

DAY ONE | What is Poetry?

Core Curriculum Standards

Reading Literature: Craft and Structure

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- RL.7.5** Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure

- RI.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- RI.7.5** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.7.2** Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue.

Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- SL.7.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- SL.7.6** Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

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Lesson Goals

Outcomes

Students will question and analyze the meaning of poetry. It is also imperative that at some point during this lesson students understand the meaning of plagiarism (see reference handout). Also, check out the free website grammarly.com to help spot plagiarism and errors in grammar. By the end of this unit, students will acknowledge the importance of poetry as a means of creative self-expression.

Themes, Issues, and Concepts

what is a poem, love, nature, farm life, notes, taking what is not yours, what poetry means to you, plagiarism

Literary Terms

style, compare and contrast

Materials

“How to Eat a Poem” by Eve Merriam (optional)
“Eating Poetry” by Mark Strand (optional)
“Unfolding Bud” by Naoshi Kuriyami (optional)
What is a Poem? Handouts
“What Cats Think” by Alvin Do, 2012 7GP Winner (optional)
“Lucky Lake” by Joshua Macy, 2014 7GP Winner (optional)
“The Dinkey Bird” by Eugene Field (optional)
YouTube (optional)
Writer’s notebooks

Teacher Tips — *Want to get the students excited about this year’s contest?*

- If you are a previous participant, kick off this unit by inviting and showcasing your school’s 7GP winner. Your student can recite his/her winning poem to the class from the 7GP anthology. If you are new to *The 7GP Contest*, please review the content on the 7gp.org website which contains past 7GP winning poems and videos of students reading their work. Pick one or two to share with your class.
- Collaborate with the music teacher to discuss poetry and figurative language in song lyrics (using, of course, music that is popular with 7th graders).
- Encourage students to simply write about what they know or what they are passionate about; *authenticity is important*. Refer to student examples, “Muddin’ in Missouri” (**Lesson 7**) and “Lucky Lake” (**Lesson 1**).
- Give students an opportunity to play with language and unleash their creativity. Students can practice imitating or creating a parody of known authors’ poems much like Weird Al Yankovic does with music. By the way, “Word Crimes” by Weird Al is a great parody to share with your students for ELA. My students loved it.

Plagiarism Reference Handout

Plagiarism is intentionally or inadvertently taking credit for somebody else's words or ideas.

Acts of Plagiarism

- Copying another student's work
- Turning in another student's paper as your own
- Copying any an amount of text from an electronic source (including, but not limited to, the Internet)
- Copying any amount of text from a print source
- Purchasing work and turning it in as your own
- Working with a partner or group on an individual assignment
- Having someone write the paper for you
- Expressing ideas other than your own without citation
- Passing off the ideas of another as your own

Guidelines for Avoiding Plagiarism

- Use quotation marks to show when you are borrowing material from another writer, even if it is only a phrase or key word.
- Be careful to separate your own ideas from the ideas of others, especially when summarizing and paraphrasing. *
- Make sure to properly cite and credit all ideas that are not your own, (See section on citations.)
- When in doubt, cite. It is better to be too careful than not careful enough. Remember, teachers are there to help you. Ask the teacher any and all questions about the assignment and ask questions about when and how to document others' ideas.
- Regardless of your intention, do not loan or share your work with others.

*Paraphrasing is a restatement of a text or passage in another form in order to clarify or inform. When paraphrasing, you must always give credit to the original author.

Adapted from Mt. Greylock Regional School (Williamstown, MA) 7th Grade Academic Integrity Agreement, 2014.

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Lesson Plan

PAGE 1

DO NOW (5 minutes)

In their writer's notebooks, have students write a definition for poetry. If students have access to a device, you may also have students post their ideas on Padlet (refer to example: padlet.com/knights7/7i8c6l8onxex) or go to padlet.com to create your own unique Padlet wall.

WHOLE GROUP (20 minutes)

Explain to the students that by the end of this unit, they will be required to write a poem. As we go through our unit, they should keep that in mind as they learn more about poetry. Any time something sparks their imagination, they should make a note of it (perhaps in their writer's notebook). Explain The 7th Grade Poetry Foundation's contest to them. Explain that they are going to be the poets. *The 7GP Contest* is their chance to be an author. You may want to let them know that, though they only have one poem due at the end of this unit, they will hopefully be inspired to write many and choose their favorite and best for entry into the contest.

EXTRA — What is art?

You may want to ask the students what they consider to be art. One form of art is literary art, which includes poetry. By writing a poem, they are also becoming a literary artist. Ask the students what they wrote for their definitions of poetry. Write them on the board. As you go through this lesson plan, the definition of what poetry is will be constantly questioned. It might be helpful to have students write the definitions other students had below their own definition. Since this is the beginning of the poetry unit, "How to Eat a Poem," by Eve Merriam, might be a good poem to start off the unit. "Eating Poetry" by Mark Strand is also a good poem to begin a poetry unit. Now that everyone has discussed what they think a poem is, ask the following questions:

Is music poetry? Why or why not? What about rap or country music?

Before asking this question, play them a variety of music with lyrics. If you don't have access to YouTube, perhaps try printing out some song lyrics and having the students look at those instead.

If you take a sentence out of a book, could that be considered a poem? Why or why not?

Read a random sentence out of a book and see if students think that could be a poem.

