Poetry Unit

Ah! Loneliness,
How would I know
Who I am
Without you?

- Emma Larocque

During the next few weeks, you will be reading, writing, writing about, memorizing, studying, discussing, and collecting poems. Your unit grade will be primarily based on the following:

- the work done in and around this poetry booklet
- your memorization of two poems
- your independent study of a poem of your choice
- your grade on the poetry test

Note that the poetry unit is no different than any other unit, in that class participation plays an important role in your marks, as does your general behavior.

It is essential that you keep this handout neat, organized, and in your possession. I will not make additional copies to replace lost handouts. If you misplace a handout, you will need to copy it over by hand. Furthermore, you are responsible for making a cover for this booklet.

William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) defined poetry as “the art of exciting the imagination and touching the heart by selecting and arranging symbols and thoughts.” In order to understand poetry, you will need to experience the process of writing poetry. The poems you write will be included in this poetry booklet. Although I do not expect you to become a world-wide acclaimed poet, I do expect that you will attempt to write every poem demonstrated for you, and your efforts to be sincere.

We will study a wide variety of poems which are recognized for their excellence. You will take notes on these poems and keep the notes in this booklet. Most of the material covered by the test will be in this booklet. In addition, you will have to memorize the poem "Trees" and another one of your choosing.

A final but important part of our poetry unit will be your independent study of one poem. Because this poem cannot be one of the poems we are studying in class, you will need to find the poem on your own. You can look for a poem that “speaks to you” online. There are many websites but I suggest you try famouspoetsandpoems.com, allpoetry.com, or poemhunter.com. You can also visit the library. I can help you find one, given you will help yourself.

Once you have selected a poem to study, you will write a paper about it, read it to the class, and explain it to the class.

Finally, you should continue putting your dictionary to good use. If there is a word you do not know – and there should be many – use it! And no, you will not be tested on vocabulary words found in poems, but there sure is nothing wrong with learning new words.

By the way, keeping this booklet presentable, tidy and neat matters! As this booklet is an extension of you, feel free to be creative and use the space you are offered well and to your liking.
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Introduction Poem

This poem should introduce you, and should begin and end with the following line:

I am ______________.

In between, you should write 4 truthful statements about yourself and 4 lies. Then, the idea is to mix them up so that telling truth from fiction may be difficult.

Example:

I am Sylvain Naud.
I am forty-seven years old.
I nearly drowned twice in the summer of my seventh year.
I collect foreign coins.
My sister has six fingers on her left hand.
My mother died while I was living in Taiwan.
Time has stood still for me.
An arsonist destroyed my first home.
I am afraid of heights.
I am Sylvain Naud.
Circle Poem

A. Write a poem where your title "triggers" the word or phrase of your first line, which in turn "triggers" the next line, and so forth.

B. Try to surprise us with each new line, taking us each time to a new world – taking us on a rich various trip through time, place, ideas, objects, colors, tastes, names, and so forth.

C. Your poem will end when your last line "circles back" to the beginning, approximating your title.

D. Look at the example by the man who developed the strategy, Joseph Tsujimoto. Your poem should have no less than 10 words.
Extended Metaphor Poem

1. What is an extended metaphor?
2. Using extended metaphor, write a poem about poetry, the poet, or the poem.
3. Establish through a simile what your subject is like.
   For example, you might compare the poet to an athlete. Then, throughout the remainder of the poem, talk about the poet exclusively in terms of the athlete – how he or she trains, practices, performs, does well, and does poorly, and so on...

Example: Flaming Poetry

Poetry
is like
flames,
which are
swift and elusive
dodging realization.
Sparks, like words on the paper, leap and dance in the flickering firelight. The fiery tongues, formless and shifting shapes tease the imagination.
Yet for those who see, through their mind’s eye, they burn up the page.
Concrete Poem

1. Concrete poetry uses the words and the form of the poem to convey the same meaning so that they are difficult to separate one from the other. In other, simpler words, form is meaning.

