

AMERICAN LITERATURE: POETRY UNIT

STUDENT NAME: _____

PERIOD: _____ DATE: _____ DUE: _____

	Check done	Assignment	Stamp CHECK (2pts each)	LRA & Summary	SOAPStone Points	Class Check
1		"The Lanyard"		--	/5	
2		"Who Understands Me But Me?"		--	/5	
3		"What Do You Feel Underground?" *PIP		/5	/5	
4		"A Voice"		/6	/5	
5		"Now and Then, America"		/5	/5	
6		"somewhere I have never travelled..."		/5	/5	
7		"Design"		/8	/5	
8		"Nothing Gold Can Stay" *PIP		/7	--	
9		"Trying to Name What Doesn't Change" *PIP		/5	/5	
10		"Birches" *PIP		/7	/5	
11		"Mending Wall" *PIP		/11	/5	
12		"Tableau"		/7	/5	
13		"America"		/5	/5	
14		"Harlem"		/6	/5	
15		"Negro Speaks of Rivers" *PIP		/8	/5	
16		"Mirror" *PIP		/5	/5	
17		"Young" *PIP		/5	/5	
18		"Dust"		/4	/5	
19		"George Gray" *PIP		/7	/5	
20		"Man Listening to Disc"		/7	/5	
21		"The Journey" by Oliver		/5	/5	
		TOTAL POINTS :		/38	/100	/256

HOW TO SOAPSTONE EACH POEM

SOAPSTONE	Analytical Response—Your commentary about why you have identified this particular area with this particular label	Textual Support—Underline or highlight in the actual poem with analytical commentary
SPEAKER Who is the speaker and what do we know about him/her?		
OCCASION What are the circumstances surrounding the text?		
AUDIENCE What is the target audience?		
PURPOSE (AUTHOR'S) Why was the text crafted?		
SUBJECT What is the subject being addressed?		
TO NE What is the tone of voice within the text?		
Your overall interpretation/meaning of the poem:		

UNIT OBJECTIVE:

Students will read and analyze a variety of poems both written and performed from the eighteenth-, nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-centuries. They will also cite strong textual evidence for identifying and understanding speaker, occasion, audience, purpose, tone, author's style and aesthetic purposes for using figurative language. (RL 1-4 & 7)

POETRY PACKET INTERPRETATION & INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the poem through and see how much of the author's meaning you can immediately grasp.
2. Mark the poem for all literary content: imagery, metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration, allusion, paradox, style, assonance, etc. Define all the images and symbols, if necessary referring to outside reference works or other works by the same author. Unlock the poet's meaning. Go through again, line by line.
3. Mark the poem by identifying your SOAPSTONE with commentary for every poem. DO THIS ON THE POEM!
4. Answer all literary response and analysis questions in complete sentences and label with title of poem on a separate sheet of paper.
5. After completing LRA questions, write a brief paragraph/summary of your overall impression and interpretation of the poem.

GUIDELINES TO HELP YOU UNLOCK MEANING IN A POEM

- Pay attention to literary devices: what is the purpose of the literary devices and figurative language in the poem? Why does the author choose these techniques?
- Read according to punctuation, not according to lines: pause at commas, dashes and semicolons. Stop at end marks like periods, exclamation points, and question marks.
- Use your senses: poets use sensory details on purpose. Create a visual in your mind for words and images you read.
- Don't overanalyze: try to enjoy the poem for what it is, not for what you are forcing it to be.
- Read the poem more than once: most readers will not "get" a poem on the first reading. Read it through. Read it, and stop to analyze/question. Read it again. Annotate it. Work with it.

POETRY & LITERARY TERMS TO KNOW

Assignment: Study the following terms. Definitions provided by the Holt textbook “Handbook of Literary and Historical Terms on pages 1169—1188.

