



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
التعليم أولاً Education First

ENGLISH SUPPORT DOCUMENT

ANALYZING POETRY

OVERVIEW

Purpose of this resource

This resource is designed to support teachers in analyzing poetry.

This document does not include all aspects of analyzing poetry.

Contents

- What is poetry?
- Why is poetry important?
- Where are the links to poetry in the ADEC English Curriculum Frameworks?
- Poetic features
- Forms of poetry
- Figurative language
- Example of figurative language *The Storm*
- Example poem *Walls*
- How to analyze poetry within the ADEC English Curriculum Frameworks
- Example annotation – *Two Little Shadows*
- Guiding questions and responses – *Two Little Shadows*
- Scaffold for analyzing poetry
- Example poem *Nothing Gold Can Stay*
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Analyzing Poetry

What is poetry?

Poetry uses an economy of words in a complex way to capture a moment and/or truth regarding the human condition.

Poetry involves the organization of experience into a lyrical form of patterns of sounds through images.

Poetry is a link between the rhythm of language and thought.

Poetry is a vehicle for expression of human truths which cannot be expressed through prose.

Poetry is a form of expression that can be created in a different way without engaging formal structured language.

Why is poetry important?

Poetry is the manifestation of the different rhythmic patterns of language.

Poetry is an integral component of culture as a literary form to express ideas, tell stories, preserve oral histories, acknowledge achievement, teach values, give moral direction and reflect on life.

Poetry allows for heightened expression and thought to capture ideas.

Poetry is read and recited for the enjoyment of the language.

Poetry gives shape to images.

*The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;*

William Shakespeare A Midsummer Night's Dream

Where are the links to analyzing poetry in the ADEC English Curriculum Frameworks?

English Learning Plan choose appropriate poems that link to the topic and the purpose of the teaching and learning focus

- Text types
- A range of genre
- Critical response

ECART -

Research

- to gather further information

Strategies

- Sustained Reading Program poems part of wider reading range of texts
- reading journal
- vocabulary development

Reflect and Review

- to reflect on a perspective within a topic

Product

Integrated Strand Tasks

- Compare and Contrast
- Reading for Meaning
- Writing for a Purpose
- Analysis of Language and structure
- Adapting Spoken Language
- Synthesis Write and Graphically Represent
- Electronic Task

Poetic features

Poetry is often written to be read aloud.

Poetry is about:

- **description**
- **feelings**
- **reflection**

Poets use devices such as:

- imagery – simile, metaphor, personification, sensory
- sounds – onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance
- rhythm, rhyme. repetition

Poems are structured as a series of steps in:

- stanzas
- verses
- free verse

Poems have different purposes :

- narrative
- recount
- description

Grammatical patterns in poetry

Relies on textual cohesion in word chains based on choice of words and the order of words:

- antonyms
- synonyms
- repetition

If telling a story then grammatical features of narrative texts such as:

- action verbs
- noun groups
- adverbs
- adverbial phrases

Forms of Poetry

Poetry Form is the general organizing principle of a literary work

Form	Definition	Example
Cinquain	<p>consists of five lines.</p> <p>Line 1 is one word (the title) Line 2 is two words that describe the title. Line 3 is three words that tell the action Line 4 is four words that express the feeling Line 5 is one word that recalls the title</p>	<p>Tree Strong, Tall Swaying, swinging, sighing Memories of summer Oak</p>
Sonnet	<p>lyric poems that are 14 lines long falling into three coordinate quatrains and a concluding couplet sonnets are divided into two quatrains and a six-line sestet.</p>	<p>O thou my lovely boy by William Shakespeare</p> <p><i>excerpt</i></p> <p>O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power Dost hold Time's fickle glass his fickle hour; Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st Thy lovers withering, as thy sweet self grow'st.</p>
Haiku	<p>a Japanese poem composed of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Haiku poetry reflects on some aspect of nature and creates images.</p>	<p>None is travelling by Basho (1644-1694)</p> <p>None is travelling Here along this way but I, This autumn evening. The first day of the year: thoughts come - and there is loneliness; the autumn dusk is here.</p>
Blank verse	<p>unrhymed iambic pentameter.</p>	<p>The Ball Poem by John Berryman</p>

