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Lyric Poetry: The Sonnet

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Overview

In the 1947 article "Those Who Make Poems," Chicago poet Carl Sandburg challenged the status quo of poetry: "recently a poet was quoted as saying he would as soon play tennis without a net as to write free verse...The poet without imagination or folly enough to play tennis by serving and returning the ball over an invisible net may see himself as highly disciplined." ¹ The poet he referred to was Robert Frost, a serial practitioner of iambic pentameter. Like a highly skilled tennis player, Frost adhered to the conventions of traditional line and meter, proving his game on the international court by winning four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry in his lifetime. ² Frost makes a good point, there is something to be said for those who adhere to the rules, but I would argue there is also something to be said about the deliberate choice to selectively challenge the convention. That is entirely what this unit sets out to do — challenge conventional poetic form while taking it seriously before turning away from it.

School Background

This past year the James H. Bowen Campus celebrated its 100 year anniversary. Situated on the South East side of Chicago, this South Shore campus provides public education as a neighborhood school. Primarily an area of the city that was dominated by the steel mills for decades, South Shore has drastically changed in the last 20 years. Experiencing a cultural shift from a Mexican community with a gradual influx of African-Americans has caused social, emotional, and economic tension. Six years ago, in an effort to make smaller learning communities, Bowen was separated into four distinct high school settings. For several years these schools functioned as four different high schools with completely different school names, foci, uniforms, and demeanor. This spring Chicago Public Schools announced the consolidation of the Bowen campus. As one of two English teachers that were asked back, I am charged with bringing together four very different school cultures. This difficult shift has made me think about what my students have in common with other students in the building. The greatest difference in my view is their reading level. Although my students enter high school with a variety of reading levels, by the time they reach me many of them are disheartened and disempowered by knowing how far they are behind. They also have been systematically taught by the streets and social

institutions that their voice doesn't matter, much less their creativity.

Content

Undoubtedly there is a very high level of skill involved in following tight-knit rules. What I'd like students to consider is how those rules can be studied in certain structures of poetry, like the sonnet, and how they can then be challenged.

I envision this unit as a four phases during which we will:

- 1.Revisit the fun of reading by playing with rhyme and word usage
- 2.Focus on the two most basic sonnet formulas
- 3.Spend time comparing and contrasting the sonnet with free verse poems
- 4.Utilize our newly developed skills to analyze free verse poem

Their final project will be an argumentative essay in which they will defend a free verse poem as a legitimate artistic endeavor. This will also require students to have access to a variety of poems and critical essays.

1. Revisit the fun in reading by playing with rhyme and word usage

I would like students to stick to four reading fundamentals while reading poetry. I'm still adjusting some of these, but foundationally I want students to understand that first and foremost educated people revisit texts. Students should have built in the expectation that they will read a text and to revisit it several times – the mind gains security in going back to a text. Secondly, I don't want students getting too caught up on vocabulary. If the first expectation is that you are going to revisit a text it's understood that you will have time to go back and identify any confusing words. During a first read students should use any context clues available and on a reread be given the chance to use the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to help them along. Thirdly, the default frame of mind should be that every element in a poem has a purpose. Students should be made to realize that artistry in language isn't just a bunch of coincidences. They should be looking for patterns and how they function separately and how they inform the text as a whole. In the end, I do not want students getting caught up in looking for guaranteed right answers. We need to remind students that poems don't always provide exact meanings and that is okay.

In an effort to help them let go of their presuppositions about structure in reading I want to revisit these four expectations by reading texts like Dr. Seuss' *Green Eggs and Ham*. Eventually, we will work our way toward Jim Hall's "Maybe Dats Your Pwoblem Too", May Swenson's "Nosty Fright", and Billy Collins' "Introduction to Poetry". While we have fun playing with the language of these texts, I want to revisit those four pillars of reading that I outlined previously. I want them to know that it is okay to struggle with texts. For instance, "Nosty Fright" is at a reading level where students will struggle, but still be able to reach that *a-ha* moment while reading.

2. Focus on the two most basic sonnet formulas

In introducing the sonnet I want to provide some background information in addition to an in-depth discussion of the two main fixed forms: Italian and English. At first we will look at examples of both kinds of sonnets, using Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" and Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer". Using these poems we will see what similarities and differences we can find between the two forms. Next, we will start looking more deeply at the significance of these two sonnet forms.

