



poetry

How to Read Poetry

ENJAMBMENT

- ♦ Enjambment- the continuation of a sentence beyond the end of a line
- ♦ When reading a poem, you do not stop or pause at the end of a line. You read the complete sentence according to the punctuation.
- ♦ Tip: Underline the capital letters and circle any punctuation if it helps you read a poem.
- ♦ Note- You do not have to capitalize the first letter of every line, but some poets choose to do so.

“We Real Cool”- Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.



“We Real Cool”

Gwendolyn Brooks

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/we-real-cool>

- Listen to Gwendolyn Brooks' introduction and reading of the poem “We Real Cool”

- How does hearing Gwendolyn Brooks read her poem affect how you approach the piece?

“We Real Cool”

Sound

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

- Circle the letters or sounds that are repeated in the poem.

-With your group, practice saying the sounds that you picked

- Write down words to describe the sounds

“We Real Cool”

Alliteration

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

How does the
alliteration in the
poem add to the
poem?

Alliteration- The
repetition of sounds

“We Real Cool”

Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We

Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

What do you personally take to be the overall theme or message of the poem?

- Remember: Your interpretation may be different from the author's intention.

A Look at Structure

Xxxx xxxx xx xxxxxx

Xxx xx xxxxxx xxx

Xxxx xx x xxxxxx-xxxxxx xxxx

Xxxx xxxxxx xxx.

What can we
tell about this
piece just by
looking at the
structure?

Xxxx xxxx xx xxxxxx

Xxx xxxx xxxxxx xx

Xxxx xx x xxxxxx xxxxx

Xxxxxx xxxx xxxx.

A Look at Structure

Xxxx xxxx xx xxxxxx

Xxx xx xxxxxx xxx

Xxxx xx x xxxxxx-xxxxxx xxxx

Xxxx xxxxxx xxx.

-Note the punctuation.
How many sentences
are there?

-How many stanzas are
in the poem?

Xxxx xxxx xx xxxxxx

Xxx xxxx xxxxxx xx

Xxxx xx x xxxxxx xxxxx

Xxxxxx xxxx xxxx.

-How many lines are in
the poem?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Structure

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

- How does the structure affect the way you read the text?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Structure

Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams for when dreams go life is a barren field frozen with snow.

- How would the text be different if its structure was different?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Structure

Hold fast

to dreams

for if

dreams

die life is a broken-

winged bird that cannot

fly.

- If the structure of text looked like this, how does the theme of “holding fast to dreams” differ?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Reader Response

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

- Which words or images stick out to you?
- How does the poem make you feel?
- What do you believe is the mood or tone of the poem?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Figurative Language- Metaphors

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

- What are the two metaphors in the poem?
- How do you think the metaphor adds to the poem?
- Metaphor- A direct comparison

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Rhythm, Rhyme, and Repetition

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

- What words are repeated in the poem? Why do you believe they are repeated?
- Which words rhyme?
- Is there rhythm to the poem?
- How do the rhythm and rhyme affect the way you read the poem?

“Dreams”- Langston Hughes

Theme

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

What do you think is
the overall theme or
message of the
poem?

What things
should you
consider when
reading poetry?

Reading Poetry: Things to Consider







- Structure (stanzas/line break)
- key words and images
- mood
- figurative language
- Repetition
- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Theme

Speaker vs. Author

What is the difference between speaker and author?

- Who is the author of *The Outsiders*?
- Who was the narrator in *The Outsiders*?
- Why is it important to note the difference between the two?

Autobiographical, Confessional, & Persona Poems

-  - Read poems as if a certain speaker or character is giving it voice.
-  - Some poems contain elements of inspiration from a poet's life.
-  - However, when a poet begins writing, he or she becomes detached from the position of authorship.
-  - The role of the poet is a performative act and assumes a certain persona
-  - Always note the distinction between the author and speaker and focus on the speaker!
-  - ***Persona- a poem from the point of view of an object or someone very different from the author

Research in Poetry

- Sometimes, research can help broaden your understanding of a poem
- Often you can research information regarding:
 - the author's life
 - words you are unfamiliar with
 - allusions- references to people or events from history, literature, or pop culture

Margaret Atwood:

“Siren Song”

[http://www.
poetryfoundation.
org/poetrymagazine/poe
m/21988](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/21988)

- Read the poem “Siren Song” by Margaret Atwood

- What words do you not understand?
- What confuses you?