1. Alliteration—the repetition of consonant sounds in words that are close together.
2. Allusion—a reference to someone or something in history, literature, religion, politics, etc, that an author expects the reader to recognize.
3. Ambiguity—when a writer deliberately suggests two or more different or conflicting meanings in a work.
4. Anapest—A metrical foot with two unstressed syllables followed by one stressed syllable.
5. Ballad—a song or poem that tells a story.
6. Blank verse—poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameter
7. Couplet—two consecutive rhyming lines of poetry.
8. Dactyl—a metrical foot with one long and two short syllables or of one stressed and two unstressed syllables
9. Free verse—poetry that doesn’t have any meter or rhyme scheme.
10. Haiku—a short, unrhymed poem with 17 syllables (three lines usually five, seven, and five syllables) respectively.
11. Iamb—a two syllable word that has the stress on the second syllable
12. Iambic pentameter—a line of poetry with five iambic feet.
13. Idiom—an expression particular to a specific language that isn’t literal.
14. Imagery—descriptive language that evokes a picture or sensation of a person, place, thing, or experience.
15. Lyric Poem—a poem that doesn’t tell a story but expresses the feelings of the speaker.
16. Metaphor (extended/implied)—a comparison between two things where one thing is said to be the other.
17. Meter—a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry.
18. Mood—the overall emotion in a work of literature.
19. Octave—an 8-line poem or first eight lines of a Petrarchan or Italian sonnet.
20. Ode—a lyric poem unusually long, on a serious subject and written in dignified language.
21. Onomatopoeia—a word whose sound suggests its meaning.
22. Oxymoron—a figure of speech that combines contradictory words in a brief phrase.
23. Paradox—a statement that seems contradictory but reveals the truth.
24. Parallelism—repetition of words or phrases with similar structure.
25. Personification—a figure of speech in which an object or animal is given human qualities.
26. Prose—an ordinary form of written or spoken language.
27. Pun—a play on words which have double meaning or sound alike.
28. Refrain—a word, phrase, line or group of lines that is repeated for effect, several times in a poem.
29. Repetition—a unifying property of repeated words, sounds, syllables, phrases, etc that appear in a work.
30. Rhyme (exact/slant/internal/external) —the repetition of sounds and words that sound the same.
31. Rhythm—the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a poem.
32. Sensory images—images described in vivid detail to appeal the senses.
33. Sestet—six lines of poetry especially the last six in a sonnet.
34. Simile (extended)—a comparison between two unlike things using the words like or as.
35. Sonnet—a 14 line poem usually written in iambic pentameter.
36. Speaker—the voice that addresses the reader of the poem.
37. Spondee—a metrical foot made of two syllables, both are stressed.
38. Stanza—a group of consecutive lines that form a structured unit in a poem.
39. Symbol—something that has a meaning in and of itself and also stands for something larger than itself.
40. Syntax—the order of words in a sentence.
41. Theme—the insight into human life that is revealed through a literary work.
42. Tone—the attitude an author takes toward a work, the character or the plot.
43. Trochee—a metrical foot made of two syllables, the first of which is stressed.
44. Voice/Diction—a speaker’s choice of words.

The Lanyard

Billy Collins

The other day I was ricocheting slowly
off the pale blue walls of this room,
moving as if underwater from typewriter to piano,
from bookshelf to an envelope lying on the floor,
when I found myself in the L section of the dictionary
where my eyes fell upon the word lanyard.

No cookie nibbled by a French novelist
could send one more suddenly into the past—
a past where I sat at a workbench at a camp
by a deep Adirondack lake
learning how to braid thin plastic strips
into a lanyard, a gift for my mother.

I had never seen anyone use a lanyard
or wear one, if that's what you did with them,
but that did not keep me from crossing
strand over strand again and again
until I had made a boxy
red and white lanyard for my mother.
She gave me life and milk from her breasts,
and I gave her a lanyard.

She nursed me in many a sick room,
lifted teaspoons of medicine to my lips,
set cold face-cloths onto my forehead,
and then led me out into the airy light
and taught me to walk and swim,
and I, in turn, presented her with a lanyard.

Here are thousands of meals, she said,
and here is clothing and a good education.
And here is your lanyard, I replied,
which I made with a little help from a counselor.
Here is a breathing body and a beating heart,
strong legs, bones and teeth,
and two clear eyes to read the world, she whispered,
and here, I said, is the lanyard I made at camp.

And here, I wish to say to her now,
is a smaller gift—not the worn truth
that you can never repay your mother,
but the rueful admission that when she took
the two-tone lanyard from my hand,
I was as sure as a boy could be
that this useless, worthless thing I wove
out of boredom would be enough to make us even.

Who Understands Me but Me

Jimmy Santiago Baca

They turn the water off, so I live without water,
 they build walls higher, so I live without treetops,
 they paint the windows black, so I live without sunshine,
 they lock my cage, so I live without going anywhere,
 they take each last tear I have, I live without tears,
 they take my heart and rip it open, I live without heart,
 they take my life and crush it, so I live without a future,
 they say I am beastly and fiendish, so I have no friends,
 they stop up each hope, so I have no passage out of hell,
 they give me pain, so I live with pain,
 they give me hate, so I live with hate,
 they have changed me, and I am not the same man,
 they give me no shower, so live with my smell,
 they separate me from my brother, so I live without brothers,
 who understands me when I say this is beautiful?
 Who understands me when I say I have found other freedoms?

