

2014

# Ready<sup>®</sup> Common Core

## Reading Instruction 7



## Analyzing the Structure of a Poem

## CCSS

**RL.7.5:** . . . Analyze how a . . . poem’s form or structure (e.g., . . . sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

Theme: *A Family Scrapbook*

Poetry is writing that uses words, sound, and structure in special ways to express meaning. Sometimes, poets arrange their thoughts in **stanzas**, or groups of lines. Stanzas may have a particular pattern of rhyming words. Sometimes poets write in **free verse**. In free verse, the arrangement of lines is irregular, and there may be no **rhyme scheme**, or pattern of rhyme, at all. Poets may also repeat certain sounds, words, or patterns to call attention to them, or create a rhythm.

**Read the poem excerpt below, which describes the tasks a mother must do each day. Notice the rhyme scheme, which is based on the last sound of each line. When two lines have the same rhyming sound, they are assigned the same letter. Also, look for the groups of verbs at the end of each line, and circle them.**

**from “Song of the Old Mother”**

*by William Butler Yeats*

I rise in the dawn, and I kneel and blow  
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow;  
And then I must scrub and bake and sweep  
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep . . . .

**Rhyme Scheme**

A  
A  
B  
B

**Read the chart to learn how the structural elements in this poem contribute to its meaning.**

| Structural Element  | What It Adds to the Poem  |
|---|---|
| Rhyme scheme  | The AABB rhyme scheme helps tie together the parts of each idea— starting the fire, and cleaning all day. |
| Repeated pattern  | Ending each line with a group of verbs suggests the day-in and day-out nature of the woman’s work.        |
| <b>Poem’s Meaning:</b> The work of a mother is ongoing and difficult. |   |

Listen closely the next time you read or hear a poem read aloud. Ask yourself these questions to better understand the poem’s meaning: how is the poem organized? Does it rhyme, or is it free verse? Does the poet use repetition? If so, what effect does it create? Understanding poetry can be difficult, but asking questions like these can make it easier.



Read the poem below, which is about a child woken in the night by a hooting owl.

Genre: Lyric Poem

### A Barred Owl *by Richard Wilbur*

The warping night air having brought the boom  
 Of an owl's voice into her darkened room,  
 We tell the wakened child that all she heard  
 Was an odd question from a forest bird,  
 5 Asking of us, if rightly listened to,  
 "Who cooks for you?" and then "Who cooks for you?"  
 Words, which can make our terrors bravely clear  
 Can also thus domesticate a fear,  
 And send a small child back to sleep at night  
 10 Not listening for the sound of stealthy flight  
 Or dreaming of some small thing in a claw  
 Borne up to some dark branch and eaten raw.

**Explore how to answer this question:** "How does the structure of the poem contribute to its meaning?"

"A Barred Owl" is a lyric poem, or a poem that expresses the speaker's feelings. In this poem, parents want to comfort their frightened child, even though they realize the owl may not be as innocent as they tell her it is.

**In the poem above, number the stanzas and think about the meaning in each one. Mark the rhyme scheme and underline any instances of repetition. Then, complete the following chart.**

| Structural Element     | What It Adds to the Poem  |
|------------------------|---|
| Stanzas                |   |
| Rhyme scheme           | The AABB rhyme scheme is similar to a lullaby used to help a child fall asleep. |
| Repetition             |   |
| <b>Poem's Meaning:</b> |   |

**With a partner, take turns discussing how you interpreted the poem's meaning. Citing evidence from the text, explain how the different structural elements helped you come to that conclusion.**





### Close Reading

This is a sonnet, a lyric poem with 14 lines. Think about how the phrase “count the ways” in the first line relates to phrases in other lines. **Underline** the phrase that is repeated throughout the poem.

### Hint

Look closely at the repeated phrases that you underlined. How do they connect to the poem’s title?

Read the poem, then use the Close Reading and Hint to help you answer the question.

Genre: Sonnet

## How Do I Love Thee? *by Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

5 I love thee to the level of everyday’s  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle–light.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
 I love thee with a passion put to use

10 In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.  
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,  
 I shall but love thee better after death.

Reread the poem. Then explain how the poet has used repetition to express the speaker’s feelings.

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### Show Your Thinking

Citing evidence from the poem, explain how the poem’s structure helps you understand the speaker’s feelings.

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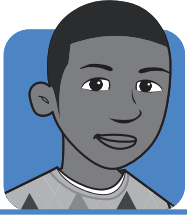


With a partner, list and discuss the ways in which the speaker answers the question “How Do I Love Thee?”



Read the poem. Use the Study Buddy and Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Ode



An ode is a type of lyric poem that celebrates something. I will keep this in mind as I read to see what the poem celebrates.

## Close Reading

The speaker mentions mistakes in some photos. **Underline** instances of all the things that are wrong with the photos.

The speaker starts by flipping through a book of photos. Does he keep doing so to the end? What changes, and how do the lines and stanzas help show that change?

