

# Poetry Interpretation and Figurative Language

**Grade Level or Special Area:** Fifth Grade

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**Length of Unit:** Four lessons, three weeks to complete the entire unit; Lesson Two is repeated four times which amounts to about seven days of 40 minute lessons for just poetry interpretation; Lessons One, Three, and Four, and the Culminating Activity require eight blocks of 40 minutes

## I. ABSTRACT

In this poetry unit students read, analyze, and compare poetry. This can be used as a poetry unit or the unit can be divided into individual lessons to be used throughout the year. There is a focus on locating and understanding figurative language.

## II. OVERVIEW

### A. Concept Objectives

1. Students develop their awareness that there are a variety of materials. (modified Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing: 1)
2. Students recognize that thinking skills are necessary for comprehension when reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. (modified Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing: 4)
3. Students recognize literature as a record of human experience. (modified Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing: 6)

### B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*

1. Language Arts: Grade 5 (pp. 109-111)
  - a. Writing, Grammar, and Usage: Writing and Research
    - i. Produce types of writing—including reports, summaries, letters, descriptions, research essays, essays that explain a process, stories, poems—with a coherent structure or story line.
  - b. Poetry: Poems
    - i. The Road Not Taken (Robert Frost)
    - ii. I, too, Sing America (Langston Hughes)
    - iii. Captain! My Captain! (Walt Whitman)
    - iv. Narcissa (Gwendolyn Brooks)
    - v. A Poison Tree (William Blake)
  - c. Fiction and Drama: Literary Terms:
    - i. Literal and figurative language:
      - a) imagery, metaphor and simile, symbol, personification
2. Language Arts: Grade 3 (p. 67)
  - a. Poetry
    - i. Jimmy Jet and His TV Set (Shel Silverstein)

### C. Skill Objectives

1. Students will understand how figurative language supports meaning in a given context. (Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing Standard 6, Grade Level Expectation for Fifth and Sixth Grade)
2. Students will summarize text passages. (Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing Standard, Standard 6, Grade Level Expectation for Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grade)
3. Students will draw inferences using contextual clues. (Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing, Standard 1, Grade Level Expectation for Fourth Grade)

4. Students interpret poems to reveal author’s message. Students will compare and contrast different texts. (Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing: 1, Grade Level Expectation for Fifth Grade)
5. Students will paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize information from a variety of text and genres. (Colorado Model Content Standard for Reading and Writing: 1, Grade Level Expectation for Sixth Grade)
6. Students will compare and contrast different texts.
7. Students will recognize and identify different methods and figurative language that poets use to create meaningful poetry.
8. Students will use the matrix and checklist to make some decisions about poems.

### III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
  1. Heard, G. *Awaking the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School*
  2. Heard, G., McCormick-Calkins, L., *For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry*
  3. Auman, M., *Step Up To Writing Manual*
  4. Hoopes, E.W., *Create a Poem Writing Rhymed and Unrhymed Verse*
- B. For Student
  1. Language Arts: Grade 1
    - a. Reading and Writing: Reading Comprehension and Response
      - i. Read and understand simple written instructions.
      - ii. Notice his or her own difficulties in understanding text.
      - iii. Predict what will happen next in stories, justify his or her predictions, and later discuss whether predictions were confirmed.
      - iv. Discuss how, why and what-if questions about both fiction and non-fiction texts.
      - v. Use complete and detailed sentences to respond to what, when, where, and how questions.
      - vi. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of fiction and non-fiction selections, including both read-aloud works and independent readings.

### IV. RESOURCES

None

### V. LESSONS

#### Lesson One: Figurative Language (two 40 minute blocks of time)

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students develop their awareness that there are a variety of materials.
    - b. Students recognize that thinking skills are necessary for comprehension when reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Literary Terms:
      - i. Literal and figurative language:
        - a) imagery, metaphor and simile, symbol, personification
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will paraphrase, summarize, and synthesize information from a

variety of text and genres.