For example, when we discuss the Italian sonnet time will obviously be spent on the octave/sestet form with some emphasis on the variable sestet rhyme scheme. I primarily want to focus on octave/sestet shifts, or voltas, and will probably use Wordsworth's "The World Is Too Much with Us" and Keats's variation of that in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" as examples. We will focus on the volta's shift and analyze how changes in tone occur and how that creates and/or adds meaning.

We will also spend time looking at the form of the English sonnet. This will begin with a brief overview in comparison to the Italian sonnet and continue into a discussion about its structure in reference to rhyme and how that allows room for more thematic breaks—or in some cases for no thematic break at all. I would like to focus particularly on Shakespeare's sonnets because I think they will be the most rewarding for the students. I think that struggling students can get them on a surface level, but that they also offer plenty of depth, so that as students continually practice with the same author and form they can arrive at a deeper level of understanding.

During this time we will also work on other formal elements in poetry. More specifically, this section will also focus on rhetoric, sound, structure, theme, and historical context.

3. Spend time comparing and contrasting the sonnet [with] free verse poems

I would like students to understand the break from pentameter and other regular meters and see visual spacing and economy of language as poetic devices, as in the works of the Cummings, H. Doolittle, Whitman, and Williams. I will also include poems such as Bishop's "A Visit to St. Elizabeth's" and Moore's "I Too Dislike It".

4. Utilize our newly developed skills to analyze a piece of free verse

As I stated previously, I am interested in having a student defend a piece of free verse as a legitimate artistic endeavor. I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of conclusions can be reached by students when they start to analyze the point at which poems start to stray from fixed forms and start asking questions like: what properties of a sonnet does the poem still possess or what is the effect of its irregular meter?

Rationale

Originally this unit was set to coincide with my AP English Literature and Composition course. While that is still my intention, as I spent time with the syllabus and the summer reading list I started thinking about how I could create a unit that tackles my students' main hurdle – reading proficiency. My students have considerable oral fluency and can read aloud flawlessly, yet their reading comprehension skills are lacking. My

plan is to have students focus on the arrangement of the sonnet to help them clarify meaning in other kinds of poetry.

I often find students poetry-phobic. They can't see the use of it because they have had a hard time finding or explaining the interest of this or that poem they may have read. The sonnet, on the other hand, provides a nice formula in small compass to aid them in uncovering compressed meaning. Sonnets are convenient because they are compact, but they do pack a punch. Additionally, the sonnet implies a lot about other forms of poetry, including free verse.

Objectives

While I will be observing the Illinois State Board of Education English Standards, the College Readiness Standards, and new Common Core standards, one of the main objectives that I want my students to achieve is critical thinking. My students have asked me why they should bother to do this with poetry. The answer is that poetry itself and the reading of poetry too take great skill in performing and articulating the mental acrobatics of an argument. That is the true essence of critical thinking and can be captured in the College Board's objectives as well: ³

- Wide-ranging vocabulary used with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness
- A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordinate and coordinate constructions
- A logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
- A balance of generalization with specific illustrative detail
- An effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis
- At NMSH we follow the College Readiness Standards (CRS), designed by the American College Testing Program, to help guide our instruction. More specifically the unit is designed to help students develop or enhance the following skills: ⁴

Main Idea and Author's Approach:

- Distinguish between key concepts and secondary ideas in a text and be able to write a concise summary.
- Determine how an inference might change based on additional information
- Search for clues that suggest the viewpoint from which a text is written and whether that point of view is biases or valid (and discuss what this means)
- Look at rhetorical devices an author or narrator uses to convey their message (i.e. imagery, metaphor, analogy) and discuss effectiveness of these devices

- Supporting Details:
- Gather and interpret details in a text that support key points (find evidence in text to back up ideas)
- Check inferences against information provided in a text to identify what is and is not supported by the text.
- Identify details that support key points.
- Generalizations and Conclusions
- Pull together information in challenging texts to make generalizations/conclusions about people or situations.
- Use other sources to provide examples or counterexamples to confirm or disprove generalizations

Background Information

Poetry can be divided into three main categories: epic, dramatic, and lyric. Epic poems in the British tradition reach as far back Anglo-Saxon times with the discovery of *The Exeter Book's Beowulf*. Dramatic poems are the monologues and dialogues that are written in an author's created voice. Some examples of these would be Browning's "My Last Duchess" or Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade". Lyric poetry, originally performed by the ancient Greeks with a lyre or harp, expresses personal feelings. Lyric has since evolved into other forms including (but not limited to): ballads, ode, rondeau, villanelle, sonnets. For purposes of this unit we will be studying the sonnet.