I cannot fly or make something appear in my hand,
 I cannot make the heavens open or the earth tremble,
 I can live with myself, and I am amazed at myself, my love, my beauty,
 I am taken by my failures, astounded by my fears,
 I am stubborn and childish,
 in the midst of this wreckage of life they incurred,
 I practice being myself,
 And I have found parts of myself never dreamed of by me,
 they were goaded out from under rocks in my heart
 when the walls were built higher,
 when the water was turned off and the windows painted black.
 I followed these signs
 like an old tracker and followed the tracks deep into myself,
 who taught me water is not everything,
 and gave me new eyes to see through walls,
 and they spoke sunlight same out of their mouths,
 and I was laughing at me with them,
 we laughed like children and made pacts to always be loyal,
 who understands me when I say this is beautiful?

What Do You Feel Underground?

Gabriela Mistral

Underground do you feel
the delicate warmth of this spring?
Does the sharp perfume of honeysuckle
reach you through the earth?

Do you remember the sky,
the clear jets of mountain water,
the shimmering summit?
Do you remember the deep-tapestried path,
my still hand in your trembling hand?

This spring perfumes and refines
the sweet liquor of veins.
If only underground your beautiful
closed mouth could savor it!

Bordering the river, to this green
redolence you would come.
You might like the ambivalent warmth
of my mouth its soft violence.

But you are underground—
your tongue silenced by dust;
there is no way that you can sing with me
the sweet and fiery songs of this spring.

Literary Response & Analysis: "What Do You Feel Underground"

1. How would you characterize the relationship between the speaker and the person being addressed?
2. Find five sensory images in the poem and identify the sense to which each image appeals—sight, sound, touch, taste, or smell.
3. Mistral uses questions repeatedly throughout the poem. What emotional effect do these repeated questions create?
4. In a sentence, state the theme of the poem. What insight into life or love does it reveal? What evidence from the text supports your interpretation?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Choose an emotion and write a *Five Senses* poem using the format listed below. You want to maintain the quality of the emotion you choose by personifying it with traits you think it would have if you could see, touch, smell, hear and taste it. Example emotions/values: Fear, Courage, Rejection, Faith to name a few.

FORMAT OF POEM:

EMOTION
Color of the emotion
Taste of emotion
Smell of emotion
What the emotion looks like
What the emotions sounds like
Feeling evoked or felt by the emotion
EMOTION

EXAMPLE POEM:

LOVE
The color of a brilliant sunrise--red gold and glowing
A bitter sweet caramel candy apple rolled in nuts on a summer
afternoon
The refreshing sent of an ocean breeze
Kind eyes and a soft smile
The sound of gentle rain drops and the crashing wake of waves
Goosebumps on your skin and warmness within
LOVE

A Voice*Pat Mora*

Even the lights on the stage unrelenting
as the desert sun couldn't hide the other
students, their eyes also unrelenting,
students who spoke English every night

As they ate their meat, potatoes, gravy.
Not you. In your house that smelled like
rose powder, you spoke Spanish formal
as your father, the judge without a courtroom

In the country he floated to in the dark
on a flatbed truck. He walked slow
as a hot river down the narrow hall
of your house. You never dared to race past him,

To say, "Please move," in the language
you learned effortlessly, as you learned to run,
the language forbidden at home, though your mother
said you learned it to fight with the neighbors.

You liked winning with words. You liked
writing speeches about patriotism and democracy.
You liked all the faces looking at you, all those eyes.
"How did I do it?" you ask me now. "How did I do it

When my parents didn't understand?"
The family story says your voice is the voice
of an aunt in Mexico, spunky as a peacock.
Family stories sing of what lives in the blood.

You told me only once about the time you went
to the state capitol, your family proud as if
you'd been named governor. But when you looked
around, the only Mexican in the auditorium,
you wanted to hide from those strange faces.

Their eyes were pinpricks, and you faked
hoarseness. You, who are never at a loss
for words, felt your breath stick in your throat

Like an ice-cube. "I can't," you whispered.
"I can't." Yet you did. Not that day but years later.
This is America, Mom. The undo-able is done

In the next generation. Your breath moves
through the family like the wind
moves through the trees.

Now and Then, America

Pat Mora

Who wants to rot
beneath dry winter grass
in a numbered grave
in a numbered row
in a section labeled Eternal Peace
with neighbors plagued
by limp plastic roses
springing from their toes?
Grant me a little life now and then, America.

Who wants to rot
as she marches through life
in a pinstriped suit
neck chained in a soft silk bow
in step in style insane.
Let me in
to boardrooms wearing hot colors
my hair long and free,
maybe speaking Spanish.
Risk my difference my surprises.
Grant me a little life, America.

