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Don't Fear the Symmetry: The Poetry of William Blake

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Overview

Thus far in my teaching career, nothing brings more sighs and moans in my classroom than when I begin a poetry lesson. Poetry is, without a doubt, the most off-putting genre to a majority of my students. This is frustrating for many reasons. I love poetry and cannot understand how my heightened excitement does not readily transfer to my students; most, if not all, of my students are highly musical and recite hip-hop lyrics on the spot and expound upon their meaning, which tells me they have the tools to discover meaning in the poetry I present to them. I write on the board each time: poeTRY. I plead with them to try, and I am at a loss when my teaching gets lost in translation and students continue to remain locked out of the most beautiful expressions of language available to them.

I study poetry for pleasure, and I am always looking for a poem that will ignite a spark in my students. In thinking about this unit, I knew right away that I wanted to create something on William Blake and his illustrated poems. His ideas expressed in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* are gripping and very telling about the times in which he lived. While reading these poems, I began to think about my own students' experiences; what do they know of innocence and experience? How do they view the world around them in relation to these concepts, both socially and politically? What do they fear and how does this fear contribute to loss of innocence? How can they use Blake's illustrations and poems to express their concerns about their current lives and situations?

William Blake believed that "innocence" and "experience" constituted the two "contrary states of the human soul." One can relate innocence to childhood, and experience as the loss of childhood caused by fear, inhibition, or social and political corruption. [1] Blake's first exploration of innocence is introduced in "Song by an Old Shepard." He defines innocence as " a winter's gown which helps us abide life's perpetuating storm." He stresses that innocence is not necessarily the opposite of experience per say, but rather the opposite of "experimental life, its storms and follies." Harold Bloom carries this idea further by noting in his work *William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience* that "innocence is a state of the soul that warms our hearts against experience, and reproaches the errors of a supposedly mature existence." [2] Blake had a profound grasp on the interrelationship between the individual and societal problems that highlight cruelty, injustice, and violence. He sought understanding of how to free man's natural mind from the "illusionary opposites" of the divine/human, as explored in the poem "The Divine Image." He also explored the relationship between the

spiritual/material and the self/other that are found in all individuals. [3]

This three-week unit is designed for 50 seniors in Advanced Placement Literature and Composition at Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond, Virginia. At the completion of this course, students are required to take the AP Literature exam, which, with a passing score, gives them credit for one college-level English course upon entering college or university. Forty percent of this exam asks them to analyze and evaluate poetry through a written essay, as well as through several multiple choice questions based on 2 to 3 randomly selected poems. While ensuring that students are adequately prepared for success on this exam is certainly the focus of most of the instruction in my classroom, it is also my desire to help my students become more confident readers of poetry and to show them how to experience the pleasure in the language of poetry.

I have selected four poems and illustrations from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* for my students to study throughout this unit: "The Lamb," and "The Tyger," and "The Chimney Sweeper" (from both books). Through the use of annotation, reader response writing, Socratic seminars, as well as the creation of original poems and illustrations, students will be afforded the opportunity to see poetry in a new way. Each poem is creative expression, a unique riddle of the imagination. Each illustration is a door that I ask my students to walk through, into the poem itself

Rationale

Passing the AP Literature and Composition exam is largely based on a student's ability to interpret poetry. Students are presented with poems that are often difficult due to their archaic language and tricky syntactical patterns. Also, the time constraint of the exam adds extra pressure, and students often give up on making a solid effort to perform well on the poetry sections. Basically, if presented with a poem that is not simplistic in language and theme, students shut down. They need to learn how to relate to the poem, to find a connection between themselves and the language, no matter the time period or subject matter.