The Sonnet

The form of the sonnet emerged during the Italian Middle Ages. Sonnets were popularized by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) during this time period and were later refined in France and Spain during the 16th century.

Consisting of 14 lines of iambic pentameter, the sonnet is the most widely-known subgenre of lyric poetry in the Western world. Borrowing its name from the Italian word *sonnetto*, meaning little song, sonnets were most widely popular during the 16th century. Typically, sonnets are a fixed form of lyric poetry that can be written in several different styles. The primary forms that appear on the AP English Literature and Composition exam are Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets.

Petrarchan sonnets, named after the 14th century poet Petrarch, are also known as Italian sonnets. The Italian sonnet consists of two main sections. The first section is an octave, eight lines, that follows the rhyme scheme *abbaabba*. The second stanza is a sestet, six lines, which have variable rhyme schemes. The most common are: *cdecde*, *cdccdc*, or *cdcdcd*.

English, or Shakespearean sonnets, fundamentally follow a similar format. Instead of containing an octave/sestet split, English sonnets are composed of three quatrains and conclude with a couplet of two rhyming lines. The rhyme scheme for an English sonnet is *abab, cdcd, efef, gg*.

I have provided a comparison chart below of the Italian and English sonnets:

	Italian			English	
1 st quatrain	<i>a</i>	octave	1 st quatrain	<i>a</i>	
	<i>b</i>			<i>b</i>	
	<i>b</i>			<i>a</i>	
	<i>a</i>			<i>b</i>	
2 nd quatrain	<i>a</i>		2 nd quatrain	<i>c</i>	
	<i>b</i>			<i>d</i>	
	<i>b</i>			<i>c</i>	
	<i>a</i>			<i>d</i>	
TURN			3 rd quatrain	<i>e</i>	
1 st tercet	<i>c</i>	sestet*		<i>f</i>	
	<i>d</i>			<i>e</i>	
	<i>e</i>			<i>f</i>	
2 nd tercet	<i>c</i>		TURN		
	<i>d</i>			<i>g</i>	
	<i>e</i>			<i>g</i>	

***Note:** The sestet of an Italian sonnet can vary. See above.

Shakespearean Sonnets

Since the bulk of the sonnets I will be covering in class were written by Shakespeare, my students should know something about the circumstances of their composition. I do not want to focus too much on his life, but more on the traditional Shakespearean sonnet form and how and why Shakespeare, at times, diverges from those conventions.

Although it is unsure when Shakespeare wrote his sonnets, they were first published in 1609 by Thomas Thorpe, as *SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS: Never before imprinted*. The collection contains 154 sonnets written by William Shakespeare. Elizabethan poets were known for writing sonnet sequences, or cycles. Shakespeare's sonnets 1-17 are commonly referred to the Get Married, Young Man sequence. These sonnets are written to a young male friend or lover and in many sonnets urge him to marry and have children. Sonnets 18-126 are bit

milder and it could be argued who the actual sequence is written to because there are shifts in addressee. Sonnets 127-52 are commonly referred to The Dark Ladie sonnets. These sonnets stray from spiritual or familial love, found in the Get Married, Young Man sequence, and are highly sexualized in content.

Students may ask why Shakespeare chose to differ from the Italian form. Joseph Rosenblum, in *The Greenwood Companion Shakespeare Vol. 4: Romances and Poetry*, claims that there are two obvious reasons Shakespeare chose this form of the sonnet. First, there is the advantage of the three sections. Since the English sonnet contains three quatrains it allows the author to develop an idea through three different stages that are parallel. This parallelism unifies this larger argument, which is then capped by the couplet.

The second claim is that this structure makes use of the greater variety of rhymes to be found in English.⁵ English words don't typically end with vowels. Italian words, on the other hand, most commonly end with feminine vowel endings that are quite limited in variety. This allows for an extended repetitive rhyme scheme. The language of English sonnets can accommodate more rhyme changes, and this in turn leads to more breaks in thematic development within the sonnet.

Free Verse

Straying from the conventions of traditional poetic forms, free verse doesn't lend itself to typical patterns. Although it can lack meter and rhyme, that doesn't necessarily mean that it lacks structure — it just lacks formalized structure. This unit relies on students being able to recognize metrical and rhyming patterns, like those in the sonnet, and being able to see the absence of such patterns in poems that seem to lack structure. It is important to note that free verse isn't just a rebellion to fixed forms of poetry, but more of an extension of what poetry can be. Despite this lack of formalized structure, free verse employs the use of varying lengths, strong repetitions of phrases, inventive use of typeset and space, etc.

