Poetry

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **Creative Writing**
Time Period: **7 weeks**
Length: **7 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

This unit, done well, can deepen students' sense of control and economy over their language. As with other units in this course, the structure of lessons is to first read a published example then write one's own. With this unit, because the styles of poetry vary so much, the read/practice cycle can be much more rapid. In general, poems are selected for some specific linguistic, structural, thematic, or stylistic feature, that feature or combination of features is closely examined by the students, and then the students attempt to produce this on their own. Ultimately, the goals are three-fold: to have students understand how poetry works from a linguistic/structural standpoint; to have students able to write in many different styles and forms; and to have students able to write intentionally in their own style. Exposure to a wide range of poetry in the class helps them to come up with their own approach; that said, one cannot skimp on the reading of the published poets, as poetry is often the genre that students have the least exposure to.

Transfer and Understanding

Students will understand the following:

- Ways in which they might adjust their sentence structure and length to adjust tone to a desired effect.
- Ways in which they might use their words of different origin, tone, and mood to adjust tone to a desired effect.
- Ways in which language can be pared down to the most essential, economic language to achieve a desired effect.
- Ways in which they might follow a traditional structure to build narrative, and how that structure clarifies a poem's vision, pacing, or creates a desired effect in the reader.
- Ways in which manipulating the structure of a poem can play with the reader's expectations, and how to balance typical and atypical structure.
- When and how to use metaphor, simile, specific or unique description, imagery, symbol, and specific detail to move through the ideas and emotions they wish to in the way they aim to move through them.
- When and how to use various poetic devices to a desired effect (I.e., rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc).
- That self-criticism is important and necessary to be successful at the above.

Essential Questions

Students will continually consider the following:

- What type of structure does a specific poem have, how much does it follow or deviate from a traditional structure, and what is the effect of the structure on the meaning and style of the poem?
- What types of literary devices does an author use in a poem, and what effect do those devices achieve?
- How does the author build in the meaning, symbolism, clues, et cetera into the poem?
- What ideas in one's own writing must be expanded, altered, or omitted to serve the poem in either what the writer actually intends of the poem or what the poem might ideally become?
- How might a sentence or paragraph be manipulated or adjusted get the feeling of that sentence or paragraph closer to what the poem either is or is desired to be?
- How do the traditional features of poetry effect the poem (I.e., rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc)?
- How does the writer use and manipulate elements of the poem build the sense of the world of the poem?
- Why might I be reluctant to change something about my writing, and how can I move past that to make the writing better?
- How might historical or thematic context effect the language, structure, and meaning of the poem?

Application of Knowledge and Skill

Students will be able to do the following:

Students will be able to independently using their learning to do the following in both reading another's text and writing their own poetry:

- Analyze effect of specific diction on the style and tone of a poem.
- Become intentional and effective in specific diction to achieve desired style and tone.
- Analyze economy of language in published poems.
- Adopt economic, precise language in students' own poetry.
- Analyze how various poetic structures impact the meaning, tone, feeling, etc of a poem.
- Write accurately and effectively in a variety of formal poetry structures, achieving desired emotional and thematic effects.
- Analyze how theme and context effect the creation, construction, and impact of a poem.
- Write effectively from pre-ordained contextual or thematic frameworks (I.e., from the perspective of another person, a generational poem, about or from the perspective of a specific object, etc).

Students will apply their knowledge to create or accurately and thoughtfully complete the following:

- Critiques of professional writers' poems

- Close-readings (that is, marking up texts) of texts, with emphasis on the writer's technique.
- Pre-writing exercises developing various literary elements to use in their poems.
- Poems of several formal structures – Haiku, Sonnet, Terza Rima, Villanelle, Ghazal
- 10-Line Poems – Short poems done every few days to practice a specific new technique followed in example poems.
- Generational Poem – Culminating activity, creating a poem about their generation, following the stylistic, thematic, stylistic vision of each student.
- Critiques of fellow-students' and their own writing.