B. *Materials*

1. Figurative Language Sheet (Appendix A) (one copy for each student)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Figurative language: a way to express ideas boldly by using non-literal methods and figures of speech figures of speech help make abstract ideas concrete through the use of the senses, it adds richness, allows a communicator to say more using fewer words
2. Personification: giving a human quality to a non-human being or object
3. Simile: a figure of speech that compares unlike things using the words , like, as, than, similar to, resembles, and seems
4. Metaphor: a figure of speech that compares two unlike things; one thing is spoken of as if it were another, usually a being verb is used to make the comparison
5. Oxymora: figure of speech that combines opposing words or ideas together
6. Paradox: a figure of speech that seems to be contradictory but in reality tells a truth about the way things are

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Post the words “Figurative Language” in the front of the classroom. Tell students that when a writer wants to style their work, often the idea behind the words is not the same as what is actually written. Ask “If someone devours a book, does that mean they ate the book?”
2. Have students brainstorm other instances where what someone says is not meant to be taken literally.
3. Tell students they are going to be using poetry to investigate figurative language.
4. Post the words “Simile” and “Metaphor.” Write “Her hair was like the frayed end of a rope.” and “Her hair was frayed rope.” Ask what is the same about the two sentences. Ask what is different. Students should respond that one sentence states “the hair is frayed rope” and one sentence uses like or as. Move the word simile near the sentence using like or as. Explain that both sentences compare her hair to frayed rope, but the simile uses the words like or as.
5. Hand out Appendix A, Figurative Language. Have students finish the similes.
6. Take the word “Metaphor” and place it next to the metaphor. Explain that sometimes figurative language can be made stronger by saying something is rather than using like. Have students finish the metaphor stems.
7. To assess have the students turn over the paper and write a metaphor on the back, and then ask them to change it into a simile. Walk the room and give immediate feedback. Have students repeat this quick assessment often throughout the unit, until it is evident that students can tell the difference.
8. Tell students that they are moving on to a different type of figurative language. Write the word “Personification.” Ask if they see any word inside this word that they recognize. If they identify the word “person” say “Wow, that is a great way to remember what personification means.
9. Write the example “The gentle wind whispered to the praying horse.” Point out the first example of a non-human having human qualities “The gentle wind whispered...” Have the students identify the second personification “praying horse.”
10. Have students practice by using personification to describe a flower in an open meadow. Have students practice until they demonstrate that they can write personification.
11. Write the example “silent screams.” Ask students what an author might mean if

they said “She sat alone in her room with her silent screams.” Most people have been in situations where they were screaming on the inside but could not scream out loud.

12. Ask students what is peculiar about silent and scream being used together. Explain that an author often uses oxymora for an effect. It gets the reader’s attention and makes the reader think about both words in a new way.
13. Have students practice using oxymora on the worksheet. They begin by finishing the stems, then they create their own.
14. Follow the same steps for paradox.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students will be assessed throughout the unit when they are asked to determine what type of figurative language is used in each of the studied poems. The assessment for learning happens during the lesson while students practice. The teacher should be walking around celebrating when students get it right, and teaching on the spot when students cannot complete each of the tasks.

**Lesson Two: Interpreting Poems (two to three 40 minute blocks of time, repeated four times)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students recognize that thinking skills are necessary for comprehension when reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Road Not Taken
  - b. I, too, Sing America (Langston Hughes)
  - c. O Captain! My Captain! (Walt Whitman)
  - d. Narcissa (Gwendolyn Brooks)
  - e. A Poison Tree (William Blake)
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students interpret poems to reveal author’s message.
  - b. Students will understand how figurative language supports meaning in a given context.
  - c. Students will summarize text passages.
  - d. Students will draw inferences using contextual clues.

B. *Materials*

1. Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together Rubric, Appendix B (one copy for each child)
2. A poem that is difficult to grasp on the first read (copy of the poem for each child)
3. Highlighters (two colors) for each student
4. Poetry journals for each child
5. Figurative Language, Appendix A (one copy for each child)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Interpret: to explain or tell the meaning of
2. Symbol: something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance
3. Symbolism (depending on the grade level): the art or practice of using symbols
4. Clarify: to free of confusion
5. Stanza: a division of a poem consisting of a series of lines arranged together in a recurring pattern; a stanza does for poetry what a paragraph does for prose; often times each stanza will have a central idea