Strategies

Explication

Poetry is like a puzzle. We need to look very specifically at the details in the text to create some kind of meaning as a whole. This also means that we must take every detail of the text into account. I think that sophisticated explication foundationally begins with some of the main tenets I want students to keep in mind while reading:

- 1.It is okay to revisit texts
- 2.You shouldn't get too stuck on vocabulary
- 3.Every element in a poem has a purpose
- 4.You don't need to have all of the right answers

More specifically I am asking students to read the text, think about the text, locate similarities and/or differences over the course of a text and then draw conclusions from those steps. It is important to have

students annotate their text. I suggest having a method that works for you as well as for your students. For instance, the kinds of annotations that students make on texts are same kinds that I make when I grade their papers. Having this common language also helps with peer editing. When students and I annotate in the same way we reinforce our reading tenets and apply them to our own writing. Using the teacher's practice confers critical value on their opinions.

Guiding a student through this kind of annotated explication can be quite difficult because there are so many different things to focus on in a text — no matter how small.

In my class, when we analyze poetry we will be doing so by looking through a series of different lenses:

1. Rhetorical analysis
2. Sound devices
3. Structural foundation
4. Thematic Understanding
5. Historical context

Rhetorical Analysis

This can be done in a variety of ways depending on the skill level of the student. For purposes of this class I usually have students only focus on the occasion, audience, and purpose of a text and how they utilize the rhetorical appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos.

In the case of the sonnet, this process proves to be a bit easier than for other poetic forms, because the sonnet often poses a problem and then proposes a solution.

In looking at the occasion of a poem, one must ask why the author has written it.

- What is the nagging problem?
- What about this moment provides a need for them to persuade?
- Is there anything historical about this moment or significant about moment that makes them feel the need to record it?

When assessing the audience one must question who they are writing to and for.

- Is there anything in the text that points you to a particular person or character?
- What is their relationship to the author?
- What kind of secondary audience is implied? The author's contemporaries? Posterity? Ourselves?

In the search for purpose, what is it that the author wants to do or to understand?

- How can we summarize the text?

- What is it they want the reader to believe or act upon?
- Do they successfully fulfill their purpose?

In addressing these questions it is important to evaluate the rhetorical appeals in doing so.

- How does this appeal to your reason (logos)?
- How does this appeal to your credibility (ethos)?
- How does this appeal to your emotions (pathos)?

Sound Devices

Sound plays an intricate part in poetry. Poetry is supposed to be read aloud. Sound qualities also give meaning and understanding to a text. Items students should be able to identify in a poem are:

- Alliteration — the repetition of similar sounds at the beginning of words. For example, in Sir Walter Raleigh's "To His Son": "And they be these: the **w**ood, the **w**eed, the **w**ag."
- Assonance — the repetition of particular vowel sounds to create an internal rhyme. For example, in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 55": "But you shall **sh**ine more **bri**ght **i**n these contents."
- Consonance — the repetition of a similar consonant sound two or more times. For example, in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 29": "**L**ike to the **lark** at **br**eak of day arising".
- Cacophony — the use of harsh sounds to convey additional meaning. For example, in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 116": "Within his bending sickle's compass come."
- Euphony — the opposite of cacophony; the use of pleasant sounds to convey additional meaning. For example, in Shakespeare's "Sonnet 116": "If this be error and upon me proved,/ I never writ, nor no man ever loved."
- Internal Rhyme — rhyming that occurs within a line. For example, in Richard Wilbur's "Praise in Summer": "Obsc**ure**ly yet most **sure**ly called to praise,".
- Rhyme— the repetition of similar sounds. For example, in Milton's "How Soon Hath Time" the first stanza repeats the rhyming sounds th and er. "How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of you**th**,/ Stoln on his wing my three and twentieth year!/ My hasting days fly on with full career,/ But my late spring no bud nor blossom shew'**th**."
- There are many other sound qualities in poetry, but for the purpose of this unit these are the ones that help in identifying areas of a poem that need special attention.

Structural Foundation

Since we are using the format of the sonnet as our basis, students should be able to perform scansion, note the rhyme scheme, and then try to gather information from that point forward. This is where they should start to answer key questions:

- How does the form inform the content?
- How does the form breach any operative conventions? Why does this occur?
- Is the formal element most prominently found in rhyme scheme, meter, or line? Why does it occur this or that element?