# Ode to Family Photographs

by Gary Soto

- This is the pond and these are my feet,  
This is the rooster, and this is more of my feet.  
*Mama was never good at pictures.*
- This is the statue of a famous general who lost an arm,  
5 And this is me with my head cut off.
- This is a trash can chained to a gate,  
This is my father with his eyes half-closed.
- This is a photograph of my sister  
And a giraffe looking over her shoulder.
- 10 This is our car's front bumper.  
This is a bird with a pretzel in its beak.  
This is my brother Pedro standing on one leg on a rock,  
With a smear of chocolate on his face.
- Mama sneezed when she looked  
15 Behind the camera: the snapshots are blurry,  
The angles dizzy as a spin on a merry-go-round.
- But we had fun when Mama picked up the camera.  
How can I tell?  
Each of us laughed hard.
- 20 Can you see? I have candy in my mouth.



### Hints

Eliminate answer choices that misinterpret the poet’s use of structure.

How is this ode a celebration?

Think about how the speaker’s actions and feelings are communicated not just through his words but also through the repetition of phrases and the lengths of stanzas.

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 How does the structure the poet uses help add meaning to the text?
  - A The use of the rooster imagery suggests the speaker lives on a farm.
  - B The free–form lines mirror the speaker’s fun and lighthearted tone.
  - C The italicized sentence shows the speaker’s anger at the mother.
  - D The rhyme scheme mirrors the turning of pages in a photo album.
  
- 2 How do the speaker’s feelings become clearer in the last stanza of this poem?
  - A The speaker wishes his mother had been a better photographer.
  - B The speaker regrets how he described the photographs.
  - C The speaker reveals that he likes his mother’s photography.
  - D The speaker is upset that the photographs had mistakes.
  
- 3 This poem explores a relationship between photographs and memories. Write a paragraph that describes how the structure of the poem helps to explore this relationship. Use at least three details from the text to support your response.

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Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

## A Boy and His Dad

*by Edgar Guest*

- A boy and his dad on a fishing-trip—  
There is a glorious fellowship!  
Father and son and the open sky  
And the white clouds lazily drifting by,  
5 And the laughing stream as it runs along  
With the clicking reel like a martial song,  
And the father teaching the youngster gay  
How to land a fish in the sportsman's way.
- I fancy I hear them talking there  
10 In an open boat, and the speech is fair.  
And the boy is learning the ways of men  
From the finest man in his youthful ken.  
Kings, to the youngster, cannot compare  
With the gentle father who's with him there.
- 15 And the greatest mind of the human race  
Not for one minute could take his place.
- Which is happier, man or boy?  
The soul of the father is steeped in joy,  
For he's finding out, to his heart's delight,  
20 That his son is fit for the future fight.  
He is learning the glorious depths of him,  
And the thoughts he thinks and his every whim;  
And he shall discover, when night comes on,  
How close he has grown to his little son.
- 25 A boy and his dad on a fishing-trip—  
Builders of life's companionship!  
Oh, I envy them, as I see them there  
Under the sky in the open air,  
For out of the old, old long-ago  
30 Come the summer days that I used to know,  
When I learned life's truths from my father's lips  
As I shared the joy of his fishing-trips.



Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

## Answer Form

1 (A) (B) (C) (D)

2 (A) (B) (C) (D)

3 (A) (B) (C) (D)

Number  
Correct

3

- 1** Which statement **best** describes the structure of the poem?
- A** The poem has three stanzas, and each stanza uses repetition.
  - B** The poem has four stanzas, and each stanza uses a rhyme scheme.
  - C** The poem has four stanzas that use repetition in alternating stanzas.
  - D** The poem has five stanzas that use rhyme and repetition.
- 2** How does the question at the beginning of the third stanza help to develop the central idea of the poem?
- A** The speaker realizes that the father and son’s time together is more important than fishing.
  - B** The speaker understands that the son will soon be ready to face the challenges of life.
  - C** The speaker envies the relationship the father and son reveal during the fishing trips.
  - D** The speaker imagines what the father and son are learning about fishing.
- 3** How do the speaker’s feelings become clear in the last stanza of this poem?
- A** The speaker wants all fathers and sons to go on fishing trips.
  - B** The speaker hopes that sons will learn lessons about life from their fathers.
  - C** The speaker wants to go on fishing trips with his grandfather.
  - D** The speaker fondly remembers his own experiences as a young boy.





4 The central idea of this poem is that a man and his son happily bond while on a fishing trip. Write a paragraph that describes how the structure of the poem helps to express this central idea. Use at least **three** details from the text to support your response.

Lined writing area for student response

**✓ Self Check** *Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 119.*

# Ready<sup>®</sup> Common Core

## Reading Teacher Resource Book **7**



# Analyzing the Structure of a Poem

Theme: *A Family Scrapbook*

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Recognize and identify forms, patterns, and structures in poetry.
- Analyze how the poet’s choice of sound devices, stanzas, and patterns function in a poem.
- Analyze how the poet’s choice of form and structure contributes to meaning and theme.