6. Imagery: the language that creates pictures/images in a reader or listener's mind
  7. Deliberate: on purpose, to put considerable thought into a decision
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Hand out Appendix B, "Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together" Rubric. Ask students how they will earn a four on the rubric for the work they will do today.
  2. Post the word "interpret" in front of the class. Ask the students what the word means. Most likely you will get the definition of translates. A translator is called an interpreter so students will most likely give that answer.
  3. Ask what a person might do to interpret a poem. "In English?" a student might ask. "Yes in English" you will add. State again, "What would it mean, 'to interpret a poem'?" Have students talk with their tables, pods, or groups.
  4. Allow students to discuss what interpreting poems mean. If students are reluctant to answer or confused, post the Webster's definition on the board. "To explain or tell the meaning of..."
  5. After the groups have time to discuss what "interpreting a poem" might mean, hand out a poem that you will read aloud and tell them that they will be interpreting this poem. This should be a poem that is hard to understand.
  6. I will use the poem the "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. I have chosen this poem to demonstrate this lesson for two reasons, one it is a poem that most teachers are familiar, and two because a fourth grader changed my mind about its meaning.
  7. First read the poem to the students and ask what they think of the poem.
  8. Then ask, "What is the author talking about?"
  9. Many students will give the literal meaning; in the case of "The Road Not Taken" students often say that it is about a path or a road. In some poems the poem is what it says it is about, but in others, students need to dig deeper.
  10. If it is a poem that is not necessarily what it says it is about, introduce the word "symbol" to the students. Explain that often authors use symbols to represent something else. Explain that it is kind of like a riddle. Poets are especially effective at creating riddles over which to ponder. "In The Road Not Taken" it is possible that Robert Frost was writing about life's roads, and this is a poem about life's choices, thus the two roads are symbols of choices.
  11. Students meet with their groups and try figure out the symbolism in the poem.
  12. After about five minutes write some of the students' thoughts on poster paper.
  13. Explain that they are going to clear up or clarify some of the mystery that the poet has presented.
  14. Independently students highlight in one color, anything that does not make sense in only the first stanza. Students highlight any words that they do not know, and any line or phrase where the words are put together in a puzzling manner.
  15. Write on an overhead or type onto a projected computer screen each source of confusion, limit it to a stanza at a time, any more will be overwhelming. You do not want to clarify the whole poem because by deciphering the first part of the poem will make the rest of the poem easier to understand. The more each individual student can decipher himself, the more willing the student will be to interpret more poetry or complex literature. Monitoring comprehension is one of the primary reading strategies that good readers use.
  16. Students break into groups to clear up any unclear concepts. Each group needs a dictionary to define unknown words, or get a different meaning for a known word. Sometimes poets use the least common definition of a word.
  17. Explain that it is okay for the group member not to agree on the exact meaning of

each confusion point. Many scholars disagree on the meanings of poems. The task is to try to make as much sense as possible out of the words of a person that one does not know personally.

18. Check with groups when the discussion about the poem seems to be waning. Ask students to show with their fingers how many minutes each group needs.
19. The class meets and each confusing part of the first stanza is discussed. Perhaps a student felt like they did not understand “yellow wood” in the poem. A representative from each group addresses this confusion. “Maybe Robert Frost was walking in a forest in fall.” Another student might add that if the poem was about choices it might be that he must make a decision in the golden years of his life.
20. Leave all interpretations open as the class works through the first stanza. Note how interesting it is that different students interpreted the first stanza differently.
21. Encourage students to think of times that they felt like the poet. For this particular poem, ask students if they have ever had to make a difficult choice. Ask students to look over the interpreted stanza and relate it to experiences that they have had. Students can relate the stanza to something that is going on or has gone on in history. They might also connect the words to some other text that they have read or movie that they have seen. This promotes connections and making connections is key in interpreting text. You may wish to do this activity after each stanza or wait until the entire poem has been interpreted. Connections often lead to new interpretations.
22. Tell the students they will have a chance to individually summarize or write about the poem after the poem has been discussed in full. In this summary, students do not have to write what the group decided but can use other groups’ ideas as well as their own ideas.
23. Discuss figurative language. If students are unfamiliar with figurative language you may want to work on a mini lesson before continuing with this lesson. Write three to five similes on chart paper. Ask students to list some things about the simile. “It compares two things.” “It uses like or as.” After presenting similes repeat this part with metaphors and personification. Ask students to be aware of figurative language when they read. You might want to have a figurative language board where students can post different similes, metaphors, and personification. You may want to use “Figurative Language,” Appendix A.
24. After the class has worked through all stanzas students then highlight figurative language with the second color highlighter. Students or groups of students search for similes, metaphors and personification. In “The Road Not Taken,” students would highlight “Because it was grassy and wanted wear” and write next to it personification. Frost gave the road human feelings; therefore that is an example of personification. It is important for those who investigate poetry to learn to pick the figurative from the literal. This part of the lesson is not just for recognizing figurative language but also to help the students break the poem into pieces to examine.
25. Groups or individuals share with the class what they highlighted.
26. Students then search for imagery, details that provide an image in the reader’s mind. Students individually circle the parts of the poem that creates images. Creating images while reading is also a strategy that good readers use. In “The Road Not Taken” they might circle “In leaves no step had trodden black.” Not only are students working on interpreting the poem, but also understanding what certain authors do to produce quality poems.
27. The class then meets one final time to discuss the meaning of the poem and

