ findings, paying particular attention to their analyses tying sound to content/meaning.

- **Homework:**
  - Read *Sound & Sense* chapter 12, “Rhythm and Meter” and fill out the guided note page.
  - Work on the unit final assessment.

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**LESSON #8 - RHYTHM AND METER**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Identify various forms of meter in poetry.
- Analyze how meter relates to the content of poems.

**Lesson Timeline:**
**Warm-up:**
- Read first three stanzas of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ballad “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” and all of e.e. cummings’ (“dim/i/nu/tiv...”). Ask students to reflect on the differences in rhythm between the two.
- Transition: Some poems have a specific rhythm and meter to create a song-like quality; this is common in odes, lyrics, sonnets, and ballads (like “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”). Other poems lack a set rhythm and meter. Today we will explore what rhythm and meter can add to a poem’s meaning and effect. Before delving into a full poem, we need to first ensure that we understood meter and its different types by completing some exercises.

**Lesson:**
- Have students use their guided note page to complete several meter exercises (see Unit Resources). Debrief answers as a class, asking students to justify their choices and marking the unstressed and stressed syllables on the poems on the SMARTBoard.
- As a large group, read Linda Pastan’s “To a Daughter Leaving Home.” Discuss the relationship of the title to the poem, and the two questions below the text. Ultimately return back to the idea of rhythm and meter.

**Wrap-up:**
- If there is time, have students apply their new knowledge of rhythm and meter to the poem they selected for their unit assessment.

**Homework:**
- Work on the unit final assessment. A solid draft is due the next lesson (hard/paper copy).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LESSON #9 - PEER REVIEW</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Target(s):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Evaluate a peer’s work and provide constructive feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Revise and edit work based on peer feedback.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson Timeline:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● <strong>Warm-up:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Ask what challenges students have run into while working on their solid drafts. Conduct a quick “challenge-solution” discussion in the large group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● <strong>Lesson:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Review the rubric together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Students should choose two peers they feel comfortable with, swap assessments, and conduct their peer review according to the handout (see Unit Resources).</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Once they are done, they may start working on revisions and edits to their assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● <strong>Wrap-up:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>○ In the large group, take any final questions or relay answers to good questions students asked during the period. Reiterate that the polished</td>
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copy is due tomorrow in paper form.

- **Homework:**
  - Revise the unit final assessment based on peer feedback. Polished copy (paper copy) due tomorrow.

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**LESSON #10 - ASSESSMENT SHARING AND REFLECTION**

**Learning Target(s):**
- Examine and discuss peers’ assessments.
- Reflect on the unit project and goals.

**Lesson Timeline:**

- **Warm-up:**
  - Congratulate students on completing their poetry projects, and explain that they will be showing off their excellent work today much like work is displayed in an art gallery.

- **Lesson:**
  - Number off students 1, 2, 1, 2, etc. Group 1 will set up their “poetry gallery” (i.e. station themselves around the room) and prepare to present their poem and analysis to “museum goers” (group 2) who will visit their gallery.
  - As “museum goers” visit, they must fill out the top half of their reflection sheet (see Unit Resources).
  - After about 10-15 minutes, group 1 and group 2 should swap (so that, now, group 2 sets up their “poetry gallery” while group 1 acts as “museum goers”).
  - Once both groups have had the chance to present and listen, have them complete the bottom half of their reflection sheet.

- **Wrap-up:**
  - If there is time, briefly discuss the questions on the bottom half of their reflection sheet.

- **Homework:**
  - None.
UNIT RESOURCES

What is included:

1. Copies of all poems:
   ○ “Introduction to Poetry” by Billy Collins
   ○ “Discovery of the New World” by Carter Revard
   ○ “Sonnet 138” by William Shakespeare
   ○ “Harlem” by Langston Hughes
   ○ “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman
   ○ “Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman
   ○ “To a Daughter Leaving Home” by Linda Pastan
2. “How to Read Poetry” handout
3. “How to Annotate Poetry” handout
4. “Harlem” imitation assignment
5. “Harlem” imitation assignment: peer review sheet
6. Sound: compare and contrast, graphic organizer
7. Rhythm and meter guided note page
8. Rhythm and meter exercises
9. Final assessment peer review sheet
10. Final assessment assignment sheet
11. Final assessment reflection sheet
“Introduction to Poetry” by Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem’s room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author’s name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

they begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.
“Discovery of the New World” by Carter Revard