And when I die plant *Zempasuchitl*, (*sempa soocheetal*)
flowers of the dead, and at my head
plant organ cactus green fleshy
fingers sprouting line in Oaxaca.
Let desert creatures hide
in the orange blooms.
Let the birds nest in the cactus stems.
Let me go knowing life flower and song
will continue right above my bones.

Literary Response & Analysis: "Now and Then, America"

1. What objection does the speaker make to traditional American burial practices?
2. What is the speaker objecting to in the workplace?
3. What motivates the speaker, what does she want?
4. What images does she use to convey her message?

Literary Response & Analysis: "A Voice"

1. What happens when the mother goes to the state capital to give speech?
2. Why does she become suddenly self-conscious about giving her speech at the state capitol, when she usually likes "winning with words" and being looked at?
3. Why does the daughter interpret her mother's failure as a success and credit her with teaching her to speak up?
4. How do you interpret the speaker's statement that her mother's breath "moves through the family like the wind, moves through the trees"?
5. Both poems by Pat Mora celebrate cultural awareness and loving who you are no matter how others ask you to change. Why, in your opinion, is it important to maintain your own cultural identity? Explain.

somewhere i have never traveled gladly beyond

e.e. cummings

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully ,suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the color of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody ,not even the rain, has such small hands

Literary Response and Analysis: “somewhere i have never traveled gladly beyond”

1. A paradox is a seemingly self-contradictory statement that actually reveals a truth. Find two paradoxes in the poem and explain what they mean.
2. The poem rises in intensity in the fourth stanza. Paraphrase this stanza, making clear what you think the speaker means by “death and forever.”
3. In line 2, the phrase “your eyes have their silence” is an example of *synthesia*—the juxtaposition of one sensory image with another that appeals to a different sense. Where in the last stanza does he use *synthesia* again?
4. In what way could the rain be said to have small hands? What is the speaker suggesting about his love by using this beautiful and mysterious metaphor?

Design*Robert Frost*

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
 On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
 Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth --
 Assorted characters of death and blight
 Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
 Like the ingredients of a witches' broth --
 A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
 And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,
 The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
 What brought the kindred spider to that height,
 Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
 What but design of darkness to appal?--
 If design govern in a thing so small.

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.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Design"

1. Describe the scene in the first stanza. What are the three characters in the poem, and what is happening to each one?
2. What color is each character? What justifies the poet's description of them as "Characters of death and blight"?
3. What similes are used in the poem's octave (its first eight lines)? How do they affect the tone of the poem?
4. What question does the speaker ask in the sestet?
5. What is the answer in the final couplet? How would you explain what the "design of darkness" is?
6. Always look for ambiguity in Frost. His poems often suggest several meanings or contain contradictory details. In line 14, at the poem's end, what reservation or doubt remains in his mind?
7. Mark the rhyme scheme on the poem above.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

1. What is the paradox in the title "Nothing Gold can Stay"?
2. Identify four specific things in "Nothing Gold Can Stay" that the speaker says cannot, or did not "stay."
3. Explain the allusion in line 6.
4. What state of mind or human situation might "Eden" symbolize here?
5. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden for eating from the tree of knowledge. Do you think knowledge is better than the beauty and innocence of paradise? Might it be just as well that "nothing gold can stay"?
6. What different ideas might gold symbolize in the poem? Why can't gold stay—or do you think it can?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Frost uses an extended metaphor in "Nothing Gold Can Stay"—the qualities and descriptions inferred in a *simple simile* or *metaphor* are spelled out in the extended version. To write an extended *Simile of Self*, find a **concrete object** that captures your personality and reveals who you are. State the simile in the first line and then develop four or more aspects of that object that you can use to reveal aspects about yourself. Record the various details and descriptions about your object. Use your imagination and select vivid, powerful words. **YOUR POEM SHOULD BE A MINIMUM OF 5 LINES! You will include in poetry packet & provide copy to teacher for display in classroom.**

Example:

*I am like an unopened book longing to be held and read,
 Seemingly quiet, and timid on the surface while
 Wars rage and passions resonate deep within the folds of my pages.
 Humor, ideas, wild imaginings fill my written world
 And hold a rich variety for those who care, who dare, to read on.*

Trying to Name What Doesn't Change

Naomi Shihab Nye

Roselva says the only thing that doesn't change
is train tracks. She's sure of it.
The train changes, or the weeds that grow up spidery
by the side, but not the tracks.
I've watched one for three years, she says,
and it doesn't curve, doesn't break, doesn't grow.

Peter isn't sure. He saw an abandoned track
near Sabinas, Mexico, and says a track without a train
is a changed track. The metal wasn't shiny anymore.
The wood was split and some of the ties were gone.