discuss the reason why authors select the words that they select. Tell the students the words that poets use are chosen deliberately, words are not included “just because.” Remember how I told you that a fourth grader changed my mind about “The Road Not Taken?” It was because of this last debriefing. The student said “He isn’t happy that he took the path in life that he took, Frost says ‘I shall be telling you this with a sigh.’” Other students chimed in and noticed the title was not called “The Road Taken.” I had always believed that the character in the poem was pleased with his decision. I have altered my interpretation due to a class of fourth grade readers that were selected to be in my class because they were the lowest readers in their classes. These are the types of discussions that you should aim for when interpreting poems. The extended process is worth the final outcome. This process also reinforces the strategy to look back at what one reads and reread until the material is fully understood.

28. You may choose to have individuals write a paragraph that explains how they interpret the poem or to have the students summarize the poem.
29. Repeat portions of this lesson when the class is reading difficult poetry, or even difficult literature. Interpreting text is a skill that readers are asked to demonstrate on many standardized tests, as well as a skill needed to comprehend much of what they read.
30. Follow this process with the following poems: *I, too, Sing America* by Langston Hughes, *O Captain! My Captain!* by Walt Whitman, *Narcissa* by Gwendolyn Brooks, and *A Poison Tree* by William Blake.
31. Each time you repeat the process gradually release the process to the students, give a little less input, until the students are able to interpret a poem by themselves or in a small group.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students are assessed on their ability to contribute and respect others points of view. This can be assessed by using “Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together” rubric, Appendix B.
2. Students are also assessed on “reading deep” and interpreting the poem to the best of their ability. The paragraph will include what they believe the poem is about and give examples of points of confusion that they cleared up and interpreted. If you choose to have students write a summary, they should identify the main idea of the poem and select at least three details that support the main idea.
3. Because students are at different stages in the writing process a clear picture of understanding might not be revealed by the paragraph. It is imperative that you assess not just the writing but also students’ thinking. Converse with students whose paragraph is not clear and use that data to decide if a student understands how to interpret a poem.

**Lesson Three: The Purpose of Poems (two 40 minute blocks of time)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students develop their awareness that there are a variety of materials.
  - b. Students recognize that thinking skills are necessary for comprehension when reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
  - c. Students recognize literature as a record of human experience.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Produce a variety of types of writing-such as stories, reports, poems, descriptions-and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his