The creatures that we met this morning marveled at our green skins and scarlet eyes. They lack antennae and can’t be made to grasp your proclamation that they are our lawful food and prey and slaves, nor can they seem to learn their body-space is needed to materialize our oxygen absorbers – which they conceive are breathing and thinking creatures whom they implore at first as angels or (later) as devils when they are being snuffed out by an absorber swelling into their space.

Their history bled from one this morning while we were tasting his brain in holographic rainbows which we assembled into quite an interesting set of legends – that’s all it came to, though the colors were quite lovely before we poured them into our time; the blue shift bleached away meaningless circumstance and they would not fit any of our truth-matrices – there was, however, a curious visual echo in their history of our own coming to their earth; a certain General Sherman had said concerning a group of them exactly what we were saying to you about these creatures: it is our destiny to asterize this planet, and they will not be asterized, so they must be wiped out.

We need their space and oxygen which they do not know how to use,
yet they will not give up their gas unforced,
and we feel sure,
whatever our “agreements” made this morning,
we’ll have to kill them all:
the more we cook this orbit,
the fewer next time around.
We’ve finished burning all their crops
and killed their cattle.
They’ll have to come into our pens
and then we’ll get to study
the way our heart attacks and cancers spread
among them,
since they seem not immune to these.
If we didn’t have this mission it might be sad
to see such helpless creatures die,
but never fear,
the riches of this place are ours
and worth whatever pain others may have to feel.
We’ll soon have it cleared
as in fact it is already, at the poles.
Then we will be safe, and rich, and happy here
forever.
"Sonnet 138" by William Shakespeare

Instructions:
1. Read the poem aloud.
2. Divide the poem into three quatrains (four line chunks) and a final couplet.
   Identify the main idea and/or rhetorical purpose of each quatrain and the couplet.
3. Use a dictionary to look up the following words. You should notice how the
   multiple denotations add richness and complexity to the poem.*
   - "vainly" (5)
   - "simple" (8) and "Simply" (7)
   - "habit" (11)
   - "told" (12)
   - "lie" (13)
4. Note connotations of other important words and phrases, e.g. "swears" (1),
   "untutored youth" (3), "subtleties" (4), etc.
5. Look at the poem as a whole. What are some different interpretations of what the
   speaker might be saying?

   When my love swears that she is made of truth,
   I do believe her, though I know she lies,
   That she might think me some untutored youth,
   Unlearnèd in the world’s false subtleties.
   Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
   Although she knows my days are past the best,
   Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
   On both sides thus is simple truth suppressed.
   But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
   And wherefore say not I that I am old?
   Oh, love’s best habit is in seeming trust,
   And age in love loves not to have years told.
   Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
   And in our faults by lies we flattered be.

*Adapted from Arp & Johnson’s Sound & Sense (2015).
What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

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

“Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman
Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying,
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he have now with his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field or gathering his grain,
So fierce you thirr and pound you drums—so shrill you bugles blow.
Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers’ bargains by day—no brokers or speculators—would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder blow.
Beat! beat! drums!—blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child’s voice be heard, nor the mother’s entreaties,
Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums—so loud you bugles blow.
“To a Daughter Leaving Home” by Linda Pastan

When I taught you
at eight to ride
a bicycle, loping along
beside you
as you wobbled away
on two round wheels,
my own mouth rounding
in surprise when you pulled
ahead down the curved
path of the park,
I kept waiting
for the thud
of your crash as I
sprinted to catch up,
while you grew
smaller, more breakable
with distance,
pumping, pumping
for your life, screaming
with laughter,
the hair flapping
behind you like a
handkerchief waving
goodbye.

