**SAMPLE WEEK OF LESSON PLANS: POETRY ANALYSIS AND PARAGRAPH WRITING**

Following is a sample week of lesson plans focused on poetry analysis and paragraph writing.[[1]](#footnote-1) While these plans tackle standards from grades 3, 5, and 6, you can use them in grades 3 and up with some modifications. (PS: It’s not illegal to address standards from higher grades!) Here are some Websites that should come in handy:

* **For elementary,** check out “28 Must-Share Poems for Elementary” posted by Stacey Tornio on *We Are Teachers*, March 25, 2016, found at

<https://www.weareteachers.com/28-must-share-poems-for-elementary-school/>

* **For middle and high school,** check out “24 Must-Share Poems for Middle and High School” posted by Samantha Cleaver on *We Are Teachers*, November 17, 2015, found at

<https://www.weareteachers.com/24-must-share-poems-for-middle-school-and-high-school/>

* **For additional resources on poetry and literary analysis,** check out the TLC “Analyzing Literature” page at<https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=2>

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| **MONDAY** | |
| OBJECTIVES: ***SWBAT…*** | |
| * Use context clues in order to infer the meaning of vocabulary words. * Analyze a poem using a questioning-the-text approach in order to explain what the poem means. | |
| MATERIALS: | STANDARDS: |
| * Do Now: “Vocabulary Hypothesis Sheet” for first 4 words (See sample following these plans.) * Poem 1 (See resource links above and select a poem of your choice.) * HW: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for first 4 words) | **Reading Anchor Standard #4:** *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*  **Writing Anchor Standard #9:** *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.* |
| DO NOW (~ 4 mins. to do, 4 to discuss): | |
| Students complete “hypothesis sheet” for 4 new vocabulary words.  Discuss their hypotheses and derive a student-friendly definition for each word. | |
| INTRODUCTION – HOOK/PITCH🡪I DO (~ 4 mins.): | |
| *Our goal today is to use a questioning-the-text strategy that will enable us to analyze a poem and really figure it out. You can use this strategy with ANY kind of text, and this week we will use it several times with poems.*  *Here’s how it’s going to work. In a moment, we’re going to turn over the handout I’ve given you, and you will see a poem. I’m going to read this poem aloud, and as I do,* ***you should read along silently and write a “?” every time you have a question.***  [The goal is to ask questions that, if answered, would help them understand the text as fully as possible. **Before you start, give examples of the different kinds of questions you might expect.** The questions can be as concrete as “What does this word mean?” or as abstract as, “Why would someone behave that way?” Note: Students should *not* record whole questions at this point, only question marks, because as they go they may find their questions answered (and plus, we want them to read along, not get distracted by writing questions in full).]  **Read the poem aloud.** | |
| GUIDED PRACTICE – WE DO (~ 20 mins.): | |
| 1. **Students re-read the passage, this time writing their questions in full.** Be sure to give them ample time and circulate to see if any vocabulary gaps are preventing them from asking more profound questions. If students are struggling with a word essential to literal comprehension of the text, quickly explain that word. A little bit of vocabulary support can raise the level of critical thinking for *all* students. Tell students, “Make sure you have at least two ‘How’ or ‘Why’ questions.” These questions will compel students to build arguments supported with evidence and explanation. Give students a minute or two for Turn-and-Talk to compare their questions. 2. **Solicit *all* of their questions and write them on the board.** Given that they have already recorded their own questions, you could say, “As I record our questions, write down any new ones that you want to add to your list, especially ones you think you might like to discuss,” or (to save time), “We will keep this list posted for our next steps.” If you notice any lingering questions about key vocabulary, clarify meanings and give students time to add or revise questions because understanding more vocabulary will boost their comprehension and may stimulate new lines of questioning. Then add any new questions to the list. 3. **Direct students to form pairs or trios and identify what they consider to be the three most important questions on the list, then discuss their responses for 2-3 minutes.** Note: Pairs are optimal, trios are OK, and groups of four should *definitely* *be avoided*. The goal is to engage *every* student in these discussions. Warn students that you will be cold-calling on them to report out on these conversations, so they should jot down a few notes. Also, it’s fine not to discuss all three questions if they don’t have time; we want them to think deeply, not rush through their discussions. 4. **Go through the poem from top to bottom to find out what they discussed.** One thing you and the students will surely notice is that our natural inclination when discussing questions is to answer them with *evidence from the text*, which is how we build arguments and write effective paragraphs and essays: That’s a vital lesson in this exercise. You should also note connections that students made and see if they have any additional questions. Depending on the topic/genre of the text, you could take this in many different directions. It may lead to further reading, research, or writing. | |