## THE LEARNING PROGRESSION

- **Grade 6:** CCSS RL.6.5 requires students to understand how a particular part of a poem fits into the poem’s overall structure.
- **Grade 7:** CCSS RL.7.5 builds on the Grade 6 standard by requiring students to not only identify a poem’s structure but also to analyze how the poetic structure contributes to the poem’s meaning.
- **Grade 8:** CCSS RL.8.5 requires students to compare the structures of various poems, analyzing how different structures contribute to meaning and style.

## PREREQUISITE SKILLS

- Understand the characteristics of and language used in poetry and how those characteristics create meaning.
- Recognize the general nature and purpose of rhyme, repetition, and rhythm in a poem.
- Explain how a particular choice of sound devices, stanzas, and patterns function in a poem.

## TAP STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Tell students that in this lesson they will learn about how the structure of a poem affects the poem’s meaning. Ask how poems differ from other kinds of writing. (*Poems are usually written in groups of lines called stanzas rather than in paragraphs; they often feature rhyme, repetition, and rhythm as well as figurative language and imagery; they may tell a story or express the speaker’s feelings and thoughts.*)
- Explain that poems, like stories, have patterns that help readers interpret the poet’s message. The way a poem is organized is called poetic structure.
- Build on what students know by comparing stanzas to paragraphs. Point out that, like ideas grouped into a paragraph, related ideas grouped into a set of lines in a poem is called a stanza. Stanzas work together to build an image, thought, or feeling.
- Ask students to name and describe types of poem structures they know, such as limericks, haiku, and ballads.
- Explain to students that determining a poem’s structure and figuring out how it reveals more about a poem’s meaning will help them to better understand poems they read.

### Ready Teacher Toolbox

[teacher-toolbox.com](http://teacher-toolbox.com)

|                              | Prerequisite Skills | RL.7.5 |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------|
| <b>Ready Lessons</b>         | ✓                   | ✓      |
| <b>Tools for Instruction</b> |                     | ✓      |
| <b>Interactive Tutorials</b> |                     | ✓      |

## CCSS Focus

**RL.7.5** Analyze how a ... poem’s form or structure (e.g. ... sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

**ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:** **RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.4, RL.7.7; L.7.1, L.7.4.a, L.7.4.c, L.7.5.a; W.7.4, W.7.9.a; SL.7.1, SL.7.4, SL.7.6**  
(See page A39 for full text.)



### AT A GLANCE

Students analyze the internal structure of a poem and consider what that structure adds to the meaning. They learn that recognizing the connection between structure and meaning enhances a reader’s experience.

### STEP BY STEP

- Read aloud the definitions of *stanzas*, *free verse*, and *rhyme scheme*. Ask students to study the excerpt from “Song of the Old Mother.” Discuss how the poem’s regular patterns of rhythm and rhyme mean that it is not a free verse poem.
- Ask students to underline the two words that rhyme in lines 1 and 2 and draw a box around the two words that rhyme in lines 3 and 4. Then have them circle the verbs at the end of each line.
- Lead students through a discussion of the chart. Point out how the rhyme scheme groups the lines in pairs. Ask volunteers to explain how lines 1 and 2 center around one idea (*starting the fire*) and how lines 3 and 4 center around another idea (*chores that follow*). Also discuss how the repeated pattern of verb use adds to the meaning.
- Suggest that, when students read a poem, the first step is simply to read and experience it. Sometimes analyzing the poem’s structure reinforces what they first thought about it. Other times, identifying a poem’s structure can help them interpret the lines to gain a clearer understanding of their meanings.

## Genre Focus

### Literary Texts: Sonnets

Tell students that in this lesson they will read lyric poems. Remind them that a lyric poem expresses the feelings of the speaker.

One type of lyric poem is called a sonnet. A sonnet is a lyric poem of 14 lines, written in iambic pentameter, a pattern of units of unstressed and stressed syllables.

Most sonnet forms follow a strict rhyme scheme. One of the most famous sonnet writers was William Shakespeare. The rhyme scheme of a Shakespearean sonnet is ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG. The final pair of rhyming lines in this type of sonnet is called a couplet. Perhaps Shakespeare’s most famous sonnet is

Lesson 14 Part 1: Introduction

**Analyzing the Structure of a Poem**

**CCSS**  
 RL.7.5: ... Analyze how a ... poem’s form or structure (e.g., ... sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

Theme: *A Family Scrapbook*

Poetry is writing that uses words, sound, and structure in special ways to express meaning. Sometimes, poets arrange their thoughts in **stanzas**, or groups of lines. Stanzas may have a particular pattern of rhyming words. Sometimes poets write in **free verse**. In free verse, the arrangement of lines is irregular, and there may be no **rhyme scheme**, or pattern of rhyme, at all. Poets may also repeat certain sounds, words, or patterns to call attention to them, or create a rhythm.