Thematic Understanding

Symbolism through metaphors, allegories, connotations through nouns, multiple symbols that are pointing in one direction: all point helpfully and concretely toward the development of a theme.

For starters, students can record first impressions of a poem. They might start with] the title, looking for double meanings or extra connotations. Many times during these first few glances it is necessary to look up any unfamiliar vocabulary. Using The Oxford English Dictionary is also useful in identifying some of those double meanings and extra connotations.

1. What kind of patterns can you identify in imagery, style, diction, punctuation, spacing, etc.?
2. What can you apply from these discoveries to the meaning of a line, stanza, or of the poem as a whole?

Historical Context

In class we break historical context into three aspects: historical time, author's history, the reader's history.

We first consider the historical context in which this poem takes place. For example, it is important when discussing a poem like Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus" to make reference to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Seeing a reference of Colossus creates context and imagery that helps us toward Lazarus' meaning.

The second kind of context we need to take into account is the author's history. This can get a bit sticky at times because students can easily be distracted from the text itself and fall back too readily on an author's history. We need to remember that we are using this context to better inform us, not to give us any answers beyond what we actually find in] the poem. It is crucial to understand Milton's political views and his relationship to Oliver Cromwell when reading "Sonnet 16" or "When the Assault Was Intended to the City". Knowing Robert Hayden's personal biography, on the other hand, can lead a discussion on "Those Winter Sundays" that strays from the form and function of the sonnet. It is key to remember that an author's personal history can enrich a text, but we want to make sure it doesn't smother it.

Lastly, one can allow students to bring in their own personal history to bear on the poem. Once again, this is tricky to do, because we want to make sure that the student focuses on the task at hand and does not get too caught up in totally private associations. I strongly suggest that having a student reference the text when giving their own personal slant will help them stay focused on the text.

Scansion

In introducing the sonnet I want to provide some background information in addition to an in-depth discussion of the two main forms. At first we will look at examples of both kinds of sonnets and see what kind of similarities and differences we can find between them. Then we will start looking more deeply at the

significance of the different forms. We will use the strategy of scansion to help guide us through this process.

Scansion is the analysis of the metrical pattern of lines and sections/stanzas. This is particularly important for students because it adds another graphical dimension to the text that can help direct them towards particular moments in a word, line, or stanza where meter reinforces meaning. Sometimes a turn of thought doesn't occur at the end of a stanza, but appears through the stresses and beats in a particular line.

There are various ways to do scansion. This unit will provide students with one of the most basic forms that will serve their purpose. For this unit we will be:

1. Reading aloud
2. Counting the syllables
3. Noting the stressed and unstressed beats
4. Identifying the feet
5. Identifying the meter

To begin this process I think it is very important for the instructor to read the poem aloud. This allows students to get the feel of the poem and recognize out any tonal qualities. By hearing the poem read aloud students will notice any shifts in the distribution of stress along the syllables. On many occasion reading aloud with this much care requires a lot of practice on the part of the instructor. There are a variety of websites that offer mp3s of poems. I suggest using these in class and practicing on your own in preparation for a lesson in scansion.

Secondly, you are going to want to break down the words into separate units of sound. This is most commonly performed by breaking lines down by syllable. Most commonly, students will mark these breaks using this symbol | . For example, the first line of Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130", "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;" becomes:

My| mis| tress| eyes| are| no| thing| like| the| sun;|

Or, the first line of Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer", "Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold," becomes:

Much| have| I| tra| vell'd| in| the| realms| of| gold|

Now that we have the breakdown of the syllables there must be notation of the meter; or, stressed and unstressed beats. You can use this chart to identify the most common feet in poetry. There are other feet not listed here, but these are the most common ⁶ :

Foot	Pattern	Example
iamb	- /	- / a way
trochee	/ -	/ - love ly
anapest	- - /	- - / un der stand
dactyl	/ - -	/ - - des per ate

Often you will also hear people refer to things like rising meter. That is when the accent is on the last beat (- /), as in an iamb or an anapest. Another term that is used is falling meter. That is when the accent is on the first beat (/ -), as in a trochee or a dactyl.