		<p>What is the boy now, who has lost his ball, What, what is he to do? I saw it go Merrily bouncing, down the street, and then Merrily over-there it is in the water!</p>
Quatrain	<p>a stanza or poem of four lines. Lines 2 and 4 must rhyme. Lines 1 and 3 may or may not rhyme. Rhyming lines should have a similar number of syllables</p>	<p>The Tyger by William Blake</p> <p>Tyger! Tyger! burning bright In the forests of the night, What immortal hand or eye Could frame thy fearful symmetry?</p>
Analogy	<p>An Analogy is a likeness or similarity between things (a subject and an analog) that are otherwise unlike. Analogy is the comparison of two pairs which have the same relationship.</p>	<p>Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost</p> <p>Nature's first green is gold, Her hardest hue to hold. Her early leaf's a flower; But only so an hour. Then leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief, So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay.</p>
Acrostic	<p>Acrostic Poem, tells about the word. It uses the letters of the word for the first letter of each line.</p>	<p>Nicky by Marie Hughes</p> <p>Nicky is a Nurse It's her chosen career Children or Old folks Kindness in abundance Year after year</p>
Rhymes	<p>Rhymes are types of poems which have the repetition of the same or similar sounds at the end of two or more words most often at the ends of lines. This</p>	<p>Nursery Rhyme</p> <p>Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.</p>

	technique makes the poem easy to remember and is therefore often used in Nursery Rhymes.	All the King's horses, And all the King's men Couldn't put Humpty together again
Free Verse	Based upon the rhythms of everyday language irregular rhythmic cadence or the recurrence, with variations, of phrases, images, and syntactical patterns rather than the conventional use of meter.	<p style="text-align: center;">Excerpt Dover Beach By Matthew Arnold</p> <p>The sea is calm tonight. The tide is full, the moon lies fair Upon the straits; on the French coast the light Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.</p>

Figurative Language

Definition

- Figurative language is used to create an image which conveys more than the literal meaning of the words or phrase.
- An imaginative truth.

Types of figurative language

- Creative word play; alliteration, onomatopoeia
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Evaluative language
- Idiom
- Sensory language: sight, smell, touch, sound, taste
-

Structure	How figurative language is used
Alliteration refers to two words close together with the same beginning consonant sound	<u>s</u> even <u>s</u> lippery <u>s</u> nakes <u>s</u> lipped by <u>r</u> ound the <u>r</u> ugged <u>r</u> ocks he <u>r</u> an
Onomatopoeia means using a word that makes its sound	The diver splashed in to the water. The wind whistled through the trees.
Simile compares two unlike things using the words like or as	The vulture came in to land like a plane in descent. The thief moved as silently as a cat through the house.
A metaphor makes a statement that says one thing is another thing	He was a tower of strength . The children are angels .
Personification means to give human or animate qualities to something that is not alive	The flames of the fire licked at the edge of the burning house.
Evaluative language judges an action or event	Without a job his future seamed bleak . He made a wise choice.
An idiom is a common expression peculiar to an individual or a group	lend a hand a know all a couch potato cool
Sensory language means words related to smell, sight, touch, taste and sound	His shoes crunched in the brittle grass as he moved across the lawn, the perfume of flowers filling the air.

Example: Figurative language

Text Type Poetry - free verse

<p>The Storm</p> <p>Threatening the earth Obscuring sunlight black clouds ever darkening convulsing like the mixer of life moving at speed shafts of lighting shooting downward like shards of glass exploding with force earth eagerly expecting wild precipitation deluge delivered <i>thankfulness</i> energy to the earth <i>up and running</i></p>	<p>alliteration: deluge delivered</p> <p>onomatopoeia: exploding</p> <p>simile: like shards of glass like the mixer of life</p> <p>sensory language: shafts of lightening shooting downward</p> <p>personification: black clouds... convulsing</p> <p>evaluative: thankfulness</p> <p>idiom: up and running</p>
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Reference:

Get ahead in grammar: a practical guide for students / Anne Quill, Anne Townsend
2007 farrbooks.com.au

Example Poem

WALLS by Mbuyiseni Oswald Mtshali

(adapted)

Man is
a great wall builder –
the Berlin Wall
the Great Wall of China -
but the wall
most impregnable
has a moat
flowing with fright
around his heart.

A wall
without windows
for the spirit
to breeze through

A wall
without a door
for love to walk in.

Discussion

The two lines

The Berlin Wall

The Great Wall of China

are talking about **literal** walls. In the rest of the poem, the word “wall” is used to suggest something else, something to do with “the heart” and with “the spirit” of people. It is used **figuratively**.

Poetry aims at finding the non scientific truth of something, in other words the imaginative truth of something. It uses **figurative language** to do this because the images or the figure can suggest more and can conjure up more associations that the **literal language** can.