Every Tuesday on Morales Street
butchers crack the necks of a hundred hens.
The widow in the tilted house
spices her soup with cinnamon.
Ask her what doesn't change.

Stars explode.
The rose curls up as if there is fire in the petals.
The cat who knew me is buried under the bush.

The train whistle still wails its ancient sound
but when it goes away, shrinking back
from the walls of the brain,
it takes something different with it every time.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Trying to Name What Doesn't Change "

1. With whom do you agree, Roselva or Peter? Why?
2. Why does Nye include the images of the butchers and the widow in her poem?
3. What do these images contribute to the poem's ideas of change?
4. A speaker tries to name things that do not change. How are her poem and Frost's poem alike and different in tone and theme? Identify the central point each poet is trying to convey about change and loss.

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Poetry is often inspired by *Memory*. Read the sentence starters below and use this as a place to begin a short poem. Each poem should be a minimum of five lines, so develop your thoughts and see where they take you. **THIS IS THREE SEPARATE POEMS!**

- Write a poem that begins with "I remember..." and recall a memory or a moment that you can develop into a simple poem.
- Write a poem that begins "I am the one who..." and list some qualities, experiences, flaws, triumphs, etc to reveal something about yourself.
- Finish the sentence "I should probably tell you..." and develop into a poem about something you want to reveal about yourself to some intended audience/person.

Birches

Robert Frost

When I see birches bend to left and right
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
 Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen them
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
 After a rain. They click upon themselves
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
 Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust--
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
 And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
 So low for long, they never right themselves:
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
 (Now am I free to be poetical?)
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows--
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
 Whose only play was what he found himself,
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.
 One by one he subdued his father's trees
 By riding them down over and over again

Until he took the stiffness out of them,
 And not one but hung limp, not one was left
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was
 To learn about not launching out too soon
 And so not carrying the tree away
 Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
 To the top branches, climbing carefully
 With the same pains you use to fill a cup
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.
 Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches.
 And so I dream of going back to be.
 It's when I'm weary of considerations,
 And life is too much like a pathless wood
 Where your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs
 Broken across it, and one eye is weeping
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile
 And then come back to it and begin over.
 May no fate willfully misunderstand me
 And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,
 And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk
 Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,
 But dipped its top and set me down again.
 That would be good both going and coming back.
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Birches"

1. Describe the scenario the speaker imagines when he sees the bent birch trees.
2. According to lines 23-40, what does the speaker prefer to believe about the bent birches? What lessons would this young boy learn about life as he subdues his father's tree?
3. In lines 41-49, what does the speaker say he wishes he could now when life is "like a pathless wood"?
4. What does the playful activity of birch swinging seem to symbolize in the poem?
5. What do you believe is the moral, or message of Frost's poem? What are the lessons for living that can be learned from swinging on birches?
6. Two strong similes give the poem richness that is both imaginative and the result of close observation. Find these similes on line 18-20 and lines 44-47, and explain what is being compared with what. What does each simile help you see?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Write a poem about something you like to do. Feel free to end the poem with, "*One could do worse than be a...* (rider of bikes, climber of trees, etc.)." Make sure you give the details about what you like to do. For example, tell where you ride your bike and what you do when you're riding. Pay more attention to describing exactly what you do, than to telling how you feel when you're doing it. Don't worry about making the poem rhyme, but try to make sure that no line has more than about 10 syllables. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

Mending Wall

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 neighbour 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 neighbours."
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:
"Why do they make good neighbours? 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 offence.
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
neighbours."

Literary Response and Analysis: "Mending Wall"

1. What do lines 1-5 suggest about nature's response to a wall?
2. According to the speaker, why is rebuilding the wall merely a game (lines 23-26)?
3. What questions should be settled before building a wall, according to lines 32-34?
4. From whom did the neighbor get his saying "Good fences make good neighbors"?
5. Frost create two characters in this poem and we come to know them by what they do, say and think. What persons or points of view in contemporary life do Frost's characters reflect?
6. What do you think the word *darkness* means in line 41? What could the simile in line 40 have to do with darkness?
7. What might the wall in the poem symbolize?
8. This poem is full of ambiguity—it represents opposing views about the wall. Do you think Frost favors the view of the speaker or of the neighbor? Which details from the poem lead you to this interpretation?
9. What historical walls or boundaries have separated neighbors?
10. Do you believe that "Good fences make good neighbors"? Explain.