**Read the poem excerpt below, which describes the tasks a mother must do each day. Notice the rhyme scheme, which is based on the last sound of each line. When two lines have the same rhyming sound, they are assigned the same letter. Also, look for the groups of verbs at the end of each line, and circle them.**

| from “Song of the Old Mother”<br><i>by William Butler Yeats</i> | Rhyme Scheme |
|---|--------------|
| I rise in the dawn, and I <u>kneel and blow</u>                 | A            |
| Till the seed of the fire <u>flicker and glow</u> ;             | A            |
| And then I must scrub and <u>bake and sweep</u>                 | B            |
| Till stars are beginning to <u>blink and peep</u> . . .         | B            |

**Read the chart to learn how the structural elements in this poem contribute to its meaning.**

| Structural Element | What It Adds to the Poem  |
|--------------------|---|
| Rhyme scheme       | The AABB rhyme scheme helps tie together the parts of each idea— starting the fire, and cleaning all day. |
| Repeated pattern   | Ending each line with a group of verbs suggests the day-in and day-out nature of the woman’s work.        |

**Poem’s Meaning:** The work of a mother is ongoing and difficult.

Listen closely the next time you read or hear a poem read aloud. Ask yourself these questions to better understand the poem’s meaning: how is the poem organized? Does it rhyme, or is it free verse? Does the poet use repetition? If so, what effect does it create? Understanding poetry can be difficult, but asking questions like these can make it easier.

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“Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?” This sonnet ends with the following couplet:

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Tell students that another famous sonnet is Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “How Do I Love Thee?” Students will read this sonnet in this lesson.

At some point, if desired, discuss how the rhyme scheme of “How Do I Love Thee?” (ABBA, ABBA, CDC, DCD) differs from the typical Shakespearean sonnet (ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG).

Point out to students that all sonnets they read are lyric poems but not all lyric poems are sonnets.



**AT A GLANCE**

Students read a lyric poem, and then identify and analyze its structural elements.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Invite volunteers to tell what they learned on the previous page about identifying the rhyme scheme and repeated elements of a poem.
- Tell students that in this lesson they will practice identifying some structural elements of poems.
- Read aloud “A Barred Owl.” Explain the meaning of the word *barred* if it is unfamiliar to students.
- Then read the question: “How does the structure of the poem contribute to its meaning?” Tell students that you will use a Think Aloud to demonstrate a way of answering the question.

**Think Aloud:** To answer the question, I’ll focus on the stanzas, rhyme scheme, and repetition to determine how the structure reveals the poem’s meaning. First, I’ll number the stanzas and think about the meaning of each one. The first stanza tells what the parents say to their child. What is the central idea of the second stanza? How do the ideas differ?

- Direct students to the chart, and review how it helps them think about the poem’s structural elements. Have students fill in the chart to describe what the stanzas add to the poem’s meaning.

**Think Aloud:** The poem includes end rhymes: *boom* in line 1 and *room* in line 2 is the first pair. I know the poet chose a particular rhyme scheme for a reason, so I’ll mark the rhyme scheme of the poem to help me think about how it affects the poem’s meaning.

- Point out to students that, as stated in the chart, the AABB rhyme scheme is similar to a lullaby.

**Think Aloud:** Now I will look for words that are repeated in the poem. I remember that a poet might choose to repeat words to add emphasis to them.

- Have students underline examples of repetition. Then ask them to describe how this structural element adds to the poem’s meaning. Have students write their ideas in the chart.
- Finally, have students complete their charts and discuss their answers with partners.

Read the poem below, which is about a child woken in the night by a hooting owl.

Genre: Lyric Poem

**A Barred Owl** by Richard Wilbur

- 1 The warping night air having brought the boom      A  
Of an owl’s voice into her darkened room,      A  
We tell the awakened child that all she heard      B  
Was an odd question from a forest bird,      B  
5 Asking of us, if rightly listened to,      C  
“Who cooks for you?” and then “Who cooks for you?”      C  
2 Words, which can make our terrors bravely clear      D  
Can also thus domesticate a fear,      D  
And send a small child back to sleep at night      E  
10 Not listening for the sound of stealthy flight      E  
Or dreaming of some small thing in a claw      F  
Borne up to some dark branch and eaten raw.      F

**Explore how to answer this question:** “How does the structure of the poem contribute to its meaning?”

“A Barred Owl” is a lyric poem, or a poem that expresses the speaker’s feelings. In this poem, parents want to comfort their frightened child, even though they realize the owl may not be as innocent as they tell her it is.

In the poem above, number the stanzas and think about the meaning in each one. Mark the rhyme scheme and underline any instances of repetition. Then, complete the following chart.

| Structural Element  | What It Adds to the Poem   |
|---|--|
| Stanzas   | 2 stanzas: first stanza is what parents say to child, second stanza is their reasoning after they’ve shut the bedroom door |
| Rhyme scheme  | The AABB rhyme scheme is similar to a lullaby used to help a child fall asleep.  |
| Repetition  | Who, you, child, small, some, sound, stealthy  |
| <b>Poem’s Meaning:</b> Calming words are the best thing to ease a child’s fears, but the reality of the owl’s actions are unsettling. |  |

With a partner, take turns discussing how you interpreted the poem’s meaning. Citing evidence from the text, explain how the different structural elements helped you come to that conclusion.