| INDEPENDENT PRACTICE – YOU DO (~ 3 mins.): | |
| 1. **Ask students to complete this sentence:** *In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_.* 2. **Ask students to reflect (in writing) on the process they just went through:** *What was challenging about what we just did? What did you like about it?* *What did you learn about the value of* questioning *the text?* [They should arrive at the insight that good readers ask lots of questions and as a result derive deeper meaning from the texts they read.] 3. **Cold-call on students to share their responses.** | |
| ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET (~ 10 mins.): | |
| *Turn your argument sentence* (In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_.) *into a paragraph with evidence and explanation.* | |
| HOMEWORK: | |
| * Complete vocabulary wordplay handout [e.g., sentence stems; for resources, see TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.] * Independent reading | |
| NOTES ON DIFFERENTIATION: How will you extend and differentiate your teaching to reach every student in the classroom? | |
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| **TUESDAY** | |
| OBJECTIVES: ***SWBAT…*** | |
| * Use context clues in order to infer the meaning of vocabulary words. * Use subordinating conjunctions and commas properly in order to write complex sentences. | |
| MATERIALS: | STANDARDS: |
| * Hand back paragraphs students wrote about poems yesterday. * Do Now: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for first 4 words) * HW: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for first 4 words) | **Reading Anchor Standard #4:** *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*  L 5.2.b  L 5.2.d  L 3.1.h |
| DO NOW (~ 4 mins. to do, 4 to discuss): | |
| Students complete a vocabulary wordplay exercise. [See TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.]  Discuss their responses to the Do Now and last night’s homework. | |
| INTRODUCTION – HOOK/PITCH🡪I DO (~ 10 mins.): | |
| *When we wrote our paragraphs yesterday, we began with this phrasing:*  **In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_.**  **\*Teachable Moment:** *We put the name of the poem in quotation marks because it’s a* part *of a thing, whereas a book is a* whole *thing, so a book title would be underlined or italicized.* [L 5.2.d]  *It’s a small thing, but that comma is really important. Why does it matter? And how can we know when we need one?*  *Let’s look at a couple of sentences. We’ll read them out loud and try to figure out when we PAUSE, then see if we can figure out WHY we need a comma.*  Show students a few sentences such as the following, but leave the commas out: ***When you pause, you need a comma. When you stop, you probably need a period.***  *Why does this comma matter? Because it shows us how the sentence works. You can take out the dependent clause (or the prepositional phrase, such as “In the beginning,”), and the sentence will still make sense. Why? Because what’s left is the INDEPENDENT clause, which, as we know, is a complete sentence.*  *Let’s break those sentences down to see their parts:*  ***When you pause [dependent], you need a comma [independent].***  ***When you stop [dependent], you probably need a period [independent].***  *We know how to connect independent clauses with FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So), so we can write compound sentences like, “I went to the store,* but *I forgot to buy milk.” Today we’re going to practice more COMPLEX sentences. To write a complex sentence, you need an AAAWWUBBIS, also known as a* ***subordinating conjunction.***  “AAAWWUBBIS” =As, Although, After, While, When, Unless, Because, Before, If, Since. | |
| GUIDED PRACTICE – WE DO (~ 15 mins.): | |
| *Let’s write a practice sentence about [a character in a recent novel] beginning with “Although.” Jot a sentence about [that character] that begins with “Although.”* Actively monitor. Have them compare with a partner, then highlight a few good examples (using Show Call).  **\*Teachable Moment:** *Notice that these sentences we just created are arguments! They could become topic sentences for some nifty paragraphs!*  Give students more sentence practice with other AAAWWUBBIS prompts, and keep having them share out.  Then show them your sample paragraph about a character in a recently read novel that includes several sentences that include AAAWWUBBIS conjunctions but have failed to insert commas properly.  **[Create your own paragraph and insert it here.]**  *Let’s read this together and figure out if the writer inserted commas where needed….*  After students have worked through where the commas belong, give them directions for independent practice. | |
| INDEPENDENT PRACTICE – YOU DO (~ 10 mins.): | |
| *Take your paragraph from yesterday and rewrite it to include 3 subordinating conjunctions. I will score the paragraph based on two things: 1) All sentences must be complete, and 2) All conjunctions must be used correctly, with proper punctuation.*  *Staple the revised version ON TOP OF the original.* | |
| ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET (N/A) | |
| Collect independent practice as the Exit Ticket. Note: Select 2-3 excellent examples to share with the class tomorrow. | |
| HOMEWORK: | |