- or her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will draw inferences using contextual clues.
- B. *Materials*
1. A copy of *A Poison Tree* by William Blake (a copy per student)
  2. A copy of *Jimmy Jet and His TV Set* by Shel Silverstein (a copy per student)
  3. Chart or poster paper (large)
  4. Markers
  5. Purpose of Poems, Appendix C (a copy per student)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Purpose: the intention, in this case the intention of the writer
  2. Assumption: the belief that something is true, a conjecture, a theory about what was meant
  3. Category: a group to which something has a common trait, a cluster defined by like qualities
  4. Point of view: a position from what something is viewed, viewpoint
  5. Tone: mood, style or manner of expression in which something is spoken or written
  6. Inspire: to stir or bring out thoughts, the power to move intellect or emotions
  7. Plagiarism: to steal another person's words
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Write "The Purpose of Poetry" in the middle of a piece of poster paper and circle the words (you are creating the center of a web).
  2. Students are encouraged to think of reasons to read or write poetry.
  3. Space the lines from the center far enough apart so that poems that are read can be attached to purpose categories. For example, a student might say that some poems are just for fun. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade there are many poems that the students study that are funny. A line is drawn from the center circle to the first category (just for fun) and then another line attaches the category to the title of the poem "Jimmy Jet and His TV Set" by Shel Silverstein. Other categories might include (poems that make you think) or (poems that draw pictures with words) or (poems that present a riddle). Students should create the categories, and add categories as they read more poems. A poem might belong to more than one category. One solution for this dilemma is to write the poem more than once so it is connected to each category, another solution is to draw a different color line from that poem to its second category.
  4. Students then read two very different poems. *A Poison Tree* will be the serious poem, and *Jimmy Jet and His TV Set* will be the funny poem. Be sure that if either of the poems needs interpreting that the interpretation is done before this lesson.
  5. Small groups discuss what each purpose was for each of the poems and write the clues that help them come to that decision. See the "Purpose of Poems," Appendix C.
  6. Students then examine the poet's point of view. In William Blake's poem it is assumed that the poet is the angry voice, in *Jimmy Jet and His TV Set* the poet is often telling a story.
  7. Independently students rewrite one of the two poems from a different point of view, or change the purpose or tone of the poem. For example a student might wish to write a "make you think" poem about watching television. Or write a dream poem from the point of view of the dream instead of the dreamer, personification. Students must use their own words and may not take lines from

- the poems unless they have learned to quote and cite the poem from which they copied. If they fail to recognize the other poet the student work is plagiarized.
8. Under the title of the student's poem should be the word "inspired by title of the poem written by author of the poem."
  9. After sharing individual poems the class reflects about the assignment. What were the strategies that different class poets used to change the tone or the point of view of the poem? How did individuals come upon their ideas to alter the poems? What was difficult about the assignment, what was easy about the assignment? Write this down on new chart paper so that students can see where they started. You may want to do this lesson again at the end of the poetry unit with different poems. Have the students decide if more experiences with poetry made the task easier.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students should be working together as a whole class and in small groups. Assess their performance with the "Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together" rubric, Appendix B. It might be a good idea to have each student self assess using the rubric to see if they are aware of their interaction with the class and small groups. Students who have a vastly different view than yours of their performance might need some coaching. This unit is pivotal on group work and supporting one another in the class. Poetry is a very sensitive subject for many people and a harshly critical classmate might squelch a budding poet.
2. Assess small groups by the "Purpose of Poems," Appendix C. Students must defend why they believe a poem belongs to a certain category. One defense for a "just for fun" poem, might be that it made them laugh. A stronger answer might be "The boy turns into a T.V. set, and that was silly." Answers should include examples from the text.
3. The final assessment point is the individual poem that veers from the tone or point of view of the original poem. Remember you will have poets that are stronger and poets that are weaker; this is not about style or cleverness at this point in the unit. This is to assess whether the student can change the tone or the point of view of the chosen poem.

**Lesson Four: Contents of a Poem (three 40 minute blocks of time)**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students develop their awareness that there are a variety of materials.
  - b. Students recognize that thinking skills are necessary for comprehension when reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Produce a variety of types of writing-such as stories, reports, poems, descriptions-and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his or her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
  - b. Various selections of poetry from *Core Knowledge Sequence*
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will compare and contrast different texts.
  - b. Students will recognize and identify different methods and figurative language that poets use to create meaningful poetry.
  - c. Students will use the matrix and checklist to make some decisions about poems.