**Tier Two Vocabulary: Domesticate**

- Ask students to look at the word *domesticate* in line 8. Remind students that figuring out the part of speech of an unfamiliar word can help reveal its meaning. Sometimes a word’s ending shows its function, but in this case the ending *-ate* appears in different parts of speech.
- Explain that when context clues and word parts do not reveal the meaning of an unfamiliar word, a dictionary or thesaurus can help. This strategy is particularly helpful when reading an unfamiliar word in a poem.
- Have partners use a thesaurus to identify a synonym for *domesticate*. (*tame*, *trained*, *cultivated*) Then have students name the synonym closest in meaning to *domesticate* as it is used in the poem. (*tame*) Discuss how a fear can be “tamed.” (RL.7.4; L.7.4.c)



### AT A GLANCE

Students read the sonnet “How Do I Love Thee?” and identify elements of poetic structure. Then they answer a question about how the use of repetition helps express the speaker’s feelings.

### STEP BY STEP

- Tell students that they will read a well-known sonnet entitled “How Do I Love Thee?”
- The Close Reading helps students identify important features of the poem that reveal its structure. The Hint will help them analyze what that structure contributes to the poem’s meaning in order to answer the question.
- Ask volunteers to share the repeated phrase and rhyme scheme, as directed by the Close Reading.
- Then have students respond to the question, using the Hint to help them.
- Have students respond to the Show Your Thinking at the bottom of the page. Remind them that the work they did for the Close Reading will help them answer this question.
- Finally, have students complete the partner activity. If they have trouble identifying the separate ideas in the poem, encourage pairs to “translate” each line into modern language.

### ANSWER ANALYSIS

Sample response: The poet uses repetition to emphasize the ways in which the speaker expresses his or her love.

Sample response for Show Your Thinking: The poet repeats the phrase “I Love Thee” a total of nine times in the poem. By repeating this phrase so often and then describing specific ways, the poet helps readers understand the nature and extent of the speaker’s love.

**ERROR ALERT:** Students who had difficulty explaining how the speaker’s feelings are represented by the poem’s repetition might be struggling with the abstract nature of poetry. Guide these students in forming a concrete understanding of the content and message of the poem first. Then discuss how the poet’s choices in presenting the ideas also serve that content or message.

Part 3: Guided Instruction
Lesson 14

**Close Reading**

This is a sonnet, a lyric poem with 14 lines. Think about how the phrase “count the ways” in the first line relates to phrases in other lines. **Underline** the phrase that is repeated throughout the poem.

**Hint**

Look closely at the repeated phrases that you underlined. How do they connect to the poem’s title?

Read the poem, then use the Close Reading and Hint to help you answer the question.

Genre: Sonnet

**How Do I Love Thee?** by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
 5 I love thee to the level of everyday’s  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
 I love thee with a passion put to use  
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.  
 10 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,  
 I shall but love thee better after death.

**Reread the poem. Then explain how the poet has used repetition to express the speaker’s feelings.**

**Responses will vary.**

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**Show Your Thinking**

Citing evidence from the poem, explain how the poem’s structure helps you understand the speaker’s feelings.

**Responses will vary.**

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With a partner, list and discuss the ways in which the speaker answers the question “How Do I Love Thee?”

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## Tier Two Vocabulary: *Strive*

- Have students look at the word *strive* in line 7. Point out that line 7 has the same structure as line 8 below it. Suggest that the lines have the same parts of speech in the same places, only the words are different.
- Lead students in identifying some clues in line 8 that can help reveal the meaning of *strive* in line 7. Ask students how the prepositions *for* and *from* help suggest the meaning of *strive*. (They suggest that men strive for something positive but turn from something negative.)
- Have students determine the meaning of the word *strive* (“reach for or make an effort to achieve”) and confirm it by using a dictionary. **(RL.7.4; L.7.4.a)**

**AT A GLANCE**

Students read a poem twice about family photographs. After the first reading, you will ask three questions to check your students' comprehension of the poem.

**STEP BY STEP**

- Have students read the poem silently without referring to the Study Buddy or the Close Reading text.
- Ask the following questions to ensure students' comprehension of the text:

Why does the speaker mention so many family members in this poem? (*The speaker sees these family members in the old family photos that he or she is viewing.*)

Who was responsible for taking most of the “family photographs” and how do you know? (*The speaker's mother, or Mama, took the pictures. This detail is suggested by line 3, lines 14–15, and line 17.*)

What does the speaker seem to like best about the family photographs? (*The speaker enjoys remembering the fun the family was having when each picture was snapped; he also sees the humor in his mother's inability to take good photos.*)

- Ask students to reread the poem and look at the Study Buddy think aloud. How does the Study Buddy help them think about the poem's meaning?
- Tell students to follow the directions in the Close Reading.