2. Read the example, and then create your own concrete poem. Do not choose a simple object such as a circle, pencil, or a table.

A poem
can play
with the wind
and dart and dance
and fly about in the mind
like a kite in the cloudy white
sky at so dizzy a height it
seems out of reach but
is waiting to be
very gently
pulled
down
to
the
page
below
by a
string
of
musical
words
Shakespearean Sonnet

A sonnet is a fourteen-line stanza form consisting of iambic pentameter lines. The two major sonnet forms are the Italian or Petrarchan and the English or Shakespearean sonnet.

The English sonnet is a fourteen-line stanza consisting of three quatrains and a couplet (three sets of four and one set of two lines.) Notice how the poet's thoughts are organized around these 4 sets of lines. The rhyme scheme is A B A B C D C D E F E F G G.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground.
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Now create your own fourteen-line stanza on the topic of your choice. Don't forget that they need to be written with iambic pentameter lines.
Haiku Poem

Haiku is a type of Japanese poetry that has seventeen syllables and just three lines. It is a short poem that captures a moment in nature.

Line 1 Five syllables
Line 2 Seven syllables
Line 3 Five syllables

Examples:

A bitter morning
Sparrows sitting together
Without any necks
It's cold — and I wait
For someone to shelter me
And take me from here

Falling to the ground,
I watch a leaf settle down
In a bed of brown

An old silent pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again

Write three haiku poems about one aspect of nature; include a one sentence description of what all three poems are about. For example, you could write three haiku poems about three different types of birds or three different types of flowers. Your one sentence description would tell both what the poems are about, and what point you are making in your poems.

Remember: haiku is more than a type of poem; it is a way of looking at the very nature of existence.
Cinquain Steps (sin-kan steps)

Cinquain Steps are much like Haiku in that they are a "syllable count" poem. Your subject can be about anything, and it doesn't even have to rhyme.

Example:

1st line: 2 syllables
2nd line: 4 syllables
3rd line: 6 syllables
4th line: 8 syllables
5th line: 2 syllables

Write at least one Cinquain Step poem below.
Number Poem

For this poem, you will use a number (telephone, social security, birthday, etc.) that has some meaning for you. This will determine the number of syllables per line. You must have at least six lines, and zeros (0) count as ten (10).

Example:

April (4) 7, 1966

Line 1: 4 syllables
Line 2: 7 syllables
Line 3: 1 syllable
Line 4: 9 syllables
Line 5: 6 syllables
Line 6: 6 syllables

Write your number poem below.
A Pantoum is a poem where you write eight lines of a sixteen line poem with a preset rhyme scheme. Don't let all the lines confuse you. This is really fairly simple if you follow the directions exactly.

Step 1: Write the first four lines with a rhyme scheme of A B A B.
Step 2: Copy lines 2 and 4 to lines 5 and 7.
Step 3: Write lines 6 and 8 (rhyme = C)
Step 4: Copy lines 6 and 8 to lines 9 and 11.
Step 5: Write lines 10 and 12 (rhyme = D)
Step 6: Copy lines 10 and 12 to lines 13 and 15
Step 7: Copy lines 3 and 1 to lines 14 and 16 (in that order)

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<td>C</td>
</tr>
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Extended Metaphor II

Step 1: Pick any topic and create a metaphor by comparing one noun to another unrelated noun.
Example: Our class is a sitcom.

Step 2: Next, answer anyone of the following questions about your comparison. Who? What?
Example: Our class is a sitcom with (what?) many comedians.

Step 3: Try to extend your metaphor by listing all the characteristics of the second noun in your comparison. Write your ideas in a paragraph.
Example: Our class is a sitcom with too many comedians who are constantly trying to upstage each other.

Step 4: Keep extending your metaphor with more ideas from step 3. Try finish your paragraph with a final closing thought about your metaphor.
Example: Our class is a sitcom with many comedians who are constantly trying to upstage each other. Sometimes it's entertaining but I'm starting to get tired of the re-runs.