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: In a freewrite discuss what social, economic, emotional, or other symbolic barriers exist in your life, community, or world. What are the effects of such barriers? When you are finished, read your writing and arrange your ideas into a *Walls* poem. It does not need to rhyme. Create an artistic rendering of the wall or barrier (physical, psychological, or emotional) that your poem conveys toward the subject. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

Tableau*Countee Cullen*

Locked arm in arm they cross the way,
 The black boy and the white,
 The golden splendor of the day,
 The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare,
 And here the fair folk talk,
 Indignant that these two should dare
 In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and work
 They pass, and see no wonder
 That lightning brilliant as a sword
 Should blaze the path of thunder.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Tableau"

1. What exactly are the two boys in the tableau doing?
2. Why are "the dark folk" and "the fair folk" indignant? How do the boys respond?
3. What metaphor in the first stanza describes the black boy? The white boy?
4. Two more metaphors are used in the third stanza. Who or what is "lightning brilliant as a sword"? Who or what is "the path of thunder"?
5. How do the metaphors make you feel about the boys?
6. What do you have to know about the social context of the poem in order to understand why such a commonplace thing as a friendship between two boys could evoke such a dramatic response?

America*Claude McKay*

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
 And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
 Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
 I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!
 Her vigor flows like tides into my blood,
 Giving me strength erect against her hate.
 Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood.
 Yet as a rebel fronts a king in state,
 I stand within her walls with not a shred
 Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer.
 Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
 And see her might and granite wonders there,
 Beneath the touch of Time's unerring hand,
 Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand.

Literary Response and Analysis: "America"

1. To what does "bread of bitterness" and "tiger's tooth" refer?
2. In the first four lines, what does McKay personify America as?
3. What conflicting feelings are expressed toward America?
4. In the last four lines, what does the speaker foresee?

Harlem

by Langston Hughes

Here on the edge of hell
 Stands Harlem-
 Remembering the old lies,
 The old kicks in the back,
 The old "Be patient"
 They told us before.

Sure, we remember.
 Now when the man at the corner store
 Says sugar's gone up another two cents,
 And bread one,
 And there's a new tax on cigarettes-
 We remember the job we never had,

Never could forget,
 And can't have now
 Because we're colored.

So we stand here
 On the edge of hell
 In Harlem
 And look out on the world
 And wonder
 What we're gonna do
 In the face of what
 We remember

"Harlem" by Langston Hughes

1. What **mood** does the speaker immediately create with this description of the poem's **setting**: "Here on the edge of hell/ Stands Harlem –"?
2. Name the specific hardships and injustices that the people of Harlem remember, according to the speaker.
3. What is the effect of the **repetition** of the word *remember*?
4. How do you interpret the poem's final stanza? Is it an expression of powerlessness, of opposition, or of something else? Be sure you can defend your interpretation.
5. What adjective would you use to describe the overall **mood** of the poem?

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

by Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

“The Negro Speaks of Rivers” by Langston Hughes

1. What specific rivers does the speaker name?
2. Like Whitman, this speaker speaks for a multitude. Who or what does the poet imagine is in the “I” in this poem? (The title provides one clue.)
3. What special connection may African Americans have with each of these rivers?
4. In the last line, what **comparison** does the speaker make?
5. What instances of **repetition** occur in the poem? What line acts as a **refrain**? What is the emotional effect of this **repetition**?
6. After you read Hughes’s poem aloud, think about the **tone** you hear. Which word best describes that **tone**: sad? bitter? thoughtful? joyful? Give details from the poem to support your response.
7. How does Hughes identify rivers with human life?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Langston Hughes writes about the enduring spirit of the black man in his poems “Harlem” and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”. He uses a metaphor of place/setting to symbolize that enduring spirit. Write a poem in which you choose a place like a mountain, river, lake, forest, sunset, ocean, etc. to reveal the triumphs or struggles of human life—your own or for the multitude. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

Mirror*Sylvia Plath*

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
 Whatever I see, I swallow immediately.
 Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike
 I am not cruel, only truthful –
 The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
 Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
 It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
 I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
 Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
 Searching my reaches for what she really is.
 Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
 I see her back, and reflect it faithfully
 She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
 I am important to her. She comes and goes.
 Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
 In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
 Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Literary Response and Analysis

1. What qualities does the speaker claim to possess? What does the speaker imply by saying it is the “eye of a little god” (line 5)?
2. Why would the speaker refer to the candles and the moon as “liars” (line 12)?
3. The last line of “Mirror” contains the striking image of a “terrible fish.” How would you explain this last image? What associations and emotional overtones does the image of a terrible fish have for you?
4. What would you say is the real subject of this poem? (It is not really about a mirror.) What is it about?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Personification means giving human qualities/attributes to an animal, object or idea. Choose a quality, emotion or value and write a poem that gives that quality a human persona. Imagine that it has just assumed the guise of a person—make it seem alive by giving it human characteristics with a rich, detailed description. Example of Personification: The toilet swallowed my remains. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

MODEL OF EXTENDED PERSONIFICATION:

DEPRESSION

Depression walks barefoot down the street
 covered in layers of black veils with frayed edges.
 None can say they have ever really looked her in the eyes—
 and those who have, refused to meet anyone else’s gaze.
 She is the villain and the victim both.
 Blending in with the crowds
 she wears a bottle of pills hanging
 from a piece of twine around her neck.
 The bottle never empties
 even though she swallows a pill everyday.
 And every day the pills
 take a little more of her away.
 (Written by a tenth grade student 2003)

Young*Anne Sexton*

A thousand doors ago
 when I was a lonely kid
 in a big house with four
 garages and it was summer
 as long as I could remember,
 I lay on the lawn at night,
 clover wrinkling over me,
 the wise stars bedding over me,
 my mother's window a funnel
 of yellow heat running out,
 my father's window, half shut,
 an eye where sleepers pass,
 and the boards of the house
 were smooth and white as wax
 and probably a million leaves
 sailed on their strange stalks
 as the crickets ticked together
 and I, in my brand new body,
 which was not a woman's yet,
 told the stars my questions
 and thought God could really see
 the heat and the painted light,
 elbows, knees, dreams, goodnight.

Literary Response and Analysis

1. This poem overflows with visual imagery. What images linger in your mind after reading this poem?
2. This poem is written in one long sentence and should be said in one breath to capture a single moment in time. A sentence always contains a doer and an action. What did the speaker do "a thousand doors ago" when she was a lonely kid? What did she tell the stars? What did she think God could really see?
3. How do you think the girl in *Young* feels about where she is in her life?
4. What metaphors does the poet use to describe the windows of her house? How could these metaphors reflect the speaker's different feelings for her mother and father?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Write a poem in which you use visual images to re-create an experience from your *Childhood* that made you feel joy. Model your poem after Sexton's and like this poem, write yours as just one long sentence. Imitate the style and rhythm of this poem. **FIFTEEN LINES MINIMUM!**

Dust*Dorianne Laux*

Someone spoke to me last night
 Told me the truth. Just a few words,
 But I recognized it.
 I knew I should make myself get up,
 Write it down, but it was late,
 And I was exhausted from working
 All day in the garden, moving rocks.
 Now, I remember only the flavor—
 Not like food, sweet or sharp.
 More like a fine powder, like dust.
 And I wasn't elated or frightened,
 But simply rapt, aware.
 That's how it is sometimes—
 God comes to your window,
 All bright light and black wings,
 And you're just too tired to open it.

George Gray*Edgar Lee Masters*

I have studied many times
 The marble which was chiseled for me—
 A boat with a furled sail at rest in a harbor.
 In truth it pictures not my destination
 But my life.
 For love was offered me and I shrank from its
 disillusionment;
 Sorrow knocked at my door, but I was afraid;
 Ambition called to me, but I dreaded the chances.
 Yet all the while I hungered for meaning in my life.
 And now I know that we must lift the sail
 And catch the winds of destiny
 Wherever they drive the boat.
 To put meaning in one's life may end in madness,
 But life without meaning is the torture
 Of restlessness and vague desire—
 It is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Dust"

1. What opportunity did the speaker miss?
2. What was her excuse?
3. Name three opportunities you have missed for the same reason?

Literary Response and Analysis: "George Gray"

1. What does George Gray say about the symbol chiseled on his tombstone?
2. What words in line 7 and 8 personify two human experiences? How did George Gray respond to them and why?
3. According to George Gray, what is the danger of putting "meaning" into one's life? What is the danger of failing to do so?
4. The central symbol in this poem is a sailboat. Why would a boat with a furled sail be an appropriate metaphor for death?
5. In your own words, explain what it means to "lift the sail / and catch the winds of destiny." What do you think "the sea" in the last line stands for?
6. The speaker of this poem says "life without meaning...is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid." Create four metaphors that could suggest the quality of a life *with* meaning. Model your metaphors after the one George Gray uses: "Life with meaning is..."

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: Opportunities are chances or occasions to do something, have something, get something, etc. We are faced with opportunities everyday--opportunities to act in the best interest of ourselves or of others, opportunities to achieve, opportunities to receive or give, opportunities to advance, opportunities to learn, opportunities to speak...they are endless. Make a list of opportunities in life or in everyday experiences you have missed? You do not need to number them or put them in any particular order, just list them as they come to you. These do not need to be life-altering opportunities; they can be small opportunities too. Once you have completed your *Missed Opportunities* list, arrange the opportunities you missed into a poem. There is no need for pronouns or complete sentences. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

Man Listening to Disc

Billy Collins

This is not bad --
 ambling along 44th Street
 with Sonny Rollins for company,
 his music flowing through the soft calipers
 of these earphones,

as if he were right beside me
 on this clear day in March,
 the pavement sparkling with sunlight,
 pigeons fluttering off the curb,
 nodding over a profusion of bread crumbs.