1. Describe the rhythm of the poem as you read it out loud. How might this rhythm mirror the subject matter of the poem?

2. Read the poem written as prose (see below). What poetic effect has been lost? Which of the original line ends are particularly important to meaning and feeling?*

Prose version
When I taught you at eight to ride a bicycle, loping along beside you as you wobbled away on two round wheels, my own mouth rounding in surprise when you pulled ahead down the curved path of the park, I kept waiting for the thud of your crash as I sprinted to catch up, while you grew smaller, more breakable with distance, pumping, pumping for your life, screaming with laughter, the hair flapping behind you like a handkerchief waving goodbye.

*Taken from Arp & Johnson’s Sound & Sense (2015).
How to Read Poetry

How you read poetry should be determined by your purpose; reading for enjoyment is, after all, different than reading for analysis. For the purposes of this class, we will practice both, but will primarily concentrate on building skills to accomplish the latter.

Successful poetry analysis requires utilizing a variety of methods and skills. Though applicability of methods will vary by poem, try doing the following:

● Read the title. Anticipate what the poem may be about before reading. After reading, determine how the title relates to the poem’s content.

● Read the poem out loud. Remember to continue reading across line breaks, pausing/stopping mainly for punctuation.
  ○ Chunk meaning by sentences versus lines.
  ○ Listen to the sounds - are they mostly vowel-based and “pretty sounding”? Are there harsh, hard consonant sounds? How do these relate to the subject matter of the poem?

● Identify the speaker, audience, and occasion, much like you would a piece of rhetoric or a short story. Who is “saying” the poem? Is this person addressing anyone in particular? What seems to be the situation presented in the poem?

● Paraphrase the poem. Translate the highly poetic phrasing into simpler language, while doing your best to maintain the original meaning.
  ○ Keep a lookout for literary techniques you already know: metaphor, simile, personification, allusion, symbol, paradox, irony, etc.

● Look up words and references you don’t know. If there are words that seem particularly significant, use the dictionary to see if there are multiple denotations.

● Identify the poem’s structure. What does each stanza or section say and/or accomplish? Are there shifts in the poem?

● From a conceptual perspective, try answering the question, “What is this poem about?”

● Identify the purpose and central idea of the poem.
How to Annotate Poetry

The general expectation is that you will use your reading skills and knowledge of literary techniques to show your thinking on the page. Remember: the ultimate question you should ask yourself is, "How does the author use literary devices to create meaning?"

Implicit in that question is, of course, what is that meaning?

Meaning can be thematic; meaning can also signify what is asked of you in the prompt (e.g. “the relationship between the family and the black walnut tree” from the 2013 essay #1 prompt).

Devices to consider

- Structure
- Metaphor/simile
- Diction
- Denotation
- Connotation
- Imagery
- Repetition
- Tone
- Symbol
- Rhyme
- Meter*
- Allusion
- Shifts
- Alliteration
- Euphony*
- Cacophony*
- Assonance*
- Consonance*
- Onomatopoeia
- Personification
- Hyperbole
- Understatement
- Irony
- Oxymoron
- Paradox

*Devices I do not expect you know right now, but that you will learn over the course of this introduction unit. For a full list, you're welcome to check out our literary-rhetorical terms list that was handed out the first day of class, along with the syllabus.

See the model on the next page.
AP LITERATURE: POETRY ANNOTATION MODELS

"SONNET XV" by William Shakespeare

When I consider every thing that grows

Holds in perfection but a little moment,

That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows

Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;

When I perceive that men as plants increase,

Cheered and chequed even by the self-same sky,

Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,

And wear their bravé state out of memory;

Then the conceit of this inconstant stay

Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,

Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay.