I have seen this notation done in a variety of different ways. For younger students, I have seen teachers use capitalization in place of stress:

My MIS tress EYES are NO thing LIKE the SUN;

or

MUCH have i TRA vell'd IN the REALMS of GOLD

In my classroom, I choose to use the mark / to symbolize a stress and an - to symbolize an unstressed syllable.

- / - / - / - / - /
My| mis| tress| eyes| are| no| thing| like| the| sun|;

or

/ - - / - / - / - /
Much| have| I| tra| vell'd| in| the| realms| of| gold|

To put the feet into meter we should count the feet in the line. Here is a basic chart you can use in your classroom:

Monometer - one foot

Dimeter - two feet

Trimeter - three feet

Tetrameter - four feet

Pentameter - five feet

Hexameter - six feet

Heptameter - seven feet

Octameter - eight feet

In studying the sonnet, we will rely primarily on iambic pentameter. Notice that in both the Shakespeare's

"Sonnet 130" and Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" the five basically iambic feet are repeated from line to line. That is because these two pieces are written in iambic pentameter.

So why do we do this? First, we do it to learn to recognize meter. Secondly, we do it to make the writer's technique visible. It can help direct us to points in a poem where an author deviates from convention, for example replacing the expected iamb with a trochee. Why do they deviate? Why do they choose to do it there? What about the language helps us decide? Do we see any larger patterns by line or stanza, and how does such repetition or change affect the poem as a whole?

Socratic Seminar

There are many ideas behind the use of Socratic seminar in the classroom. Personally, I find that dialogue between students with the teacher functions as a facilitator. The difficulty in this is to allow students to guide the discussion. Some steps that help students with this strategy are to have clearly defined norms for running a Socratic seminar:

1. Nameplate — helps students guide the discussion by referencing others' ideas
2. Professional etiquette — guides how we listen and respond to others
3. No ad hominem expressions — sticking to the text for argument's sake and not taking away from your argument by acting ignorant or petulant
4. Refer back to the texts — if you are going to make a point in class you must refer to either the text or a comment that someone has already made

The focus of these Socratic seminars will be another way to guide close reading with a more critical, analytical discussion. Additionally, the role of facilitator (teacher) is to be prepared to pull students through the discussion. This needs to be done through a carefully prepared set of questions. I can foresee Socratic seminar developing from one of the following questions for this unit:

1. What are the conventions of the English/Italian sonnet?
2. When does the sonnet break from form?
3. Why does it break from the form?

Activities

Explication

Explication is a very difficult skill because there are so many different lenses in which to look at poems. I strongly suggest choosing poems that lend themselves to many different lenses that students have practiced. The purpose of this activity is to have students practice applying several specific lenses to a poem and have them explain their explication to the class.

Students should be placed in groups of 3-4 students and be given a teacher selected poem. Students will read through the poem twice and try to identify any distinguishing characteristics. Students will then visit five stations with their poems: rhetorical analysis, sound devices, structural foundation, thematic understanding, historical context. They should take notes on their own for purposes of this assignment. If the teacher wants to guide the assignment more carefully the teacher can then provide very specific questions at each station that the students visit. Students should spend about five minutes on each station, have five minutes to formulate their findings to the class, and have five minutes to report their findings. Times can be adjusted depending on your class length and level of students.

Scansion

Scansion is a difficult skill that also takes time and practice. The purpose of this assignment is to have students perform basic level scansion to help them identify the differences between English and Italian sonnets. Students should be prompted with a lecture about sonnets and primed with the vocabulary internal rhyme, couplet, quatrain, sestet, octave, sonnet, Italian sonnet, English sonnet, volta, and enjambment. This assignment can also extend to other kinds of sonnets.

Students can either work alone or with a partner. Students will read the poem twice aloud to one another. They will go through the following steps:

1. Mark the rhyme scheme for each of the sonnets (remind students that sometimes rhymes aren't exact)
2. Based on the rhyme scheme identify the sections in the sonnets. Do you see quatrains, sestets, octaves, couples? Where are they located?
3. Now, identify what kind of sonnets they are. What kinds of similarities and differences do you notice?

Advanced classes can take this a step forward and do the following:

4. Mark the beats and meters for each line. What do you notice? Are there any shifts or changes in the meter? How does that shift signify any other changes within the line or poem?
5. Locate the volta? Is it what you expected, why? Is it out of place and, if so, what do you think was the author's purpose? Why?