Step 5: Take the paragraph and divide into lines for your poem. Eliminate any "unnecessary" words, but still make the text flow.
Example: Our class is a sitcom,
too many comedians
upstaging each other.
It was entertaining
but now,
I'm tired of the re-runs.

Write your final result (extended metaphor) here:
“Trees”
By Alfred Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth’s sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair,
Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

1. What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?

2. What simile is used early in the poem? What is being compared?

3. Where is there an example of poetic license?

4. Where is there an example of personification?

5. How many stanzas are there in the poem?

6. What do the following lines mean?

   A. a tree whose hungry mouth is pressed against the earth’s sweet flowing breast

   B. lifts her leafy arms to pray

   C. a tree that may in summer wear, a nest of robins in her hair

7. Why does the author say that poems are made by fools like her and only God can make a tree?

Try to sing the poem to the tune of your choice. You’ll see; it works almost every time!
(Given you’ll need to memorize this poem, this could prove a great way to do it.)
“The Coach Of Life”
By Alexander Pushkin

Though often somewhat heavy-freighted,
The coach rolls at an easy pace;
And Time, the coachman, grizzly-pated,
But Smart, alert—is in his place.

We board it lightly in the morning
And on our way at once proceed.
Repose and slothful comfort scorning,
We shout: “Hey, there! Get on! Full Speed!”

Noon finds us done with reckless daring,
And shaken up. Now care’s the rule.
Down hills, through gulleys roughly faring,
We sulk, and cry: “Hey, easy, fool!”

The coach rolls on, no pitfalls dodging.
At dusk, to pains more wonted grown,
We drowse, while to the night’s dark lodging
Old coachman Time drives on, drives on.

Grizzly-pated: grey-haired
Repose: lie or rest on something
Slothful: lazy
Wonted: accustomed
Drowse: sleep

A metaphor makes a comparison, and in doing so shapes our perception. If we say, “Time is a river,” we’re noting a certain similarity between the two. Yet we know they aren’t identical. We may mean that time is fluid, has currents and eddies, empties into some vast ocean, but not that it’s composed of water. If we say, “Time is a stone,” we may mean it’s silent, still, indifferent, but not that it’s a mineral.

1. What might the title mean? List a few of your thoughts.

2. What main comparisons might you notice?

3. We refers to...

4. Is there a change in the setting and attitude of the passengers? How so?

5. What are the passengers doing at the end?

6. What is the coach in this poem? Who is the coachman? How do you know?

7. What changes in time occur during the poem? Explain.

8. How do the reactions of the passengers change during the journey? What do these reactions represent?

9. What happens at dusk? What does this represent?
“Time” By Mason, Waters, Wright, Gilmour (aka Pink Floyd)

Ticking away the moments that make up a dull day
You fritter and waste the hours in an off-hand way
Kicking around on a piece of ground in your home town
Waiting for someone or something to show you the way

Tired of lying in the sunshine staying home to watch the rain
You are young and life is long and there is time to kill today
And then one day you find ten years have got behind you
No one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun

So you run and you run to catch up with the sun, but it’s sinking
And racing around to come up behind you again
The sun is the same in the relative way, but you’re older
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death

Every year is getting shorter, never seem to find the time
Plans that either come to naught or half a page of scribbled lines
Hanging on in quiet desperation is the English way
The time is gone, the song is over, thought I’d something more to say.

Directions: Answer the questions in paragraphs. You can choose to type your answer or use the following page provided for you.

The theme of this poem is surprisingly similar to the Alexander Pushkin’s “The Coach of Life”. What is Pink Floyd trying to say in this selection? Use the template below to help you write a response.