The focus of this unit is multi-faceted. First, I begin with a study of the major characteristics of the Romantic Age, providing for students a general idea of what was happening socially and politically during the time period of Blake's poems selected for study. This helps students better understand the poet's purpose. Second, I present students with a list of poetry vocabulary terms. While I initially have them define the terms and provide textual examples of each, I do not believe it is imperative that they perform a rote memorization of these terms. It is more important that they learn to identify specific terms within a piece of poetry and begin to understand how the poet projects his ideas through the use of metaphor, assonance, or paradox, for example. I most often only focus on two or three terms per poem, so as not to overwhelm students. I might then suggest a question that asks how a particular device allows the poet to express an idea. Furthermore, I always encourage students to identify any other poetic term that they think helps link a poetic device to meaning. Students must learn ways in which to identify literary tools on the AP Literature and Composition Exam. Third, I provide a brief biography of William Blake. I want students to embrace Blake and his time period fully in order to see the genius of the man who painted his ideas.

While this unit is designed for my AP Literature and Composition students in their senior year of high school, it is easily adaptable for any British Literature class or for a study in poetry of the Romantic Age. There is much to be discovered about the social and historical value of Blake's poetry, as well as a multitude of ways to

connect his poetry and illustrations to contemporary times. His works are an excellent gateway into the study of Romantic, pre-20 th century British poetry specifically, but also any poetry analysis generally.

School Profile

Thomas Jefferson is a comprehensive high school located in Richmond, Virginia. The school is fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). It is also the only urban high school in the area with an International Baccalaureate program and nearly a quarter of our students pursue this accreditation.

Student enrollment is currently at 850, with a student: teacher ratio of 25:1. Although not a Title I school, 45% of the students pay reduced lunch prices. Less than 50% of Thomas Jefferson's graduates are accepted into four-year colleges or universities and scholarship rewards are few and far between which makes this curriculum all the more necessary for my students. Classes are conducted on an alternating block schedule. Students enroll in eight classes per year and attend each class on alternate days for 90 minutes per day. This unit allows the time to delve most effectively into the material we study for the AP Exam.

Objectives

At the completion of this unit, students will be able to identify the main characteristics of the Romantic Age; consider how imaginative literature reflects social and historical values of a given time period; understand how poets use language to give both meaning and pleasure to readers; recognize how illustrations help make text more meaningful; learn to perform close readings and analysis of imaginative literature that broadens their understanding of the world around them; understand how the use of poetic devices leads the reader to understand an author's purpose; develop skills as both reader and writer that reflect careful consideration of a piece of poetry; and explore how poetry reflects the human condition and is a form of communication that transcends the ages.

Research

> In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, *the Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human* society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the Poet's thoughts are every where; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. [4]

The Romantic Age

William Wordsworth's quote is a strong gateway into instruction on poetry of The Romantic Age. Despite where we live or how we live, poetry transcends time and place and provides for the reader an understanding of human existence. Poets find inspiration all around; the poems penned are lasting and once the reader connects with the language, it is forever etched in the heart and soul.

Love may be the occasional subject of poetry or art from this time period, but the Romantic Age has little connection with what most of us consider "romantic." This movement was stronger in England and Germany than countries where most of the romantic languages were spoken at the time. Beginning in the 1770's and lasting through the nineteenth century as a reaction against Neoclassicism, Romanticism emphasizes imagination and emotion over reason and intellect. The earlier part of this movement runs parallel to both the American and French revolutions, which brought about political, social, and economic turmoil, as well as the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. [5]

The basic tenets of English Romanticism are faith in the imagination, faith in the individual, interest in the past, and interest in nature. Thematic elements of Romanticism include emphasis on emotion and spontaneity of physical passion and the belief in the goodness of man in his natural state. The importance of individualism was stressed, as society revolted against political authority and convention. Stylistically, poets of this time period created wild writing dealing with exotic topics; contrasted and arranged objects asymmetrically, and seemed to be attracted to the melancholy and the cruel. [6]