Socratic Seminar

The purpose of this lesson is to help prime the argumentative process needed to be fleshed out in their final paper. Students should be primed by having access to the poems beforehand. I also suggest giving them an assignment that makes them think and respond to the text. This pre-exercise only needs to be 3-4 questions that are focused, scaffolded, and connected to the seminar. This is also a chance for you to provide any background information necessary for students, as well as, any clarification of vocabulary.

Before students enter the classroom seats/desks should be in a circle and students should have their nameplates available. Students should enter the classroom, set-up their nameplate, and have their assignment visible. The facilitator should be ready with a plentiful list of questions to help continued conversation through the allotted time. The Socratic seminar should begin with all students individually answering a yes or no question about a text. The question needs to be specific to the topic, but also fair and balanced in that students will select a fair amount of both "yes" and "no" answers. A fully planned lesson

would include a variety of these questions as a way to facilitate strong conversation. It should also be emphasized that a successful seminar is often when students make reference to someone else's thought and/or returning to the text to support their own claims.

- Questions that you could consider for this lesson:
- Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130": Read through lines 13 and 14 again. Are you convinced by the speaker's claim?
- Jonson's "On My First Son": Read through this poem again. Is this poem a sonnet?
- Bishop's, "Vists to St. Elizabeths": Read through this poem again. Does the nursery rhyme scheme fit the function of this poem?

Annotated Bibliography

Abrams, M. H. . *Glossary of Literary Terms*. New York: Rinehart, 1971.

This is a great basic text that covers terms and theories applicable to world literature.

College Board. "English Literature". http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_englit.html>.

"College Readiness Standards". ACT, Inc. <http://www.act.org/standard/>>.

Deutche, Babette. *Poetry Handbook: A Dictionary of Terms*. New York: Harper, 1974.

This text is good for basic poetry terms to cover in class. It also provides titles of examples that correspond.

Ellemann, Richard. *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1988.

This is a wonderful text that includes modern poetry in the authors' chronological order. It begins with Whitman and continues to authors who were born in the mid 1950's.

Ferguson, Margaret . *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2004.

There are thousands of pages of poems in authors' chronological order from Anglo-Saxon to the present cannon in this edition. Additionally, it also includes short biographical entries as an appendix.

"Robert Frost" Poets.org <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/192>>.

Rosenblum, Joseph. *The Greenwood Companion to Shakespeare: Vol. 4 Romances and Poetry*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005.

The nice thing about this text is that it does the following: paraphrases the sonnet, addresses the placement of the sonnet in relation to those around it, identifies devices and techniques, locates themes and meanings, and shows their relationship to other Shakespearean texts. Additionally, each entry includes its own annotated bibliography.

Sandburg, Carl. *The Atlantic Monthly*. March, 1942. <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/42mar/sandburg.htm>>.

Schoenbaum, Samuel. *William Shakespeare, a compact documentary life*. New York: Oxford, 1977.

This text combines an anthology of Shakespeare's works with original stage directions, omitted lines, and revisions.

Strand, Mark. *The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001.

Each chapter offers insight into a variety of poetic forms via history, contemporary application, and close reading.

Wells, Stanley, and Michael Dobson. *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*. New York: Oxford, 2001.

This is another very good anthology of Shakespeare's works. This anthology also includes a first line index of his sonnets.

Student Resources

Bishop, Elizabeth "Visits to St. Elizabeths"

Collins, Billy "Introduction to Poetry"

Daniel, Samuel "Sonnet LV"

Dr. Seuss *Green Eggs and Ham*

Hall, Jim "Maybe Dats Your Pwoblem Too"

Hayden, Robert "Thos Winter Sundays"

Jonson, Ben "On My First Son"

Keats, John "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"

Keats, John "On the Sonnet"

Lazarus, Emma "The New Colossus"

Milton, John "How Soon Hath Time"

Milton, John "Sonnet 16"

Milton, John "When the Assault Was Intended to the City"

Moore, Maryann "I Too Dislike It"

Raleigh, Sir Walter "To His Son"

Sandburg, Carl *The Atlantic Monthly* March 1942 "Those Who Make Poems"

Shakespeare, William "Sonnet 116"

Shakespeare, William "Sonnet 130"

Shakespeare, William "Sonnet 18"

Shakespeare, William "Sonnet 29"

Swenson, Mae "A Nosty Fright"