**Tip:** Remind students that not all poems include rhyme. Point out that “Ode to Family Photographs” is a free-verse poem. (If necessary, reread the first paragraph on page 1 of this lesson, which explains free verse.) Point out its conversational nature, its lack of end rhyme, and the varying stanza lengths as elements of free verse.

- Ask students to think about other choices the poet made, such as the repetition of *This is...*, and to explain how the structural choices reveal more about the speaker's feelings and attitude toward his mother.
- Finally, have students answer the questions on page 141. Use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct and incorrect responses.

Read the poem. Use the Study Buddy and Close Reading to guide your reading.



An ode is a type of lyric poem that celebrates something. I will keep this in mind as I read to see what the poem celebrates.

**Close Reading**

The speaker mentions mistakes in some photos. **Underline** instances of all the things that are wrong with the photos.

The speaker starts by flipping through a book of photos. Does he keep doing so to the end? What changes, and how do the lines and stanzas help show that change?

Genre: Ode

**Ode to Family Photographs**

by Gary Soto

This is the pond and these are my feet,  
This is the rooster, and this is more of my feet.  
Mama was never good at pictures.  
This is the statue of a famous general who lost an arm,  
5 And this is me with my head cut off.  
This is a trash can chained to a gate,  
This is my father with his eyes half-closed.  
This is a photograph of my sister  
And a giraffe looking over her shoulder.  
10 This is our car's front bumper.  
This is a bird with a pretzel in its beak.  
This is my brother Pedro standing on one leg on a rock,  
With a smear of chocolate on his face.  
Mama sneezed when she looked  
15 Behind the camera: the snapshots are blurry,  
The angles dizzy as a spin on a merry-go-round.  
But we had fun when Mama picked up the camera.  
How can I tell?  
Each of us laughed hard.  
20 Can you see? I have candy in my mouth.

**ELL Support: Possessives**

- Tell students that possessives are words that show who or what owns something. Explain that adding an apostrophe and an -s makes most nouns possessive.
- Suggest that possessive pronouns are different because they are not formed by adding an apostrophe and an -s. Instead, the possessive forms of pronouns must be memorized: *my, your, our, his, her, its, and their*.
- Point out the possessive pronoun *my* in line 1. Ask students who *owns* the feet. (the speaker) (**L.7.1**)
- Challenge students to identify two more possessive pronouns in “Ode to Family Photographs.” (*his, her*)



STEP BY STEP

- Have students read questions 1–3, using the Hints to help them answer those questions.

**Tip:** If students have trouble answering question 2, guide them to reread the final stanza. Have them describe the central idea of this stanza is.

- Discuss with students the Answer Analysis below.

ANSWER ANALYSIS

- 1 The correct choice is B. The lack of rhyme scheme helps show the fun, conversational tone. Choice A is incorrect. It is a detail in the poem that is not related to the overall structure. Choice C is incorrect. The speaker does not express anger toward Mama’s photos. Choice D is incorrect because the poem does not have a rhyme scheme.
- 2 The correct choice is C. Words such as “fun” and “laughed” show the speaker likes his mother’s photos. Choice A is incorrect. The speaker recalls Mama’s poor picture-taking as part of the fun times. Choice B is incorrect. The last stanza doesn’t suggest regret. Choice D is incorrect. The speaker’s tone is positive; he is not upset in the last stanza.
- 3 Sample response: Repetition contributes to this poem’s meaning. The poet repeats “This is” at the beginning most lines, suggesting what a person might say while flipping through photos. But then the speaker stops looking at photos and begins thinking about the person who took them—his mother. Suddenly he seems less hurried and more thoughtful. This switch from action to thought are reflected by the stanzas. Initially the stanzas are short, but they lengthen, as if the speaker, after a hurried beginning, ends up taking the time to linger over the memories those photos evoke.

RETEACHING

With students, fill in the chart to answer question 3.

| Structural Element | What It Adds to the Poem                     |
|--------------------|--|
| Repetition         | sense of excitedly flipping through pictures |
| Stanzas            | length going from short to long              |

**Poem’s Meaning:** From excitement at seeing to thought.

Hints

Eliminate answer choices that misinterpret the poet’s use of structure.

How is this ode a celebration?

Think about how the speaker’s actions and feelings are communicated not just through his words but also through the repetition of phrases and the lengths of stanzas.

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

- 1 How does the structure the poet uses help add meaning to the text?
  - A The use of the rooster imagery suggests the speaker lives on a farm.
  - B** The free-form lines mirror the speaker’s fun and lighthearted tone.
  - C The italicized sentence shows the speaker’s anger at the mother.
  - D The rhyme scheme mirrors the turning of pages in a photo album.
- 2 How do the speaker’s feelings become clearer in the last stanza of this poem?
  - A The speaker wishes his mother had been a better photographer.
  - B The speaker regrets how he described the photographs.
  - C** The speaker reveals that he likes his mother’s photography.
  - D The speaker is upset that the photographs had mistakes.

3 This poem explores a relationship between photographs and memories. Write a paragraph that describes how the structure of the poem helps to explore this relationship. Use at least three details from the text to support your response.

See sample response.