B. *Materials*

1. Four to six different types of poems that students have previously studied (copies

- for each student)
  - 2. Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together Rubric Appendix B (one per student)
  - 3. Chart paper, overhead, or computer projector
  - 4. Checklist for Poem Contents, Appendix D (one per student)
  - 5. Poem Content Matrix, Appendix E (one per student)
  - 6. Figurative Language, Appendix A (one per student)
  - 7. Sensory Language Word Bank, Appendix V (one per student)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
- 1. Repetition: the use of a sound, word, or phrase repeated in the poem
  - 2. Refrain: a line or group of lines regularly repeated within the poem
  - 3. Figurative language: a way to express ideas boldly by using non-literal methods and figures of speech, figures of speech help make abstract ideas concrete through the use of the senses, it adds richness, allows a communicator to say more using fewer words
  - 4. Simile: a figure of speech that compares unlike things using the words, like, as, than, similar to, resembles, and seems
  - 5. Metaphor: a figure of speech that compares two unlike things; one thing is spoken of as if it were another, usually a being verb is used to make the comparison
  - 6. Personification: giving a human quality to a non-human being or object
  - 7. Imagery: language that creates pictures/images in a reader or listener’s mind
  - 8. Sensory Language: language that is used to appeal to the five senses used to create images
  - 9. Paradox: a figure of speech that seems to be contradictory but presents a truth
  - 10. Oxymora: a figure of speech which combines contradictory ideas or words to bring attention to complexity
  - 11. Rhyme: words that have the same ending syllable sounds
  - 12. Alliteration: the use of words that have the same beginning sound
  - 13. Free verse: a style of writing that is generally free of meter and rhyme patterns
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
- 1. Poets use various tools when writing poetry. Figurative language is one of those tools. Have students list some of the ways poets use figurative language. Students list examples of simile, metaphor, and personification. Ask students to list some things about the simile. “It compares two things.” “It uses like or as.” After presenting similes repeat this part with metaphors and personification. Ask students to be aware of figurative language when they read. You might want to have a figurative language board where students can post different similes, metaphors, and personification. You may want to use “Figurative Language,” Appendix A.
  - 2. Oxymora and Paradox are most likely two new types of figurative language. Spend time to model this type of figurative language and have the class work together to create more examples.
  - 3. Define Repetition and Refrain. If a word or phrase is repeated in a poem it is considered repetition. If a line is repeated in a poem so that it is a repeated feature of the poem then it is considered a refrain. Poets deliberately place repetition in a poem as well as refrain. One clue in *Dream Variations* by Langston Hughes is that the lines sound the same but only one line “to fling my arms wide” is repeated word for word although there are many word repetitions in this poem. The other lines have slight variations that change the tone of each section of the poem.

4. Read a poem with meter and rhyme and then read a free verse poem. Students should be able to notice differences. Such as one sounds like a song and the other does not.
  5. Ask for students to pick out rhyme. You may choose to read *Narcissa* by Gwendolyn Brooks. When searching for rhyme read a stanza at a time. “Some of the girls are playing jacks. Some are playing ball. But small Narcissa is not playing Anything at all.” Ask students if there is any rhyme in that stanza. Students should be able to recognize ball, small, and all rhyme.
  6. Then read Langston Hughes’ poem *I, Too*. Students should notice that there is no rhyme in this poem, some students might notice the repetition of the words “I, too,” and “America.” Students need to hear much free verse to see the benefit of writing in that manner.
  7. Ask students if they know any tongue twisters. If any student mentions “Peter Piper” ask what most of the words start with. The letter P. Explain that when words that are put together or near each other that start with the same letter it is referred to as alliteration.
  8. Students practice alliteration with their names, beautiful Bonnie, timid Tom and stubborn Stephanie.
  9. Students may then work in groups or individually to look at four to six poems and check for any of the parts that are listed. Students use the “Checklist for Poem Contents,” Appendix D. After each poem is inspected the student writes FV next to the title if it is free verse.
  10. Students then compare the poems using the “Poem Contents Matrix,” Appendix E. Students place an X in the box in each column that names a part of the poem. For example, in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students might read “Buffalo Dusk” by Carl Sandburg. The poem does not rhyme so **no** X would be placed in the column labeled Rhyme. The poem does have a refrain “the buffalos are gone” so an X would be placed in the column labeled Repetition or Refrain. After the title the students would place an FV for free verse.
  11. Class debriefs about the matrix. How many of the poems contained rhyme? Were there any free verse poems? Which poem contained the most Xs in a row, which contained the least?
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. The matrix should be completely filled out. If you question the student about a particular poem they should be able to use the text to show that they correctly marked their matrix.
  2. If students miss a particular part of a poem, for instance, are not able to recognize alliteration, then pull those students aside and give some extra time to practice writing alliterations and extra time to recognize alliterations.