For Romanticism, imagination is considered the dynamic, active power for creating art that represents life not as it is, but perhaps to escape from reality in some way. Romanticism asks humans to understand differences and opposites in a world where previously Neoclassic rules were followed. William Blake is a true poet of the Romantic Age in that he condemned the traditional verse forms in his poetry. His inspiration came from his visions and he believed that individuals "don't want either Greek or Roman models if we are but just and true to our own imaginations." The Romantic poets value instinct, emotion, and intuition above all. [7]

Poetry Terminology

There is a vast amount of poetic terminology to use when studying poetry. Students need exposure to most of these terms, but it is important that they are not overwhelmed with too many at one time. Also, rote memorization of these terms is not a goal; rather, students should learn how to recognize examples of these terms while actively reading and engaging with text. Focus on two to three terms per poem. For example, I discuss rhythm and imagery in "The Tyger." Using the document camera, I model annotations, marking patterns and vivid imagery throughout the poem. Once students are comfortable with selected terms, I add to the list. As we move through poetry instruction, I find that students begin to make connections and discoveries on their own.

I provide for students a list of poetry terms to be covered throughout the year. They are required to define each term and give a textual example using direct lines from various poems. This frontloading of information helps students begin to make connections between the device and how it is used in a poem. Sometimes, students benefit from hearing "real world" examples, either from familiar commercials or popular slogans. Terms used specifically for the study of Blake's poetry are discussed in the Classroom Activities section.

Historical Background

The English Industrial Revolution shaped much of artists' responses between 1760 and 1815 and Blake was no exception. Production of goods moved from the villages to industrial centers, causing disconnect with the traditions with which individuals were familiar. As manufacturing took over, men were forced to change the way in which they viewed their place in the economy. Working in villages allowed man to see his livelihood as a gift from nature. The village worker was master of his destiny, but dependent upon times of plenty or famine. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, Englishmen moved from cottage and village life to factory life. This shift made man more of an individual, separate from his family or the larger community in which he lived. [8]

Brief Biography of William Blake

William Blake's poetry speaks to the time period in which he lived. His illustrations and poetry speak to the changes that occurred during the Industrial Revolution in England. His work is a part of the Romantic Age, yet his life lies in the Industrial Revolution. A self-taught, lonely, and awkward poet, he shattered the traditions of previous ideas in art and literature.

William Blake, who lived from 1757-1827, was self-educated except for the field of engraving, in which he was apprenticed from age fourteen for the next seven years. He did not attend public school, as public education was not available until nearly a century later, but was educated at home by his mother. Prior to his apprenticeship, Blake attended a drawing school, which would later fuel his many illustrations published during his lifetime. In 1779, he entered the Royal Academy, which allowed him to practice drawing from living models and to attend lectures and exhibitions. [9]

His childhood was rather pleasant with only one well-known oddity: he had what one might call "visions." In G.E. Bentley's *Blake Records*, Bentley describes these visions as follows:

> From his earliest childhood Blake saw visions. When he was four years old, God put his head to the window and set the child screaming, and once "his mother beat him for running in & saying that he saw the Prophet Ezekiel under a Tree in the Fields." Later, when he was eight or ten, one day as he was walking on Peckham Rye […] he saw 'a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars.' Another time, on a summer morning he saw "the hay –makers at work, and amid them angelic figures walking. [10]

Blake's interest in the opinions of others was merely to refute them at every turn. He lived and worked alone, with his wife Catherine whom he taught to read and write. As he worked to create illustrations for the writings of others, he gradually lost commissions because he turned these assignments into his own independent creation. He followed the Christian belief system, yet he hated churches; he was political yet he hated radicals. [11]

Blake believed that every obstacle to the imagination was merely a fiction bred by the division man created within him. He rebelled against society; he disliked any formal sort of institution such as prisons, churches, money, morals, and anything "trendy" in opinion. Any restrictions that man felt within society came from within his own mind – what Blake called the "mind-forg'd manacles." Sin was not something he believed in, but he thought that man committed "intellectual errors." He mocked the ideas of good and evil because to him, men cannot be punished for "following their energies." [12]