To change your day of youth to sullied night,

And all in war with Time for love of you,

As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

Potential Themes

- Human life is both cyclical and unpredictable
- Life is fleeting but people can become immortalized through writing
- Youth is the prime of life, but it leaves far too quickly
- Human attempt to wage war against "Time" and "Decay," but will always lose the physical battle
“Harlem” Imitation Assignment

Using Hughes’ “Harlem” as a foundation, compose a poem that poses a question at the beginning, and attempts to answer that question through a series of similes. The question should be, “What happens to <adjective + abstract concept>? ”

Use “Harlem” and our analysis of it to guide your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model (student-produced, 2017)</th>
<th>Essential structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happens to knowledge absorbed?</td>
<td>What happens to ________?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it lie like a rug?</td>
<td>Does it ________ like ________? A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or fly around carelessly like a bug?</td>
<td>Or ________ like ________? A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it find a home?</td>
<td>Does it _______________? B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or die like a cell phone?</td>
<td>Or _______________ like _______________? B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe it just sleeps like an old man.</td>
<td>Maybe it just ________ like _______________. C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or does it have a plan?</td>
<td>Or _______________? C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ideas

Abstract nouns/concepts

- Pride
- Loyalty
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Success
- Deceit
- Beauty
- Love
- Truth
- Faith
- Liberty
- Knowledge
- Culture
- Information
- Progress
- Education
- Friendships

Adjectives based on verbs

- Adventure
- Sacrifice
- Curiosity
- Happiness
- Luck
- Wisdom
- Hate
- Evaporated
- Absorbed
- Shamed
- Unchecked
- Forgotten
- Blinded
- Broken
- Measured
- Celebrated
- Damaged
- Deceived
- Deprived
- Disguised
- Distorted
- Dominated
- Forsaken
- Imagined
- Hushed
- Idealized
- Jaded
- Muted
- Exploded
- Applauded
- Awakened
- Coveted
- Coveted
- Feared
“Harlem” Imitation Assignment: Peer Review

Your name: _________________________    Partner: __________________________

Remember the components of effective peer review:

- Positive and constructive comments are needed.
- A good peer reviewer does not simply respond “yes” or “no” to questions. He or she gives specific feedback and comments on the effectiveness of the writing.

Before your conversation with your partner, read his or her poem and the handwritten notes describing what he or she wants help with. Then reflect on the following:

1. Does the poem have a title that reflects its content?
2. Does the writer choose an appropriate abstract concept and adjective?
3. Does the writer follow the essential structure of “Harlem”?
4. Do the similes present different outcomes/scenarios related to the question posed in the first line? Are they primarily image-based?
5. Does the last line pack a punch?
6. Where is the word choice particularly effective? Where could it be stronger?
7. Overall, what does the writer do well? What could be improved?

Have your conversation. Be sure to start with a positive comment or two!

Once you have both given feedback, start the revising/editing process. Final copies (electronic to the dropbox on Finalsite) are due before the next lesson.
Sound: Compare and Contrast

**Instructions:** Identify sound qualities in both “I Hear America Singing” and “Beat! Beat! Drums!” by Walt Whitman. Record your findings below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“I Hear America Singing”</th>
<th>“Beat! Beat! Drums!”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How does each poem use sound devices to complement its content/meaning?
**Sound & Sense “Rhythm and Meter” (ch. 12) Guided Notes**

**THEORY**
- “Rhythm is _______ to our lives, from the way our _____________ to the way we _________.”
- What is one major difference between prose and verse?
- “Rhythmic effects depend almost entirely on __________.”
- What is rhythm based on? How is it created?
- What is the difference between rhythm and meter? Explain the architecture analogy in your response.

**TERMS**
- **Rhythm:** Any ______________ recurrence of motion or sound. In speech it is the natural ______________ of language.

  **Types of stress**
  - **Accented/Stressed:** A syllable that is given more prominence in pronunciation than the rest.
  - **Rhetorical Stresses:** Accenting/stressing certain words or syllables to make our intentions clear.

  **Types of stops**
  - **End-stopped line:** one in which the end of the line corresponds with a natural speech pause
  - **Run-on line:** one in which the sense of the line moves on without pause into the next line.
  - **Caesura:** a _______ that occurs within a line, either grammatical or rhetorical

  **Types of poetry**
  - **Free Verse:** the basic rhythmic unit and predominating type of poetry being written; no ______ rhythm or rhyme (doesn’t mean it doesn’t have some type of rhythm)
  - **Blank verse:** __________________________
  - **Prose poem:** depends entirely on ordinary prose rhythms
Meter