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. Prepare for a “Poet’s Afternoon.”
- B. Arrange the classroom like a café.
- C. As visitors arrive serve them cookies and flavored milk in cups. If you have written a schedule of readers give that to the visitors (parents or other classes). Students can dress like a poet, or dress as their favorite poet. Hats should be made available to students who did not come in costume.
- D. Students perform their poem in the center front of the “café.” They are to introduce themselves, give a brief explanation as to why they chose the poem they chose, or give some background information about their life or the assignment that encouraged them to write the poem.

## VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Figurative Language
- B. Appendix B: Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together Rubric
- C. Appendix C: The Purpose of Poems
- D. Appendix D: Checklist for Poem Contents
- E. Appendix E: Poem Content Matrix

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Appendix A, page 1  
**Figurative Language**

**Simile**

Her hair was like spun gold.

**Metaphor**

Her hair was spun gold.

**Personification**

Please free me from her scalp. She curls me five times a day, burning the ends of me and freezes me with sticky goop. If that is not bad enough I am near enough to her mouth to hear her complain about my behavior. "I'm having a bad hair day." I'll show her a bad hair day.

**Similes and metaphors can emphasize good or bad qualities. Similes and metaphors set the tone. Which of these similes or metaphors would you want someone to say about you?**

His eyes are the color of polished mahogany.

His eyes are the color of dirt.

She is as lively as a cricket.

She is a tornado wrecking everything in her path.

**Finish these similes:**

The day was like \_\_\_\_\_.

My coat felt like a \_\_\_\_\_.

She was dressed like a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Finish these metaphors:**

\_\_\_\_\_ was a dream.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a storm.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a monster.

**Try personification. How does a flower feel in an open meadow?**

Appendix A, page 2

**Oxymora and Paradox**

An **oxymora** is a figure of speech that combines opposing words or ideas together. Usually an oxymora uses few words to create a paradox.

Examples:

Silent screams

Pleasant sadness

Smart ignorance

Angry peace

Spring's autumn

Try writing your own oxymora

\_\_\_\_\_ Living \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Disgusting \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Lying \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

A **paradox** is a figure of speech that seems to be contradictory but in reality tells a truth about the way things are.

Examples:

The awkwardness made the experience familiar.

We all joined in separately.

He worked hard to find the easy way out.

The students were absently present during the lecture.

Try turning an oxymora into a paradox:

Example: They maintained peace in the town with anger.

Appendix B

## Collaborative Work Skills: Working Together Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Contributions</b>	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
<b>Monitors Group Effectiveness</b>	Routinely monitors the effectiveness of the group, and makes suggestions to make it more effective. Asks questions instead of always directing.	Routinely monitors the effectiveness of the group and works to make the group more effective.	Occasionally monitors the effectiveness of the group and works to make the group more effective.	Rarely monitors the effectiveness of the group and does not work to make it more effective.
<b>Attitude</b>	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Often is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Often has a negative attitude about the task(s).
<b>Focus on the task</b>	Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done. Very self-directed.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done some of the time. Other group members must sometimes nag, prod, and remind to keep this person on-task.	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.
<b>Problem-solving</b>	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems. Reminds the group of the goal. Asks if the group if they are getting closer to the goal or farther away from the goal.	Refines solutions suggested by others. Reminds group members about the goal.	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Lets others do the work.

Appendix C  
**The Purpose of Poems**

The purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ was to \_\_\_\_\_.

The clues that allow me to make this assumption are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of \_\_\_\_\_ was to \_\_\_\_\_.

The clues that allow me to make this assumption are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D**  
**Checklist for Poem Contents**

<p>Poem 1 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>	<p>Poem 2 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>
<p>Poem 3 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>	<p>Poem 4 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>
<p>Poem 5 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>	<p>Poem 6 _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Simile or Metaphor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sensory Language</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Personification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Repetition/Refrain</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alliteration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rhyme</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Paradox or Oxymora</li> </ul>