In his lifetime, William Blake created over 1400 designs and engravings for books, over 1000 prints and watercolors about biblical, literary, and historical subjects; and roughly 400 plates for his own "verbal-visual" books he dubbed "illuminated printing." [13]

Brief Synopsis of "The Lamb" and "The Tyger"

"The Lamb" (*Songs of Innocence*) and "The Tyger" (*Songs of Experience*) portray two views of a creator. While the poems in Songs of Experience tend to have a darker tone, Blake is not trying to convince the reader that experience is inferior to innocence. Instead, he seems to suggest that each state within the individual reflects the incompleteness of the other. [14]

Using simple diction, monosyllabic words and end-stopped lines, Blake creates a childlike simplicity for the reader in the poem "The Lamb." The couplets and repetitions beg the reader to sing the poem aloud. The speaker, a child, talks to the lamb, asks the lamb the question "Little Lamb, who made thee?" and answers his own question in a trustful way. The child accepts the Christian story he has been taught: that the lamb was created by Christ, Christ is known as a lamb as shown in the New Testament, and Christ is also "a little child" through his incarnation. Therefore, the child and the lamb are one with Christ. All are gentle and merciful. [15]

While the main question in "The Lamb" is answered in "The Tyger," the central question, "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" is left unanswered. The speaker, an adult, is not speaking to a tiger literally, but rather apostrophizing (this is an excellent opportunity to introduce apostrophe as a literary device). The imagery of the poem is fierce. Right away, the reader can imagine two eyes peering out from the darkness, glowing like fire. This imagery of fire is carried throughout with comparisons of the tiger to items such as "hammer," "chain," "furnace," and "anvil." The creator is the all-powerful smith, but, is this creator good or evil? Does the smith see what he has created? The tiger, in his awesomeness, arouses fear and admiration in the reader at the same time. Its "fearful symmetry," the burning of its eyes, its twisted sinewy heart, the "deadly terrors" of its brain all suggest beauty and ugliness, strength and violence. And if the tiger is awesome, then so must be his creator, who is described as "immortal" and "daring," "winged" and "strong." [16]

What do the lamb and the tiger symbolize? After discussing both poems, students explore the range of meanings these symbols evoke. Using the ideas of innocence and experience, conversations should run towards concepts that involve good and evil, God's love and wrath, meekness and power, purity and sexuality, peace and war, or mercy and justice.

Strategies

Free response writing

Homework assigned the night prior to a Socratic Seminar allows time for students to begin thinking about their own concepts of the topic for discussion. For this unit, I ask students to compile a set of five images that they believe best represent their ideas about innocence and experience. Once they determine the visual representation of these ideas, they are required to write two to three sentences per image, making a connection between the visual and the concept. Images can come from variable sources such as the Internet or magazines. The expectation is that students bring their completed work to the following class period in

preparation for the think, pair, share and carousel activities.

Think, Pair, Share

This strategy is designed to provide time and structure for students to think about both prior knowledge and new information. They have the opportunity to share their ideas with peers and formulate their own thoughts as they respond to the ideas of others. It also encourages responses from all students, rather than relying on the more traditional strategy of the teacher proposing a question and then only one or two students volunteering answers.

For this unit, students should be prepared to share their chosen images and explanations on the concepts of innocence and experience with a partner prior to whole class discussion. Pair students together and provide for them a set of guided questions to help stimulate discussion. For example, you might ask them to define their definition of innocence and explain how a particular image relates to that definition. Encourage students to express whether they agree or disagree with one another. The goal is to have each pair determine a definition for each concept, as well as provide a visual that best represents each definition. These will be shared with the whole class through the carousel activity.

Carousel, or Rotating Review

The purpose of this type of learning promotes discussion of new or existing information through movement, conversation, and reflection. Students will post an image and explanation that represents their understanding of the concepts of innocence and experience at specific locations in the classroom (see Lesson 1 under Classroom Activities). They then move clockwise, spending two to three minutes at each location, and reflect as to why they agree or disagree with other opinions on these concepts. This allows time for students to formulate their thoughts for discussion, as well as think about ideas and opinions that may differ from their own. As students work, I observe images and read comments to determine open-ended questions for Socratic Seminar that occurs in Lesson 1.