How to analyze poetry

Example of analyzing poetry

This model supports the development of:

- Critical Literacy: see Support Document Critical Literacy
- Reading Strategies: see Becoming a Better Reader

Set the context by:

- Questioning what poetry is and why it is important to human existence
- Looking at examples of poems
- Eliciting prior knowledge of poetry and the content of the poem
- Frontloading to support content and vocabulary knowledge for the Poem *Two Little Shadows*

Example Annotation

Two little shadows Anonymous

metaphor → I saw a young mother
 With eyes full of laughter
 And two little shadows
 Come following after.

alliteration → Where ever she moved,
 They were always right there
Holding onto her skirts,
Hanging onto her chair.
 Before her, behind her –
 An adhesive pair.

repetition
Rhyme line 2 + 4
 here - chair

Stanza 3 changes the mood from happiness to weariness

“Don’t you ever get weary
 As, day after day,
your two little tagalongs
 Get in your way?”

Rhyme line 2 + 4
 day - way

alliteration → She smiled as she shook
 Her pretty young head,
 And I’ll always remember
 The words that she said.

Rhyme line 2 + 4
 head - said

“It’s good to have shadows
 That run when you run,
 That laugh when you’re happy
And hum when you hum –
 For you only have shadows

repetition

Coda
Contrast –
 sun and shadows

Extended metaphor
 Shadows are children

When your life’s full of sun.

Word chains:
Antonyms and synonyms

- young, little
- laughter, smiled, happy
weary
- two, pair
- shadows, sun

they are **repeated** throughout the poem

Guiding questions and responses

Guiding questions and responses	<i>Two Little Shadows</i>
identify the subject matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what is the poem about?
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shadows, mother, children
The title predicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shadows can be dark• Shadows follow you
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• poetic device shadow as metaphor
identify the emotion, mood or feeling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main emotion or mood of the poem?• Does the mood change during the poem?• What emotions does the poet want the reader to feel?
Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Happiness• Joy• Warmth of family
identify the purpose, theme, or message of the poet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main idea that the poet wants the reader to get from the poem?• Is there a reason for creating the poem and how does the poet want to shape our point of view?
Theme / ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motherhood• The joy children bring
Reasons for writing this poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To highlight the responsibility of motherhood
Reason for shaping the reader's point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge the value of motherhood
identify the form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does it look like?• Is there a specific style of form that the poet uses?• Are there any rules that are used when creating the poem or is the form free style?
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 stanzas

identify the poetic devices used

- Imagery
- Sound
- Rhythm

See annotation

explore deeper thinking

- What were the feelings of the reader before, during and after reading the poem?
- Do emotions change within the poem?
- Are emotions evoked by the particular words used?
- Are emotions evoked by the changes throughout the poem?
- What perspective is presented and whose is it?
- What other perspectives and whose are they?

Changed emotions

- The poet suggests it is not always joy “Don’t you ever get weary...”
- But the mother returns with the response that it is happiness and reinforces the joy of children

What perspective is presented?

- Joy – the poet’s perspective

What other perspectives are there?

- Children – insecurity, vulnerability, innocence
- Mother’s – challenges to motherhood

Particular words used relating to mood (see annotation)

- Contrast- sun and shadow

Scaffold for analyzing poetry

Guiding questions	Responses
identify the subject matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is the poem about? 	
identify the emotion, mood or feeling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the main emotion or mood of the poem? • Does the mood change during the poem? • What emotions does the poet want the reader to feel? 	
identify the purpose, theme, or message of the poet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the poet write and what is the main idea that the poet wants the reader to get from the poem. • Is there a reason for creating the poem and how does the poet want to shape our point of view? 	
identify the form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it look like? • Is there a specific style of form that the poet uses? • Are there any rules that are used when creating the poem or is the form free style? 	
identify the poetic devices used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagery • Sound • Rhythm 	
explore deeper thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the feelings of the reader before, during and after reading the poem? • Do emotions change within the poem? • Are emotions evoked by the particular words used? • Are emotions evoked by the changes throughout the poem? • What perspective is presented and whose is it? • What other perspectives are there and whose are they? 	

Example Text - Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Concrete to the Abstract

Abstract		Concrete	
Demonstrates understanding of the complexity of structure, language and ideas		Identifies and Interprets at a literal level	
Learning Behaviors			
Explains the effect of poetic devices and form on the meaning	Identifies the links between poetic devices, form, ideas and meaning	Identifies the form and devices used Identifies the main idea of the poem	Reads the poem

Further reading

Robin Malan *New Poetry Works*
2007 David Philip New Africa Books (Pty) Ltd

Anne Quill, Anne Townsend *Get ahead in grammar: a practical guide for students*
2007 farrbooks.com.au

www.criticalreading.com

www.blackwellpublishing.com/showalter