Opening (topic) Sentences: Introduce the topic of your paragraph (theme)
- Open with an attention grabbing idea, statement, question, or quotation related to the theme of the selection
- Show your knowledge of the term (implied definition of theme)
- Introduce the author and the title of the work and state the theme of the selection in a sentence

Supporting Details: At least three (3) specific examples from the text
- Provide a short (1-2) sentence introduction for each example
- Use specific details from the selection (who, what, when, where, why, etc.)
- Explain how the example supports the theme

Conclude: Final thoughts about the theme
- Comment on the importance of this theme
- Discuss how the theme is relevant — how you or another reader may benefit from reading the selection
- Try to conclude with a final quotation or thought that summarizes the main idea(s) in the paragraph
“If”
By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don’t deal in lies,
Or being hated don’t give way to hating,
And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream---and not make dreams your master;
If you can think---and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build’em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: “Hold on!”

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings---nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,
And---which is more---you’ll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling was an English short story writer, poet and novelist. At the age of six, he was forced to live with foster parents. He is perhaps best known for the children’s book called The Jungle Book. He was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1907.

“If” was written in 1910. It describes the virtues that Kipling believes are necessary to become a mature man. (In those days, women were not included in such a description.) Kipling means the poem to be instructive. He doesn’t list abstract values about what it takes to be a full person. Instead he gives concrete examples of the situations that face human beings. In modern times, this poem is regarded as a popular classic of English literature.

1. How many stanzas can you count?

2. What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?
3. What is the rhythm of this poem? How many syllables are in each line?

4. What is the theme or central idea of the poem?

5. Find at least one personification in the poem.

6. Find at least one metaphor in the poem.

7. Find at least one symbol in the poem.

8. Paraphrase (which is almost like summarizing) by verse (stanza) as best you can.

S1______________________________________________________________

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S2______________________________________________________________

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S3______________________________________________________________

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S6______________________________________________________________

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S7______________________________________________________________

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S8______________________________________________________________

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This is one of Shakespeare's most famous speeches. It comes from the play 'As You Like It,' and it describes life as a stage and all people as actors. The speech describes the seven ages of being human. Read the speech carefully. Can you identify the seven ages described in this speech? What are they? How are they described?

“Seven Ages Of Man”
By William Shakespeare

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players,
They have their exits and entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then, the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden, and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice
In fair round belly, with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws, and modern instances,
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide,
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Comparing life to a play, Shakespeare describes the various stages in a man's life while stating generalizations that are still relevant today. For Shakespeare, man essentially plays seven parts in his lifetime:

1. How many syllables are in most lines?

2. How is this poem similar to the poem "If"?

3. How is it different?
"I'm Nobody! Who Are You?"
By Emily Dickinson

I'm nobody! Who are you?
Are you nobody, too?
Then there's a pair of us - don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!
How public like a frog
To tell your name the livelong day
To an admiring bog!

In order to understand this poem, you need to know a little about Emily Dickinson. She was very shy and introverted; she only spoke with close friends. Although she wrote over 2,000 poems in her lifetime, only 6 were published while she was alive. Of these 6, only two were published with her permission.

When composing “I’m nobody! Who are you?” it is likely that Emily Dickinson was writing from the heart. She was one of American literature’s most reclusive figures. Apart from one trip to Philadelphia, one trip to Washington D.C., and a few trips into Boston, Dickinson spent almost her entire 56 years in her hometown of Amherst, Massachusetts. After she turned 40, she never left the boundaries of her family’s property in Amherst.

This unusual life helped Dickinson to feel a bond with people who see themselves as being outsiders and unimportant. Yet, to think of her as a friendless hermit would be incorrect. In fact, the poet had a small number of intense and lasting friendships. These important relationships demonstrate the main idea expressed in “I’m Nobody”: Companionship is the best remedy for a feeling of exclusion.

1. Who do you think is the speaker in the poem?

2. Who is the person speaking to?

3. What is the person trying to say?

4. Why didn’t the speaker want “you” not to tell that there’s a pair of nobodies? Would there be some consequences if other people knew?

5. What do you think Dickinson means by “being a somebody”? What does Emily write about being somebody? How do you think she really feels about it?
6. What are the advantages of being a nobody?