Socratic Seminar

At the completion of carousel, students then sit in a circle and begin the Socratic method of discussion. The purpose of the Socratic Seminar is to allow for a formal discussion among students based on open-ended questions proposed by the teacher. This type of discussion promotes close listening and critical thinking and offers an opportunity for students to practice articulating their own thoughts and responses to the ideas of others. I provide each student with 2 to 3 poker chips, depending on the allotted time for discussion; I consider this the "anti-poker game" where students attempt to rid themselves of the chips rather than acquire them. Only when a student makes a meaningful comment will I collect his/her chip. Students sit in a circle and the following rules are followed for the duration of discussion:

- Students should not raise their hands to speak, but rather practice reading social cues and knowing when to speak and when to wait their turn.

- Students should always remain respectful of the ideas of their peers.

- Students should always use academic language (no slang or foul words).

- Students should address one another, as I will facilitate but remain silent about my own opinions and the opinions of my students.

As students move through discussion, they will decide on one definition of each concept that will remain on display for reference as we study William Blake's poetry. It is my hope that these definitions will be added to or modified as new ways of looking at innocence and experience are discovered through poetry.

Guided Notes

Students receive a summary of the class lecture on The Romantic Age and William Blake. Blanks are provided throughout; students are required to fill in these blanks with key points of the lecture. The intent here is active engagement during the lecture, as well as the provision of full and accurate notes that students can use for study. Guided notes should be brief. I always verify completion of notes and give students a quiz grade based on accuracy.

TPCASTT Analysis

Prior to the introduction of the unit, I will model poetry annotation on the overhead. It is important that students witness the process of annotation; they need continual practice in order to perfect their ability in connecting the use of poetic devices with the poet's purpose in writing. Due to the nature of the AP Literature and Composition exam, this objective must remain in the forefront of instruction. However, annotation also opens the door for students to explore their own ideas and connections to a piece of poetry. I attempt to balance these two approaches during my instruction.

TPCASTT analysis is a formulaic approach to teaching poetry. Before beginning annotation, model reading the poem aloud two to three times. If time permits, ask a student to read as well. Using a document camera, place a clean copy of the poem on the overhead and mark the poem throughout discussion; also provide individual copies for each student to use during discussion. Walk students through TPCASTT, which asks students to approach a poem in the following seven ways:

T (Title): Read the title and predict the meaning of the poem.

P (Paraphrase): Translate the poem literally line by line in your own words. Look up unfamiliar words.

C (Connotation): Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Focus on figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

A (Attitude/Tone): Note the speaker's attitude or tone. Humorous? Sarcastic?

S (Shifts): Note any changes in the speaker's attitude or tone. Look for time changes, punctuation, or key words that signal a shift in idea.

T (Title): Reexamine the title. Have your ideas shifted after studying the poem?

T (Theme): State, in a complete sentence, what you believe the poem is about (this is the subject), and what the poet is trying to convey about the subject (this is theme).

In my past experiences with this approach, the most difficult part for students lies in determining the connotations of a poem. I am flexible as we move through the analysis, sometimes discussing theme and then going back to explore some of the connotations of the piece. Movement through TPCASTT does not have to be orderly; the students should guide the discussion and be allowed to express their ideas freely.

Individual Projects

At the close of the unit, students are required to create an original set of poems and illustrations that reflect their learning of the concepts of innocence and experience. It is important that students are given flexibility in their approach to this assignment, as it is the creative piece of the unit.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1: Presentation of Research and Socratic Seminar

Procedures and Objectives

Students bring their completed homework assignments to class and I begin instruction with a pair and share activity. Students will work with a partner and discuss their chosen images and explanations. Through this discussion students will determine the best representation of innocence and experience by selecting one image for each. They must also combine or rewrite their explanation to justify their thinking.