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Integrating Standards

Use these questions to further students’ understanding of “Ode to Family Photographs.”

- 1 What does the speaker probably mean when he says that the photographs’ angles are as “dizzy as a spin on a merry-go-round”? (**RL.7.4; L.7.5.a**)

*The speaker suggests that, unlike in normal photos, the angles from which the photos are shot make them difficult to identify and follow. The speaker wants readers to recall the feeling they have after a ride on a merry-go-round so they can understand what the photos look like.*

- 2 How does the poet’s choice of free verse reflect the theme or central idea of the poem? (**RL.7.2**)

*By choosing a structure with few rules and expectations, the poet uses a style much like Mama’s style of taking photographs. The poem collects the speaker’s ideas freely and imperfectly, just as Mama’s photos collect happy memories randomly and imperfectly.*





Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

### A Boy and His Dad

by Edgar Guest

- A boy and his dad on a fishing-trip—  
There is a glorious fellowship!  
Father and son and the open sky  
And the white clouds lazily drifting by,  
5 And the laughing stream as it runs along  
With the clicking reel like a martial song,  
And the father teaching the youngster gay  
How to land a fish in the sportsman's way.
- I fancy I hear them talking there  
10 In an open boat, and the speech is fair.  
And the boy is learning the ways of men  
From the finest man in his youthful ken.  
Kings, to the youngster, cannot compare  
With the gentle father who's with him there.  
15 And the greatest mind of the human race  
Not for one minute could take his place.
- Which is happier, man or boy?  
The soul of the father is steeped in joy,  
For he's finding out, to his heart's delight,  
20 That his son is fit for the future fight.  
He is learning the glorious depths of him,  
And the thoughts he thinks and his every whim;  
And he shall discover, when night comes on,  
How close he has grown to his little son.
- 25 A boy and his dad on a fishing-trip—  
Builders of life's companionship!  
Oh, I envy them, as I see them there  
Under the sky in the open air,  
For out of the old, old long-ago  
30 Come the summer days that I used to know,  
When I learned life's truths from my father's lips  
As I shared the joy of his fishing-trips.

Answer the questions. Mark your answers to questions 1–3 on the Answer Form to the right.

#### Answer Form

|                |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Number Correct |                       |                       |                       | 3                     |

- 1 Which statement best describes the structure of the poem?
- A The poem has three stanzas, and each stanza uses repetition.  
B The poem has four stanzas, and each stanza uses a rhyme scheme.  
C The poem has four stanzas that use repetition in alternating stanzas.  
D The poem has five stanzas that use rhyme and repetition.
- 2 How does the question at the beginning of the third stanza help to develop the central idea of the poem?
- A The speaker realizes that the father and son's time together is more important than fishing.  
B The speaker understands that the son will soon be ready to face the challenges of life.  
C The speaker envies the relationship the father and son reveal during the fishing trips.  
D The speaker imagines what the father and son are learning about fishing.
- 3 How do the speaker's feelings become clear in the last stanza of this poem?
- A The speaker wants all fathers and sons to go on fishing trips.  
B The speaker hopes that sons will learn lessons about life from their fathers.  
C The speaker wants to go on fishing trips with his grandfather.  
D The speaker fondly remembers his own experiences as a young boy.

## AT A GLANCE

Students independently read a longer poem and answer questions in a format that provides test practice.

## STEP BY STEP

- Tell students to use what they have learned about reading closely and analyzing poetic structure to read the poem on page 142.
- Remind students to underline or circle important points, including those that reveal poetic structure, such as rhyme scheme and repetition.
- Tell students to answer the questions on pages 143 and 144. For questions 1–3, they should fill in the correct circle on the Answer Form.
- When students have finished, use the Answer Analysis to discuss correct responses and the reasons for them. Have students fill in the Number Correct on the Answer Form.

## ANSWER ANALYSIS

- 1 The correct choice is B. The poem has four stanzas, and each stanza uses a rhyme scheme. Choice A is incorrect because the poem has four stanzas. Choice C is incorrect because all stanzas use repetition. Choice D is incorrect because the poem has four stanzas. **(DOK 2)**

## Theme Connection

- How do all the poems in this lesson relate to the theme, *A Family Scrapbook*?
- Which poem do you connect with most? Why?



- 2 The correct choice is A. The overall idea of the stanza is that the time spent together is important to the man and the son. Choice B is incorrect. It focuses on lines 19–20 rather than the entire stanza. Choice C is incorrect. It does not connect to the question at the beginning of the third stanza. Choice D is incorrect because the poem’s central idea goes deeper than the subject of fishing. **(DOK 2)**
- 3 The correct choice is D. The speaker refers to “When I learned life’s truths from my father’s lips.” Choice A is incorrect because it does not tell how the speaker’s feelings become clear. Choice B is incorrect. It does not reflect how the speaker personally connects, rather than just observes, the scene. Choice C is incorrect. The speaker describes fishing trips with his father, not his grandfather. **(DOK 2)**
- 4 Sample response: The poem’s highly regular rhyme and rhythm schemes emphasize the positive, happy central idea. Each pair of lines rhymes, and each line has 9 or 10 beats. This creates a sing-song structure, one that evokes the happiness of the central idea: a man and his son having a wonderful time together while fishing. **(DOK 3)**

Part 5: Common Core Practice
Lesson 14

**4** The central idea of this poem is that a man and his son happily bond while on a fishing trip. Write a paragraph that describes how the structure of the poem helps to express this central idea. Use at least **three** details from the text to support your response.

