



Poetry In Action

4th Grade Language & Literacy

Common Core Standard RL.4.10--By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Poetry is an art form used to convey a message to readers. They tell us many things, but often they tell us about the experiences of the **speaker** (the voice of the poem). However, they can be confusing. When you read poems, do you find yourself wondering what on earth you just read and what it all meant? Dictionary.com defines **poetry** as “the art of **rhythmical composition**, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts.” Still a little confused? That’s okay because that definition is rather poetic itself, so let’s dive into some methods of understanding and **analyzing** poetry (breaking the poem down piece by piece to understand it as a whole).

Materials:

- Pen or pencil
- Piece of paper
- Your favorite poem from those listed in the box at the bottom of this PDF

Developmental Objectives/Domains: By completing this activity, you will

- 1.) Develop skills in verbal analysis
- 2.) Understand how poetry is used to convey messages and act as an art form

3.) Enhance your appreciation for poetry

Procedure:

1. Read through the poems linked in the box at the very bottom of this instruction sheet and choose one to analyze. Click the name of the poem to be redirected to it.
2. ***Optional: Gather some friends over Zoom, phone, text, or another form of communication and work on this analysis together. It can be more fun this way!
3. Write down some thoughts on each of the following six categories. Do your best! If you don't understand some things, that's okay. You can look them up or skip over them. This is just a guide to get you thinking. Tip: if you need help with definitions of words, use a dictionary, parent/guardian, or the search bar at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>.

A. The **Title**

- I. i. What words or ideas from the title appear in the poem?
- II. ii. Is the title a line in the poem?
- III. iii. What does it draw attention to about the poem?

B. The **Speaker** or voice of the poem

- I. i. What is the speaker like?
- II. ii. What does the speaker love, hate, fear, etc.?
- III. iii. What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject?

C. The **Theme** or the feeling and main idea

- i. i. What are the main ideas in the poem?
- I. ii. How are they presented? For example, what is the **tone** or attitude the speaker uses, what **imagery** (words that appeal to the five senses, like "water," "gritty," or "sour") does the speaker use, or does it create a specific **mood** that you feel?

D. The Tools

- I. i. What **poetic devices** (**rhyme**, **rhythm**, **meter** (stressed and unstressed pattern of syllables), **repetition** of words, etc.) are used and which are used most frequently?
- II. ii. What tools repeat and create a complete image?
- III. iii. What are the most powerful **metaphors** (comparisons of two unlike things without using the words "like" or "as")?

E. The Turns

- I. i. Where are the spots that the poem turns or shifts?
- II. ii. What is the **tone** (speaker's attitude) at the beginning of the poem versus the end? Does it change? If so, where?
- F. **Paraphrase** (summarize in your own words)
 - I. i. Read each **line** or **stanza** (collection of lines with similar meter, rhythm, rhyme scheme, etc.) in the poem and put them in your own words.
 - II. ii. What main ideas and **images** (words that create strong pictures) stand out?
 - III. iii. What is the "story" of the poem? What happens?
- 4. ***Optional: Using everything you just learned about poetry, do you think you can write your own poem? Go give it a try!

Poetry List

"Land Ho" by Kwame Dawes

"One Vote" by Aimee Nezhukumatathil

"Chanuka Dreams" by Judith Ish-Kishor

"The Parakeets" by Alberto Blanco

"Victory" by Sherman Alexie

"Red Brocade" by Naomi Shihab Nye

"Be Glad Your Nose Is On Your Face" by Jack Prelutsky

Resource:

Cardenas, A. (2019, April 06). 30 Poems to Teach Using The Big Six. Retrieved July 16, 2020, from <https://www.mudandinkteaching.org/news/2019/4/6/30-poems-to-teach-using-the-big-six>