The class will then move to the carousel (or rotating review) activity.

At the completion of carousal, students then sit in a circle and begin the Socratic method of discussion.

As students move through discussion, they will decide on one definition of each concept that will remain on display for reference as we study William Blake's poetry. It is my hope that these definitions will be added to or modified as new ways of looking at innocence and experience are discovered through poetry.

Lesson 2: An Introduction to William Blake and Analysis of "The Chimney Sweeper"

The second lesson begins with a lecture providing background information on William Blake. I will supply students with guided notes and they are responsible for filling in information as I move through the lecture. Major concepts to explore include a brief biography of Blake and a brief historical background of the time period in which he lived. For this portion of the lecture, I focus on the Industrial Revolution and provide information on the chimney sweep, as well as Blake's ideas about the importance of childhood, the corruption of human lives in the name of social progress, and what Blake believe to be the purpose of the two contrary states of the human soul. Furthermore, I will cover ideas that fueled the Romanticism period.

We will then turn to the first set of poems for study: "The Chimney Sweeper" from *Songs of Innocence* and "The Chimney Sweeper" from *Songs of Experience*. Using the document camera, I will introduce Blake's first illustration of "The Chimney Sweeper" from *Songs of Innocence*. Students observe the image and answer the questions in Activity I. After a brief discussion, students complete Activity II by writing a brief description of the scene depicted on the poem. Students share their responses. Ask questions such as: How did they organize their descriptions (top to bottom, bottom to top, side to side, etc.) and what do they know of chimney sweeps and how did this affect their response? We then move to Activity III, where students complete the bubble chart by filling in the elements of the image that appeal to the senses (imagery). From this chart, students should determine the mood of the image and express their ideas in a complete thematic statement.

After studying the illustration, students then complete an annotation of the poem. Discussion of the poem

follows. At this point, students will revisit their original definition of innocence to identify any changes in their patterns of thinking.

The above activities are repeated for "The Chimney Sweeper" from *Songs of Experience.* Once students have an understanding of both poems, discussion of innocence and experience as they relate to the two poems ensues.

The activities for analysis of "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" are the same as above.

Suggested Poems and Illustrations

All of William Blake's poems and illustrations are easily adaptable to this unit. It is helpful to use contemporary examples of poetry/song lyrics to reiterate the concepts of innocence and experience. I will incorporate "Forever Young" by Jay-Z, which works well in comparison with "Like a Rolling Stone" by Bob Dylan. I will also use "Big-Eyed Fish" by Dave Matthews Band, and "Tell Me Baby" by Red Hot Chili Peppers. Encouraging students to find their own examples to bring to class for discussion will help reinforce the concepts studied in class.

Resources

Ackroyd, Peter. *Blake*. New York: Knopf: 1996.

Peter Ackroyd's study of William Blake is an excellent source for background information on Blake's life and writings.

Blake, William, Mary Lynn Johnson, and John E. Grant. *Blake's poetry and designs: authoritative texts, illuminations in color and monochrome, related prose, criticism*. New York: Norton, 1979.

Readers of this source are offered a glimpse of William Blake's illustrations in color. There are also several criticisms that offer different viewpoints about Blake's writing and drawing.

Blake, William, and Richard Willmott. *Songs of innocence and of experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

A valuable resource for both teachers and students. It includes study questions and brief analysis for Blake's poetry found in these two collections.

Bloom, Harold. *William Blake*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985.

A useful source for those interested in reading critical essays on William Blake and his ideas.

Bloom, Harold. *William Blake's Songs of innocence and of experience*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers,

1987.

Another valuable resource for insight into the mind of William Blake.

Bronowski, Jacob. *William Blake and the age of revolution*. [1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

This source helps the reader make connections between the social and political issues of William Blake's era with the approaches and topics he discussed in his works.