Appendix One: Terms to Know

Allegory
Alliteration
Allusion
Ambiguity
Anapest
Assonance
Audience
Cacophony
Connotation
Consonance
Convention
Cosmic irony
Couplet
Dactyl
Denotation
Diameter
Diction
Dramatic irony
Dramatic poetry
Epic poetry
Ethos
Euphony
Exigence
Explication
Falling meter
First person (point of view)
Foot/feet
Formal diction
Heptameter
Heroic couplet
Hexameter
Hyperbole
Iamb
Imagery
Informal diction
Line

Logos
Lyric poetry
Metaphor
Meter
Middle diction
Monometer
Octameter
Onomatopoeia
Paradox
Parody
Pathos
Pentameter
Personification
Poetic diction
Point of view
Purpose
Quatrain
Rhetorical analysis
Rhyme
Rhythm
Rising meter
Sarcasm
Scansion
Simile
Situational irony
Sonnet
Spondee
Style
Tercet
Tetrameter
Theme
Third person (point of view)
Tragic irony
Trimeter
Trochee
Verbal irony
Volta

Appendix Two: College Readiness Standards (English)

Strand	Topic Development in Terms of Purpose and Focus*	Organization, Unity, and Coherence*
CRS	<p><i>Identify the focus of a simple essay applying that knowledge to add a sentence that sharpens the focus or to determine if the essay has met a specified goal</i></p> <p><i>Delete material b/c it disturbs the flow and development of a paragraph</i></p> <p><i>Add a sentence to accomplish a fairly straightforward purpose such as illustrating a given statement</i></p>	<p><i>Determine the need for conjunctive adverbs or phrases to create connections between sentences (e.g. therefore, however)</i></p> <p><i>Add a sentence to introduce or conclude an essay or to provide a transition between paragraphs</i></p>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Critique and evaluate a piece of writing to determine that it maintains focus ✓ Reorganize an essay so that it meets an intended purpose ✓ Provide evidence, examples, and details to illustrate topic sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create complex sentences by combining sentences using conjunctive adverbs or phrases ✓ Include transition sentences in body paragraphs to increase fluency of a piece of writing

*Throughout the year we will be working on **Conventions of Punctuation** - use punctuation to set off complex parenthetical phrases, recognize and delete unnecessary commas based on a careful reading of a complicated sentences (e.g., between elements of a compound subject or compound verb joined by *and*), use apostrophes to indicate simple possessive nouns, recognize inappropriate uses of colons and semicolons.

- Parts of speech
- Parts of a sentence
- Comma usage
- Punctuation, commas for items in a series
- Punctuation in quotations
- Appropriate comma usage for sentence flow

Appendix Three: College Readiness Standards (Reading)

Strand	Main Idea (MID)**	Supporting Details (SUP)**
CRS	<i>Recognize a clear intent of an author or narrator in uncomplicated narratives</i>	<i>Locate basic facts clearly stated in a passage.</i>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Locate and identify details that will help you figure out what the author is trying to say. ✓ Determine what the author is thinking about. ✓ Recognize what the author is trying to say throughout the entire paragraph. ✓ Define narrator/author ✓ Create sentences that allow you to restate what paragraph is all about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Locate and define facts and opinion (are facts true? do you agree with the author's opinions? discuss the above with your students) ✓ Locate and discuss basic facts that are clearly stated in a passage ✓ Determine which facts/details are important to understand the author's intended message ✓ Identify which facts/details are important to understand the main idea/author's intended message ✓ Scan the paragraphs to find important and/or specific information
Literacy Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fishbone/Herringbone ✓ Paraphrasing ✓ Most Important Word ✓ CLOZE ✓ Guided Reading ✓ QAR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rapid Retrieval of Information (RRI) ✓ Reciprocal Teaching ✓ SQ3R ✓ Jigsaw

Throughout the year we will be working on **Meanings of Words — Understand the implication of a familiar word or phrase of simple descriptive language:

- Examine the text and explain the meaning words based on their experiences
- Explain prior knowledge and how it relates to the meaning of words for your students(make connections)
- Use the dictionary and thesaurus to increase your students vocabulary

Endnotes

1. Sandburg, Carl. *The Atlantic Monthly*. March, 1942. <http://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/42mar/sandburg.htm>>.
2. "Robert Frost" Poets.org <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/192>>.
3. College Board. "English Literature". http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/sub_englit.html>.
4. "College Readiness Standards". ACT, Inc. <http://www.act.org/standard/>>.
5. Rosenblum, Joseph. *The Greenwood Companion to Shakespeare: Vol. 4 Romances and Poetry*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005, 1056.
6. Meyer, Michael. *The Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*. Bedford/St. Martin: 2008.

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