- **Meter**: when ____________ of language are so arranged as to occur at apparently equal intervals of time (i.e. we can tap our foot to it)
- **Foot**: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foot</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trochee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anapest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dactyl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spondee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Number of Feet**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feet</th>
<th>One foot</th>
<th>Four feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two feet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Five feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three feet</td>
<td></td>
<td>Six feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Line**: second basic unit of measurement in metrical verse
- **Stanza**: third unit of measurement; a group of lines whose metrical pattern is repeated throughout the poem

- **Metrical variations**: meter that departs from what is regular. Three means:
  - ______________________: replacing the regular foot with another one
  - ______________________: added at beginnings or endings of lines
  - ______________________: omission of an unaccented syllable at either end of a line

- **Scansion**: process of defining the metrical form of a poem. 1) identify prevailing foot, 2) name number of feet in the line, 3) describe the stanzaic pattern.
Rhythm and Meter Exercises

Instructions: Read the lines below and identify their meter. This will require you to read the line aloud to “feel” its meter. Mark the syllables with a breve ( ¯ ) for unstressed and ictus ( ’ ) for stressed, and write down both the name of the foot and the number of feet (e.g. trochaic trimeter).

#1 - “The Aim Was Song” by Robert Frost
   Before man came to blow to right
   The wind once blew itself untaught,
   And did its loudest day and night
   In any rough place where it caught.

#2 - “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” by John Donne
   Come live with me and be my love,
   And we will all the pleasures prove,

#3 - “The Solitude of Andrew Selkirk” by William Cowper
   From the centre all round to the sea,
   I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

#4 - “A Psalm of Life” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
   Special note: pay particular attention to lines 1 and 3. Lines 2 and 4 are, by one syllable, truncated ← one of your vocab words from this chapter.)

   Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
   Life is but an empty dream!
   For the soul is dead that slumbers,
   And things are not what they seem.
Peer Review: Introduction to Poetry Unit Assessment

Your name: ____________________    Group Member #1: ____________________
Group Member #2: ____________________

Remember the components of effective peer review:
● Positive and constructive comments are needed.
● A good peer reviewer does not simply respond “yes” or “no” to questions. He or she gives specific feedback and comments on the effectiveness of the writing.

Before your conversation with your partner:

1. Read the poem before the annotations.
2. Using different color sticky notes/tabs, mark annotations that are:
   ○ Spot on in connecting literary techniques to meaning.
   ○ Partially complete (e.g. might identify a device but not how it’s important or what it does).
   ○ Missed opportunities (i.e. something not commented on, but is important to the overall understanding of the poem).
3. Skim through the graphic organizer, paying particular attention to the analysis column and the thematic ideas row.
   ○ Note any successes and revisions/edits you might make.
Have your conversation. Be sure to start with a positive comment or two!

Once you have given feedback, swap one more time (with your third group member). Again, have a conversation that starts with a positive comment or two.

Then you may start the revising/editing process. Final copies (paper/hard) are due at the beginning of the next lesson.
Introduction to Poetry: Unit Assessment

Task overview
For this unit assessment, you will using your close reading skills and new knowledge of poetic techniques to both annotate and analyze a poem of your choice from the list below. (With teacher approval, you may select a different poem of comparable literary merit that is not on the list.) Please do not conduct outside research on your poem; we will have the opportunity to read literary criticism with future selections and assignments.

Poem list
- “Brown Circle” by Louise Glück
- “Storm Warnings” by Adrienne Rich
- “Naming Myself” by Barbara Kingsolver
- “Ego Tripping (there may be a reason why)” by Nikki Giovanni
- “Hanging Fire” by Audre Lorde
- “A Blessing” by James Wright
- “On the Amtrak from Boston to New York City” by Sherman Alexie
- “Cartoon Physics, part 1” by Nick Flynn

Part 1: Annotations
Print off a copy of the poem you have chosen. The printed copy must be exact, i.e. reflect the spacing, stanza breaks, etc. of the published poem.

Use the “How to Annotate Poetry” handout (including the model), your experience annotating, and the requirements detailed on the rubric to complete this portion of the project.

For easy identification, literary terms should be either written in a color or highlighted; other commentary and connections to meaning should be written in black pen or pencil.