Academic Vocabulary

- Metaphor
- Simile
- Detail
- Description
- Noun
- Verb
- Adjective
- Adverb
- Structure
- Mood
- Tone
- Dialogue
- Structure
- Rhyme
- Meter
- Rhythm
- Enjambment
- Sonnet
- Villanelle
- Terza Rima
- Haiku

Learning Goal 1

Understand how language and line-structure can and should be used precisely to deliver the desired effect in a poem.

Target 1

Analyze how a published poet uses specific, precise, economic word choice and line structure to deliver the theme, message, and tone of a poem precisely.

LA.RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections 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.
LA.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. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
LA.RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Target 2

Use lessons about language and line-structure to precisely and economically deliver the theme, message, and tone of an original poem.

LA.W.11-12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.L.11-12.3.A	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
LA.L.11-12.5.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

Learning Goal 2

Understand how poetic language and features (metaphor, simile, specific or unique description, imagery, symbol, and specific detail; rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc) can be used precisely and effectively to develop theme, tone, mood, etc.

Target 1

Understand how published poets use poetic language and features (metaphor, simile, specific or unique description, imagery, symbol, and specific detail; rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc) precisely and effectively to develop theme, tone, mood, etc.

LA.RL.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections 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.
LA.RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
LA.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. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

Target 2

Use lessons about use of poetic language and features (metaphor, simile, specific or unique description, imagery, symbol, and specific detail; rhyme, rhythm, assonance, consonance, etc) precisely and effectively to develop theme, tone, mood, et cetera in original poetry.

LA.W.11-12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.L.11-12.5.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.

Learning Goal 3

Understand how formal poetic structure can be used or altered for varying poetic effects, and how formal poetic structure can shift meaning, tone, etc and, at times, elevate the poem to something only possible with that formal structure.

Target 3

Be able to use formal poetic structure with precise control, still maintaining individual intent and voice in the poem, but while also allowing the structure to inform and even elevate what the poem might become.

LA.RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
LA.RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
LA.W.11-12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).

Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities

- Discussion

- Handouts/Worksheets
- Journaling
- Text Mark-Ups/Close-Readings
- Shorter Poems (haiku, sonnets, "10-line poems")
- Poem Revisions
- Do Nows/Closures/Daily Writes

Summative Assessment

- Generational Poem
- Poetry Portfolio (selected, revised, and edited poems from the unit)

Differentiation

- Allow for shorter responses on daily written assignments
- Grouping students with others of greater ability

Enrichment

- Write longer works
- Compile, edit literary magazine for the class.

Unit Resources

- Background notes on above academic terms
- Frank O'Hara, "A Step Away from Them"
- Selections from Cid Corman poetry (Haiku-like)
- Wilfred Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est"
- Agha Shahid Ali, "Tonight" (Ghazal)
- Selections from Batsuo Basho's haiku
- Selections from Yosa Buson's haiku
- Selections from Kobayashi Issa's haiku
- Philip Larkin, "High Windows"
- T.S. Eliot, "Hollow Men"
- Juan Ramon Jimenez, "I Am Not I"
- Edward Montez, "I Remember"

- Mary Oliver, "Morning Poem"
- Robert Frost, "Mending Wall"
- James Fenton, "Out of Danger"
- Robert Frost, "Putting in the Seed"
- Francesco Petrarch, Sonnet 292
- William Shakespeare, Sonnet 18
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" (Terza Rima)
- Taylor Mali, "Totally Like Whatever" and "I Will Fight You for the Library"
- Dylan Thomas, "To Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (Villanelle)
- Seamus Heaney, "Villanelle for an Anniversary" (Villanelle)
- Jaime Saenz, excerpts from *The Night*
- Walt Whitman, from *Leaves of Grass*
- Alan Ginsberg, from *Howl*

- Background Notes
- Original Texts
- Video
- Vocabulary words and examples