Margaret Atwood-

“Siren Song”

- With your group, read the research on your assigned topic and discuss:

- Margaret Atwood
- Sirens
- Sirens' Songs
- Modern Interpretations
- Homer's *Odyssey*

Be prepared to report back to the class what you have learned

Research

Sirens: <http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Seirenes.html>

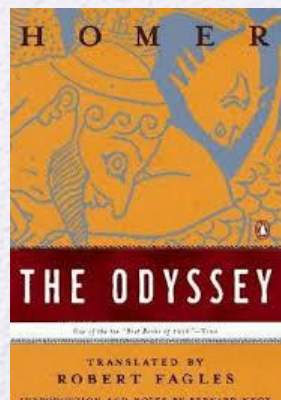
Modern interpretation of sirens: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/siren%20song>

AND <http://lgadvisors.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/sirens.jpg>

Margaret Atwood: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/margaret-atwood>
(3rd paragraph on feminism)

Homer's Odyssey: <http://www.online-literature.com/homer/odyssey/> (Paragraph 2)

WHAT DID WE LEARN?



Odysseus and the Sirens

Margaret Atwood-

“Siren Song”

-Reread the poem

[http://www.
poetryfoundation.
org/poetrymagazine/poe
m/21988](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/21988)

How does the information
we learned in our
research help our
understanding of the
poem?

Margaret Atwood-

“Siren Song”

[http://www.
poetryfoundation.
org/poetrymagazine/poe
m/21988](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/21988)

Who is the speaker of the poem?

Describe the speaker?

How does the speaker feel?

Margaret Atwood-

“Siren Song”

[http://www.
poetryfoundation.
org/poetrymagazine/poe
m/21988](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/21988)

How does the title relate
to the poem?

How does the last line
relate to the rest of the
poem?

Margaret Atwood: “Siren Song”

[http://www.
poetryfoundation.
org/poetrymagazine/poe
m/21988](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poem/21988)

What do you personally
take away from this
poem?

“Oranges” - Gary Soto

[http://edhelper.
com/poetry/Oranges_by_
Gary_Soto.htm](http://edhelper.com/poetry/Oranges_by_Gary_Soto.htm)

Read the poem “Oranges”
by Gary Soto



Circle or Underline key
words or images

Group Work

Discuss the poem with your group.

What words or images do you find meaningful?

Discuss your interpretations of the key theme in the poem.

With your group, respond to the instructions for your activity.



Presentations

Group 1: Perform a dramatic reading of the poem altering your volume, number of speakers, sounds, and gestures

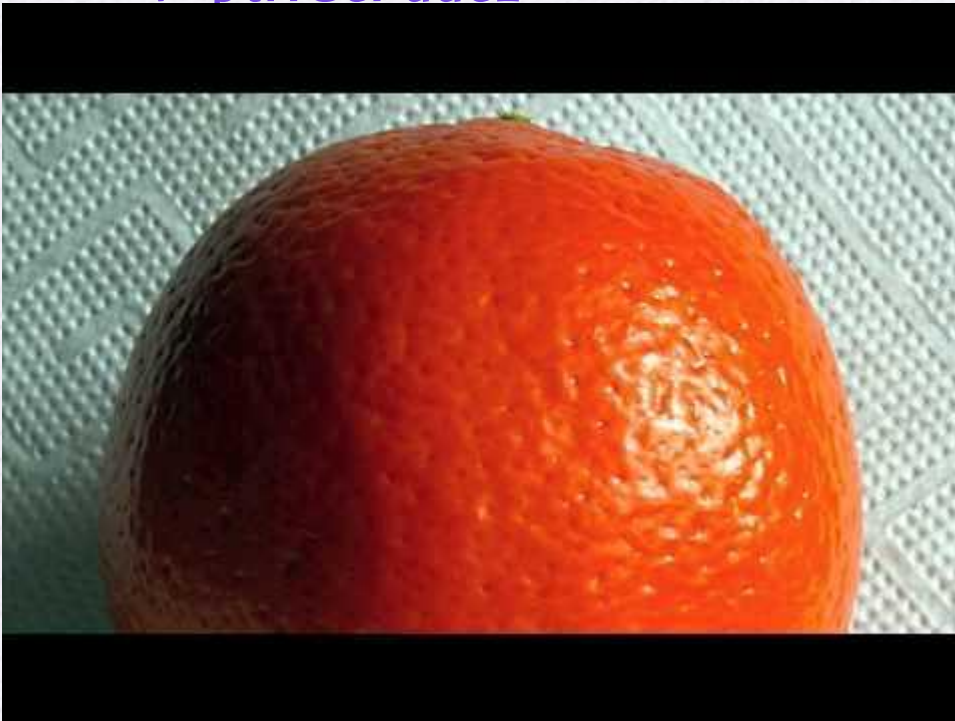
Group 2: Perform a skit to act out the events in the poem

Group 3: Become a still-life art display that represents the poem. Choose your pose and the way you are positioned in relationship to other characters carefully.

Group 4: Draw a picture to represent the key theme of the poem.

“Oranges”- Gary Soto

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptrlCcPddcE>



Consider your group presentations and the video.

How does a poem translate to other mediums of art?

How does imagery contribute to the meaning of the poem?