In fact, I would say
 my delight at being suffused
 with phrases from his saxophone --
 some like honey, some like vinegar --
 is surpassed only by my gratitude

to Tommy Potter for taking the time
 to join us on this breezy afternoon
 with his most unwieldy bass
 and to the esteemed Arthur Taylor
 who is somehow managing to navigate

this crowd with his cumbersome drums.
 And I bow deeply to Thelonious Monk
 for figuring out a way
 to motorize -- or whatever -- his huge piano
 so he could be with us today.

This music is loud yet so confidential.
 I cannot help feeling even more
 like the center of the universe
 than usual as I walk along to a rapid
 little version of "The Way You Look Tonight,"

and all I can say to my fellow pedestrians,
 to the woman in the white sweater,
 the man in the tan raincoat and the heavy glasses,
 who mistake themselves for the center of the
 universe --
 all I can say is watch your step,

because the five of us, instruments and all,
 are about to angle over
 to the south side of the street
 and then, in our own tightly knit way,
 turn the corner at Sixth Avenue.

And if any of you are curious
 about where this aggregation,
 this whole battery-powered crew,
 is headed, let us just say
 that the real center of the universe,

the only true point of view,
 is full of hope that he,
 the hub of the cosmos
 with his hair blown sideways,
 will eventually make it all the way downtown.

Literary Response and Analysis: "Man Listening to Disc"

1. Where is the poem set?
2. What does the speaker imagine happening in lines 1-25?
3. How does the music make the speaker feel? Find lines of the poem that describe his feelings.
4. What makes the music "loud yet so confidential" (line 26)?
5. What does the speaker want to say to the other pedestrians?
6. In the last verse, who is the "hub of the cosmos" who hopes he'll make it downtown?

The Journey

Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew
 what you had to do, and began,
 though the voices around you
 kept shouting
 their bad advice-
 though the whole house
 began to tremble
 and you felt the old tug
 at your ankles.
 "Mend my life!"
 each voice cried.
 But you didn't stop.
 You knew what you had to do,
 though the wind pried
 with its stiff fingers
 at the very foundations,
 though their melancholy
 was terrible.
 It was already late
 enough, and a wild night,
 and the road full of fallen
 branches and stones.
 But little by little,
 as you left their voices behind,
 the stars began to burn
 through the sheets of clouds,
 and there was a new voice
 which you slowly
 recognized as your own,
 that kept you company
 as you strode deeper and deeper
 into the world,
 determined to do
 the only thing you could do
 determined to save
 the only life you could save.

Literary Response and Analysis: "The Journey"

1. What is your reaction to what the "you" does in the poem by Mary Oliver?
2. What keeps "you" company in Oliver's poem?
3. Why is her life the only life she can save?
4. Is running away ever the most courageous response to a difficult situation?

POETRY IN PRACTICE:

Directions: The speaker in Oliver's poem challenges us to reject a life that revolves solely around responsibility to others, and to enter into the "wild night" in order to find our own voices. The reality is profoundly simple: in being true to that small voice within, we are being of service in the most profound way possible. No one else can ever walk our journeys for us. Each of us must respond to the call on our own. Write a poem about what "journey" means to you. Include metaphors to symbolize the journey of life as you see it. **TEN LINES MINIMUM!**

POETRY BOOK PROJECT:

Create a poetry book of all the *Poetry in Practice* activities, including the following requirements in the rubric below.

Check done	POETRY BOOK PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:	POINT VALUE
	COVER: Must have visual imagery from your poetry that defines you in some way.	/10
	TITLE PAGE: Title for book project, date, period, project name and teacher name.	/5
	TABLE OF CONTENTS: Title each poem and provide page number for each.	/5
	CREATIVITY: Beautify your poetry collection in some way	/10

Check done	ALL POETRY IN PRACTICE ACTIVITIES:	CLASS CHECK (2pts each)	POINT VALUE
	Five Senses Poem		/10
	Simile of Self /Extended Metaphor poem		/10
	I remember...		/10
	I'm the one who...		/10
	I should probably tell you...		/10
	One could do worse than... Poem		/10
	Walls Poem		/10
	Rivers Poem		/10
	Extended Personification Poem		/10
	Childhood Poem		/10
	Missed Opportunities Poem		/10
	Journey Poem		/10
	You may add up to two additional poems you write for extra credit (up to 10 points)		
	TOTAL POINTS FOR CLASS STAMPS:	/24	/150
	TOTAL POINTS FOR POETRY BOOK:		/174