7. What can be said of the rhyme scheme, rhythm, and meter?

8. What is the subject matter?

9. What kind of tone does the speaker have? Does this tone change throughout the poem?

10. Write a sentence or two on the truth about life that the poet is trying to communicate.

Space for... something else.
“Alone”
By Edgar Allan Poe

From childhood’s hour I have not been
As others were; I have not seen
As others saw; I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone;
And all I loved, I loved alone.

Then — in my childhood, in the dawn
Of a most stormy life — was drawn
From ev’ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still:
From the torrent, or the fountain
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that ‘round me roll’d
In its autumn tint of gold,
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass’d me flying by.
From the thunder, and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.

hour: years of childhood.
common spring: the experiences that everyone else draws upon.

---

Poe was born in Boston on January 19, 1809. Not long after his father abandoned his wife and Edgar, Mrs. Poe died. A childless couple—John Allan, a successful businessman and his wife—adopted Edgar. In 1820, he attended University for eleven months but had to withdraw because of gambling debts that Allan refused to pay. When Edgar returned home, he discovered that the girl he loved had become engaged. After moving to Boston, he published several poems but lack of money forced him to join the army. Meanwhile, his foster mother died. Allan helped him enroll at a military academy, but Poe got expelled after refusing to attend classes.

Thereafter, Poe and his father became estranged, and Poe was once again without a family. However, he then began pursuing a writing career in New York and Baltimore and achieved some success but also began drinking heavily. His experiences and his temperament led him to focus on tales of horror and the grotesque and poems that often focus on death.

After beginning his career as a poet and prose writer, he married his 13 year old cousin. He worked for several magazines and joined the NY Mirror newspaper in 1844. All the while, he was battling a drinking problem. After the Mirror published his poem “The Raven” in January 1845, Poe achieved national and international fame. Besides pioneering the development of the short story, Poe invented the format for the detective story as we know it.

Despite the acclaim he received, Poe was never really happy because of his drinking and the deaths of several people close to him, including his wife in 1847. He frequently had trouble paying his debts. It is believed that heavy drinking was a contributing cause of his death in Baltimore on October 7, 1849.

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1. Highlight the passages where Poe uses anaphora.
2. What is the tone of the poem?
3. How many rhyming couplets does it contain?
4. Describe how Poe uses meter.
5. Write a summary of the poem (50-80 words).
6. Think of a theme for “Alone.”
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, and this is sonnet number 18, his most famous.

1. Draw lines between the lines to show where you might create stanzas if you were the poet.
2. What is the rhyme scheme of this poem?
3. Briefly summarize the theme of this poem.
4. How many syllables are in each line? How would you describe the meter?
5. Why might the last two lines be indented?
6. Copy down an excellent example of alliteration in the space below.
7. What metaphor is in this poem; what two things are compared?
8. Where is there an example of personification?
9. What is "this" in the last line? How long will it last?
"Day Is Done"
By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o’er me,
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life’s endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music
And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

1. What is this poem about? What happens (is happening) in the poem? What is the theme?

2. Find two examples of analogies and explain.

a)

b)

3. List three examples of imagery.

a)

b)

c)

4. What literary techniques are used in the first stanza?
Robert Frost believed in the power of poetry. In an essay titled “Education by Poetry,” he wrote: “The person who gets close enough to poetry, he is going to know more about the word belief than anybody else knows.” Robert Frost must have been speaking about his own experiences with poetry, as it was a central part of his life.

Robert Frost lived from 1874 – 1963. Though he was born in San Francisco, he moved back to his family’s home in New England after his father died when he was a young boy. Both his mother and grandfather were teachers who made sure Robert read a wide variety of materials.

As a young man, Frost attended Dartmouth College and Harvard, but he didn’t graduate from either. Instead, he worked as a farmer, an editor, and a schoolteacher. As a young man, he wrote in his spare time, but his poems were rejected for publication. When his first poem was published in 1894, he was paid $15 for it.

