



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2005 Volume I: The Uses of Poetry in the Classroom

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## **Studying the Sonnet: An Introduction to the Importance of Form in Poetry**

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by Lynn Marsico

Created for eighth graders but adaptable for high school students, this unit uses a study of the sonnet to introduce the concept of form in poetry and its importance to the poem's overall impact. Specific sonnets are presented in three groups. The first is used to teach the structural rules for sonnets. A second group of sonnets is suggested for closer readings, with questions provided to guide students in understanding how the sonnet's form aids poets in conveying meaning. A third group shows deviations from the strict sonnet form, and students are encouraged to consider why poets made these deviations. To demonstrate an understanding of the sonnet form and the implications of that structure, students will write original sonnets.

(Recommended for English/Language Arts, grades 8-12.)

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