Frye, Northrop. *Blake; a collection of critical essays.*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966.

The critical essays in this collection aid the reader in solving the many mysteries that hide in Blake's writing.

Frye, Northrop. *Fearful symmetry: a study of William Blake*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Perhaps the most dense and challenging text on William Blake, Frye presents several ways in which to look at Blake's writings and illustrations. A must read for any reader who is seeking to better understand Blake's poetry.

Fuller, John. *Who is Ozymandias?, and other puzzles in poetry*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2011.

This gem is highly recommended for both teachers and students. It presents several approaches to understanding poetry from all periods and is very fun to read!

Haggarty, Sarah, and Jon Mee. *Blake and conflict*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

There is an excellent introduction that discusses historical background of Britain during the Industrial Revolution. It also offers discussion on Blake's many illustrations, as well as insight into Blake's religious beliefs.

Hilton, Nelson. *Literal imagination: Blake's vision of words*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

A great guide for studying Blake's illuminated paintings with his poetry.

Hollander, John. *Rhyme's reason: a guide to English verse*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

This source is essential for any teacher of poetry. Hollander helps the reader with patterns and forms of poetry in a way that is easily understood.

Kinzie, Mary. *A poet's guide to poetry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Although technical in delivery, this source provides information about the elements of poetry. There are also several writing assignments included towards the end of the text that could be valuable to students as creative writing assignments.

Murfin, Ross C., and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford glossary of critical and literary terms*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009.

This is an excellent resource for teachers. It provides definitions and examples of literary terms that students must utilize in any English classroom.

Phillips, Michael. *Interpreting Blake: essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

This is another source full of essays on William Blake and his works.

Roberts, Jonathan. *William Blake's Poetry*. London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2007.

This source provides access to William Blake's poetry with some commentary on meaning and form.

Ruefle, Mary. *Madness, rack, and honey: collected lectures*. Seattle: Wave Books, 2012.

Teachers of poetry should access this source for valuable insight on the writing process. These lectures are highly creative and provide the reader with a multitude of ways to approach poetry.

"William Blake's Romanticism." NeoEnglish. http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/12/16/william-blakeâÂ¬™s-romanticism/ (accessed August 12, 2014).

This interactive Word Press provides a very brief connection between William Blake and Romanticism.

Appendix

This unit is written in accordance with the Advanced Placement Program, which encourages academically prepared students to seek credit for college-level courses while still in high school. Students who earn a passing score on the AP Literature and Composition exam administered at the end of the course are eligible for college credit at most colleges and universities.

This unit addresses the following Advanced Placement standards:

Students will participate in an intensive study of representative works cited in the AP English course description. They will study British poets from the 16 th century to contemporary times.

Students will write an interpretation of literature based on careful observation of textual details, including but not limited to figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.

Students will write an interpretation of literature based on careful observation of the social, cultural, and historical values in a piece of literature.

Students will write informal pieces in order to discover what they think in the process of writing about their reading.

Notes

1. Harold Bloom, *William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987), 1-3.

2. Ibid.

3. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant, *Blake's Poetry and Designs,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), xiv.

4. G.E. Bentley, *Blake Records*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 9-10.

5. "A Guide to the Study of Literature: A Companion Text for Core Studies 6, Landmarks of Literature," http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/rom.html, February 12, 2009.

6. Ibid.

7. "William Blake's Romanticism," http://neoenglish.wordpress.com/2010/12/16william-blake's-romanticism

8. J. Bronowksi, *William Blake and The Age of Revolution*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 3-6.

9. Frank N. Magill, *Critical Survey of Poetry*, (Englewood Cliffs: Salem Press, 1982), 204-205.

10. Jonathan Roberts, *William Blake's Poetry: A Reader's Guide*, (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 2.

11. Kayin Alfred, *The Portable Blake,* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

12. Ibid.

13. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant, *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), xiii.

14. William Blake and Richard Willmott, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

15. Ibid

16. Ibid.