PARTNER/SMALL GROUPS (15 minutes)

Now that the class has discussed what they think does or doesn't make a poem, pass out the Comparison Poetry Handout. It contains four very different poems. "To My Dear and Loving Husband" by Anne Bradstreet seems to fit the stereotype of what people think of poetry—love, heightened language, and a predictable rhyme scheme. There is a poem by Lily Nathanson a winner of The 7GP Contest in 2013. There are also two poems by William Carlos Williams. These poems are very different from the Anne Bradstreet poem because they don't rhyme, the themes are harder to find, and the structure is unpredictable. Students can create their own poems following this same basic pattern.

With a partner, have students fill out the **Comparison Poetry Handout** together. Once everyone has completed the handout, the students will share their answers with the class.

EXTRA — “What Cats Think” by Alvin Do

You can apply the same questions from the Comparison Poetry Handout to this light and humorous poem “What Cats Think” challenges how students might view poetry because it isn’t stuffy or stereotypical.

EXTRA — Demonstrate Writing Inspiration

The author of “The Preserve” was inspired by the poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins. If your students particularly liked this poem, you may want to show them a poem by Hopkins to demonstrate how writing can inspire you.

INDEPENDENT (10 minutes)

Have students write down their answers to the following questions in their writer’s notebook:

1. Based on our lesson today, what do you think a poem should have?
2. What should a poem not have?
3. What did you notice that was different about the Bradstreet poem versus the Williams poems?
4. What similarities did you see in these poems?

REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Students share their answers from the INDEPENDENT section with the class.

HOMEWORK

In their writer’s notebook, students should reflect on this prompt: What surprised you about today’s lesson? Look back at the definition of poetry that you wrote. How does it compare to what your classmates said?

How to Eat a Poem

by Eve Merriam (1916–1992)

Don't be polite.
Bite in,
Pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice that
 may run down your chin.
It is ready and ripe now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon
or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core
or stem
or rind
or pit
or seed
or skin
to throw away.

Eating Poetry

by Mark Strand (1934–)

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

Unfolding Bud

by Naoshi Koriyama (1926–)

One is amazed
By a water-lily bud
Unfolding
With each passing day,
Taking on a richer color
And new dimensions.

One is not amazed,
At first glance,
By a poem,
Which is tight-closed
As a tiny bud.

Yet one is surprised
To see the poem
Gradually unfolding,
Revealing its rich inner self
As one reads it
Again
And over again.

What is a poem?

To My Dear and Loving Husband by Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize they love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.
They love is such I can no way repay,
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Is this a poem? Why or why not?

What is a poem?

The Preserve

By Lily Nathanson (7GP Winner, 2013)

This is my hope and
work. The land is fallow,
fickle and fleshy with water
that's barbarous and brink.
It sounds like a million
people hitting chestnut wood.

This is my place. It's serene
and pacific. The ground dazzles
and soon dims from within. It
has the power to possess you
from within.

When I see it every Thursday
I scream, "Bonanza, brilliant, blank,
alive." The ground enchants and
enlightens with one simple
slight step.

Once again, this is my
simple, special, sweet, slimy love.

Is this a poem? Why or why not?

What is a poem?

This is Just to Say

by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

The Red Wheelbarrow

by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

Are these poems? Why or why not?

What Cats Think

by Alvin Do, (7GP Winner, 2012)

Litter box not here
You must have moved it again
Your shoe will be fine.
Humans are so strange
Mine lies still in bed, then screams!
My claws aren't that sharp...
Small brave carnivores
Kill pine cones and mosquitoes.
Fear vacuum cleaner.
You never feed me
Perhaps I'll sleep on your face
That will sure show you!
The rule for today
Touch my tail, I shred your hand.
New rule tomorrow.

Lucky Lake

by Joshua Macy (7GP Winner, 2014)

There was a time when Lucky Lake waited for us to find it
And one day fish there...offering us the fish that swim about

A muskrat visited, almost like it was wishing us luck
The ducks that fly over look at the fish from the sky

Lucky Lake...a place where there is life everywhere...the houses that
Surround it in a circle comfort it like a blanket

And it's always there when we go back
And it will always be there when we go back

When we leave...it will be waiting for us to come back
And fish again

The Dinkey Bird

by Eugene Field (1850–1895)

In an ocean, 'way out yonder,
(As all sapient people know)
Is the land of Wonder-Wander,
Whither children love to go;
It's their playing, romping, swinging,
That give great joy to me
While the Dinkey-Bird goes singing
In the amfalula tree!

There the gum-drops grow like cherries,
And taffy's thick as peas--
Caramels you pick like berries
When, and where, and how you please;
Big red sugar-plums are clinging
To the cliffs beside that sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!

So when children shout and scamper
And make merry all the day,
When there's naught to put a damper
To the ardor of their play;
When I hear their laughter ringing,
Then I'm sure as sure can be
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!

For the Dinkey-Bird's bravuras
And staccatos are so sweet--
His roulades, appoggiaturas,
And robustos so complete,
That the youth of every nation--
Be they near or far away--
Have especial delectation
In that gladsome roundelay.

The Dinkey Bird *continued* **by Eugene Field (1850–1895)**

Their eyes grow bright and brighter,
Their lungs begin to crow,
Their hearts get light and lighter,
And their cheeks are all aglow;
For an echo cometh bringing
The news to all and me,
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

I'm sure you like to go there
To see your feathered friend--
And so many goodies grow there
You would like to comprehend!
Speed, little dreams, your winging
To that land across the sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!