Part 2: Analysis
Create a table in a Word document like the one you see below. This table will allow you to synthesize the usage of dominant devices and show how those individual devices, when added together, help formulate a poem’s overall message.

In the “Description” column, describe the features on the left as they pertain to the poem. For example, for “rhetorical situation,” I would identify and describe the speaker, audience, and context, as much as possible. In the “diction” row, I would identify specific words within the poem that make special contributions to its effect, whether that is through multiple denotations, connotations, or both.

In the “Analysis” column, analyze how those features help create meaning within the poem. For example, in the “imagery” row, I might note that the Keats’ use of auditory imagery in the last stanza of his poem “To Autumn” is used to emphasize the beauty and fecundity present in the fall season.
The last row, “Thematic ideas,” is a place to identify at least two potential meanings of the work. Remember that “meaning” does not mean “topic”!

***Note: certain poems will emphasize specific devices over others; hence your rows may not be equally weighted, so to speak. It is your job as a reader to read closely and evaluate the importance of the techniques to the overall piece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure and Shifts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm and Meter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thematic ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Rubric

## Part 1: Annotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Advanced** | High-quality annotations include a multiplicity of literary devices; thorough explanations connect devices to meaning. Several annotations explore multiple meanings, showing consideration of various possibilities.  
Annotations display deep, critical thought about the poem. They acknowledge the complexities of the piece and do not oversimplify its contents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| **Proficient** | High-quality annotations include a multiplicity of literary devices; explanations connect devices to meaning.  
Annotations display critical thought about the poem; there may be a couple missed opportunities for deeper thinking. In general, they acknowledge the complexities of the piece and do not oversimplify its contents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| **Developing** | Quality annotations include several literary devices; partial explanations connect devices to meaning.  
Annotations display critical thought about the poem, but there may be several missed opportunities for deeper thinking.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| **Not sufficient** | Annotations are not AP quality; literary vocabulary is not used consistently; few or no explanations connect devices to meaning.  
Annotations display some thought about the poem, but ideas are either sparse, superficial, present misreads, or focus on reader response versus literary analysis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## Part 2: Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| **Advanced** | Descriptions are accurate are thorough; evidence is selected well and represents the poem as a whole.  
Analysis, like the annotations, links devices to meaning. It explores multiple meanings, showing consideration of various possibilities. They also display deep, critical thought about the poem. They acknowledge the complexities of the piece and do not oversimplify its contents.  
Thematic ideas are supported by the poem’s content and techniques, and show outstanding interpretive abilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| **Proficient** | Descriptions are accurate and mostly thorough; evidence is selected and represents the poem as a whole.  
Analysis, like the annotations, links devices to meaning. It displays critical thought about the poem, though there may be a couple missed opportunities for deeper thinking. In general, it acknowledges the complexities of the piece and does not oversimplify the poem’s contents.  
Thematic ideas are supported by the poem’s content and techniques, and move beyond superficial interpretations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Developing | ● Descriptions are mostly accurate but perhaps not thorough; evidence is selected and somewhat represents the poem as a whole.  
● Analysis, like the annotations, provides partial connections between devices and meaning. It displays critical thought about the poem, but there may be several missed opportunities for deeper thinking.  
● Thematic ideas are supported by the poem’s content and techniques, but these may either be somewhat superficial and/or oversimplify the poem. |
|---|---|
| Not sufficient | ● Descriptions are inaccurate and/or far too sparse; some evidence is selected, but perhaps does not represent the poem as a whole.  
● Analysis, like the annotations, does not adequately link devices to meaning. It displays some thought about the poem, but ideas are either sparse, superficial, present misreads, or focus on reader response versus literary analysis.  
● Possible themes present misreads, egregious oversimplifications, or are not mentioned at the poem’s end. |
Final Assessment Reflection Sheet

Gallery Walk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Title of Poem</th>
<th>One thing you learned or thought was interesting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Reflect on the project as a whole. What new insights on poetry did you develop? What was most enjoyable? Least enjoyable?

What advice for success would you give to future students completing this project?
REFERENCES