In 1911, he decided to move to England in hopes of getting his poetry published there. By this time, he was married and had children. In England, he met other poets. His first book of poetry was published in England in 1913, and it was well received. When he returned to the United States, he was surprised by the favorable American reviews of his poems. The same publishers who had rejected his poems years before were now asking him for his poetry! He continued to teach and received invitations to lecture and read his poetry throughout the country.

In 1924, 1931, 1937, and 1943, he won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. He was appointed the Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress (which is called the Poet Laureate today). Additionally, throughout his life, he received forty-four honorary degrees and numerous awards including a Congressional gold medal in 1960 for his poetry. There is even had a mountain in Vermont named after him. In 1960, he was asked to read at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy – the first time such an invitation had been extended to a poet.

Robert Frost’s work is still extremely popular today. His poems deal with simple events. Often the topics and dialect are unique to the New England region. While the topics of his poems may be simple, like a road in the case of “The Road Not Taken,” they contain insight into human nature and life.

What is the Pulitzer Prize?
Joseph Pulitzer was a man who embodied the American dream. He was born in Hungary, moved to America, and through hard work and determination, built a successful newspaper that created standards in journalism. In his will, he established the Pulitzer Prize. The prize would be awarded each year for journalism, history, and biography. Later, awards were added for poetry, music and photography. The Pulitzer Prize is considered a great honor by all who receive it.

A Poet at the Presidential Inauguration
John F. Kennedy invited Robert Frost to speak at his inauguration on January 20, 1961. Like many people of the time, Frost was excited by the energy and enthusiasm the new President promised to bring to the country. Frost wrote a poem for the occasion called Dedication. However, Inauguration Day was bright and sunny, and an elderly Frost (he was 86) had difficulty reading the printed copy of the poem. After an attempt to read his new poem, Frost instead recited the poem The Gift Outright from memory.
Answer the following questions.

1. When and where did Robert Frost live?

2. What kinds of careers did Robert Frost have in order to support his family?

3. How do you know that Robert Frost was dedicated to writing poetry?

4. What do you think might have been one of the best awards or honors Robert Frost received in his lifetime? Why do you think that?

5. Why do you think he chose to write about topics such as rural life and life in New England?

6. Read the quote at the beginning of the article. How do you think Frost felt about poetry? Why do you think that?

7. Analyze what you think the word belief in the quote at the top of the article means. Explain your answer.
“The Mending Wall”
By Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun,
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go:
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"
We wear our fingers rough with handling them
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across:
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it:
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall:
That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed:
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

The wall that the poet refers to is made of rocks. Every year, moisture gets between the cracks and gradually as it freezes and thaws, expands and contracts, the wall falls down. The subject of his poem is the annual mending of the stone wall.
Frost wrote poetry in the simple language of everyday conversation. However, when the reader peeks beneath the words, phrases, and sentences, he finds ambiguity and unanswered questions. Why, for example, does the speaker continue to help his neighbor rebuild the wall if he believes that it serves no purpose? As the speaker points out, “My apples trees will never get across / And eat the cones under his pines” (lines 25-26). And whom do the hunters represent? Are they symbols of pillaging marauders, perhaps, or empire-building armies that cross borders to kill their quarry? (The year that Frost wrote the poem, 1914, may be significant in this regard, for it was in August of that year that WWI began.) Thus, Frost is at once simple and complex, obvious and obscure. Of course, life is that way. A person smiles at us, and we wonder whether he is frowning inside. A neighbor builds a fence, and we wonder whether he wants to keep his children in or our children out.

Frost is spare in his use of adornment and literary devices, making the poem sound like a conversation over a cup of coffee. However, the poem does contain many poetry conventions, including the metric pattern of Shakespeare — blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) — used throughout the poem. It also contains another common Shakespearean device, inversion (or anastrophe), in what is perhaps the most memorable line in the poem: “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.” (Ordinarily, one would write or say, “There is something that doesn’t love a wall)

1. Although the speaker meets with his neighbor each spring to mend the wall, he thinks that the wall is unnecessary. Why?