[See sample response.](#)

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Self Check

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 119.

144 L14: Analyzing the Structure of a Poem
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## Integrating Standards

Use these questions and tasks as opportunities to interact with “A Boy and His Dad.”

- 1** How would you describe the theme of “A Boy and His Dad”? **(RL.7.2)**

*The theme of “A Boy and His Dad” might be described as “Both father and son discover new truths about life and each other through time spent together.”*

- 2** How would you describe the speaker of “A Boy and His Dad”? Use details from the poem to support your ideas. **(RL.7.1)**

*The speaker of the poem is a keen observer of the world, as shown by the details included about the clouds and the stream in the first stanza. The speaker thinks very highly of his own father, as shown by the descriptions of what the young son thought about his father (lines 13–16). Because the speaker could not possibly know what the far-off boy thought about the father, readers can infer that those feelings reflect the speaker’s feelings for his own father.*

- 3** Write a paragraph to describe the similarities between the rhyming words in stanza 1 and those in stanza 4. What is the most likely reason for this similarity? **(W.7.9.a)**

*The rhyming pair fishing-trip and fellowship are the first two rhymes in lines 1 and 2. The same word begins line 25, which is the first line of stanza 4. The same word, fishing-trip, also ends the final line of the poem, line 32. The poet repeats fishing-trip often to emphasize the importance of the father-son bonding that, in the poet’s mind, has resulted.*

- 4** Discuss in small groups the question the speaker presents in line 17 of the poem: “Which is happier, man or boy?” What does this line mean? How do you think the poet would answer it? **(SL.7.1)**

*Discussions will vary. Remind students that their interpretations should be supported by details from the text and that their opinions can be formed from details and their prior knowledge.*

## Writing Activities

### Write a Sonnet (W.7.4)

- Have students reread the sonnet “How Do I Love Thee?” and remind them of the main features of a sonnet from the Genre Focus on page 128.
- Challenge students to write a sonnet to express their feelings about an important person in their lives. Students do not need to write in strict iambic pentameter, but encourage them to keep to the fourteen-line structure and to use a rhyme scheme of their choice.
- Tell students that their poems need not deal with serious ideas as some sonnets do. Remind them of the playful way the speaker of “Ode to Family Photographs” shares memories and a message about his mother.

### Multiple-Meaning Words (L.7.4.a)

- Write *fancy* on the board, and ask students to give a common meaning for it. (“*not plain*”) Direct students to line 9 of “A Boy and His Dad.” Discuss how the familiar meaning of *fancy* does not match the way *fancy* is being used in this poem. Have students suggest the meaning of *fancy* in line 9. (“*imagine; daydream*”)
- Challenge students to find three other multiple-meaning words in “A Boy and His Dad” and to use each word in two sentences that show its different meanings. (*Examples: open, fair, close*)

### LISTENING ACTIVITY (SL.7.1, SL.7.6)

#### Listen Closely/Make a Rhyme

- Have one student read aloud a line from one of the poems in the lesson while other students listen.
- When the student finishes reading, he or she chooses one student to make up a new line that rhymes with the line that was read aloud. Encourage playful creativity in the new lines, as long as they end with a rhyming word.
- Have students discuss how rhyme adds to the poem even if it creates nonsensical lines.

### DISCUSSION ACTIVITY (SL.7.1)

#### Talk in a Group/Discuss Poetry

- Have students think about the representation of family created by the poems in this lesson.
- Ask them to discuss the following questions: Which family relationships were discussed in the poems in this lesson? Which family relationships were not mentioned in these poems? Which poem made you think of your own family? Why?
- Allow 10 to 15 minutes for discussion. Then have groups share their results with the class.

### MEDIA ACTIVITY (RL.7.7)

#### Be Creative/Make a Digital Collage

- Challenge students to use the poems in this lesson as a starting point for making a collage that reflects their ideas about friends and family.
- If available, invite students to use photo-editing or presentation-creating programs to make their collages digitally.
- Have students discuss how ideas presented in multimedia are similar to and different from ideas presented in a poem.

### RESEARCH ACTIVITY (W.7.7; SL.7.4)

#### Research and Present/Research a Poet

- Tell students that the author of the poem “A Barred Owl.” Richard Wilbur, was once a Poet Laureate of the United States.
- Have students choose one U.S. Poet Laureate to research and prepare a report about.
- Ask them to include in their reports a brief explanation of what a Poet Laureate does in the United States, information about the poet’s life, and at least one favorite poem to read aloud.
- Allow time for students to present to the class.