2. The neighbor argues that "good fences make good neighbors." What do you think he means by this?

3. What simile does the speaker use near the end of the poem to describe his neighbor?

4. Find the three consecutive lines that use a metaphor, a hyperbole, and a personification.

5. Find an alliteration.

6. Write a four line poem in any way you desire about a barrier that separates one human being from another.
"The Road Not Taken"
By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1. Paraphrase the poem using the graphic organizer.

Stanza 1

The speaker is in the woods and comes to a spot in the road where the road is forked.

The speaker is sorry...

Stanza 2

The speaker takes the other road, which is ...

He chooses this road because...
2. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

3. What meter is Frost using?

4. What is Frost trying to tell us in the poem?

5. Why does the speaker sigh when talking about the decision made?

6. What is the purpose of the repetition “I” in the last stanza?

7. What could a possible theme be?
A Brief Outlook of Other Types of Poetry (Through Music)

Lyrical Poetry

Narrative Poetry

Imagist Poetry

Confessional Poetry

Ballad

Haiku

Elegy
Your Favorite Lyrics

Find a song with lyrics reflecting one of the styles discussed in the lesson. It is better you try to find a song that has a special meaning to you. (While many of us enjoy the rhyming of rap and hip-hop, any song with profanity will be declined and you will end up with a zero for the assignment. Remain within the boundaries of being appropriate.)

1. What is the name of the song?

2. What is the name of the group? Album/CD? What year was it released?

3. What type of lyrics does it contain?

4. What is the song about?

5. What is the theme?

6. What does the song mean to you?

7. Copy down your favorite lines and explain what they mean to you.

Provide a copy of the lyrics and add them at the end of this booklet.
### Glossary

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Poem Studied

Choose a poem you feel best able to create a personal response and analysis for. The response should include a discussion of what the poem seems to be about, what you feel the poet’s message is, in what ways the poet conveys this message such as style and technique, and how the poem makes you feel.

It is important to know that there is rarely (if ever) only one right answer, so how you support your own interpretation is of utmost importance. Support would therefore include direct evidence from the poem itself (quotes).

Like you did for the song, provide with a copy of the lyrics and add them at the end of this booklet. The subsequent pages should have your notes on this poem (if you have any), then your paper on this poem, then your speech outline – in that order. You will also need to have your poem on a Power Point for all to read while you present.

TIPS:

➢ As with all essays, you cannot hope to do well unless you know your text well. Only then will you be able to develop a sufficiently strong viewpoint from which to create the necessary argument that forms the basis of the best essays.
➢ The best essays are written as if they were an argument
➢ Whatever the essay question or title, marks are always awarded according to how well you show your abilities in three key areas:
  o **Interpretation:** You need to show that you have understood not just the poem’s 'surface' meaning – try to show knowledge of its *layers of meaning and its more subtle messages*
  o **Language:** You need to show you have understood how the poet has used language and poetic devices to help create and 'shape' create *subtle underlying messages*
  o **Structure:** You need to show you have recognised how meaning is developed across the whole poem - as each idea is explored and builds up into a coherent whole

We will discuss the rubric, as well as the structure and the format further on during the unit; as usual, I will do my best to guide you through the process. If some parts are unclear to you, you have to come to me. Do not remain in doubt!

Start by browsing on famouspoetsandpoems.com, allpoetry.com, or poemhunter.com to find a poem that “speaks to you.” I strongly recommend you look for a poem written by one of these world acclaimed poets:

➢ Maya Angelou
➢ Billy Collins
➢ Emily Dickinson
➢ Robert Frost
➢ Thomas Hardy
➢ Sylvia Platt
➢ Carl Sandburg
➢ Sara Teasdale
➢ Dylan Thomas
➢ William Carlos Williams
➢ William Butler Yeats
➢ Elizabeth Barrett Browning
➢ Oscar Wilde

Finally, you will need to have your poem approved by me before you start doing any work. The deadline for submitting your work is **March 30th**, so here are the famous last words: **Do not procrastinate!**