| * Complete vocabulary wordplay handout [e.g., sentence stems; for resources, see TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.] * Independent reading | |
| NOTES ON DIFFERENTIATION: How will you extend and differentiate your teaching to reach every student in the classroom? | |
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| **WEDNESDAY** | |
| OBJECTIVES: ***SWBAT…*** | |
| * Use context clues in order to infer the meaning of vocabulary words. * Identify key features of MLA citation format in order to apply it in our own writing. * Evaluate characteristics of various poems in order to describe features we like or don’t like when reading poetry. | |
| MATERIALS: | STANDARDS: |
| * Hand back paragraphs students wrote about poems yesterday. * Do Now: “Vocabulary Hypothesis Sheet” for second 4 words (See sample following these plans.) * “AAAWWUBBIS” anchor chart, posted * MLA citation handout (need to create this) * 6 poems divided into 3 “mini-packets” of pairs A, B, and C with enough copies so that each student can start with one pair (See resource links above and select a poem of your choice.) * “Speed Dating with a Poem” handout (See sample following these plans.) * HW: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for second 4 words) | **Reading Anchor Standard #4:** *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*  L 5.2.b  L 5.2.d  L 3.1.h  RL 6.1 |
| DO NOW (~ 4 mins. to do, 4 to discuss): | |
| Students complete “hypothesis sheet” for 4 new vocabulary words [This assumes you purposefully teach 8 per week, introducing the second 4 mid-week, with a quiz on Friday].  Discuss their hypotheses and derive a student-friendly definition for each word. | |
| INTRODUCTION – HOOK/PITCH🡪I DO (~ 12 mins.): | |
| *Yesterday we wrote sentences and then paragraphs using subordinating conjunctions (see our “AAAWWUBBIS” anchor chart over there), and today I want to highlight some good work that you did, then we’re going to kick things up a notch. Because we constantly want to improve our writing.*  Use Show Call with several student exemplars to review the comma rule introduced yesterday (L 5.2.b)— inviting students to explain the rule and praising several who followed it.  [Depending on which grade(s) you teach, the next point might be review or a stretch because it deals with a 6th grade standard. You may not need to teach this next bit, but it won’t hurt to review it.]  *Now, these paragraphs are very solid, so we can build on them. We’re going to turn our attention to citation—specifically, how to use MLA (Modern Language Association) format to cite sources. In academic writing, we always cite sources. Why do you think we need to do that?* [Solicit responses such as 1) to avoid plagiarism, 2) to be able to find the text out of interest, 3) to give credit to the author.]  *Let’s look at a sentence in which someone cites a source….*  [Spend about 5 minutes analyzing examples of parenthetical citations ON A HANDOUT so that students can infer the rules. Then discuss how to cite lines in a poem: In the first reference, you put “lines 3-5,” for example, in parentheses. After that, you only put the numbers.] | |
| GUIDED PRACTICE – WE DO (~ 10 mins.): | |
| *Let’s apply MLA to one of these example paragraphs* [or mine].  Invite students to help incorporate proper citation into a paragraph or two. (5 mins.)  ***For homework tonight,*** *in addition to your vocabulary practice, you’re going to revise your paragraph one last time to include MLA citation for lines you’ve referenced. Again, staple the newest version on top. This time I will be grading it strictly for proper citation format.*  Distribute “Speed Dating with a Poem” handout.  *Now we’re going to dig into some more poetry with a little game called Speed Dating with a Poem. We’re doing this because it’s a quick way for you to develop a clearer sense of the kind of poetry you like and the kind that maybe you’re not into. Not all poetry is the same, as you will see!*  *Everyone will start out with one of three mini-packets (A, B, or C). You will have three minutes to look over the two poems in your mini-packet, pick one you “want to know better” even if you don’t love it, and complete the information for that poem in the row on the “Speed Dating with a Poem” handout.*  [Distribute the three mini-packets (A, B, or C) systematically in the room.]  *After 3 minutes, you will hand your mini-packet to the person on your left, then we will repeat the process. By the end, you’ll have written something about 3 of the 6 poems.*  Here we go! | |
| INDEPENDENT PRACTICE – YOU DO (~10 mins.): | |
| Lead students in 3 rounds of “Speed Dating with a Poem,” timed at 3 minutes each.  If time permits, survey students about which poems they preferred and why; also discuss what they liked about this process and what was challenging about it.  Let them know we will dig into several of these poems further in the next two days. | |
| ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET (~ 1 min.): | |
| Collect the “Speed Dating with a Poem” handout. | |
| HOMEWORK: | |
| * Complete vocabulary wordplay handout [e.g., sentence stems; for resources, see TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.] * Revise your paragraph one last time to include MLA citation for lines you’ve referenced. Again, staple the newest version on top. This time I will be grading it strictly for proper citation format. | |
| NOTES ON DIFFERENTIATION: How will you extend and differentiate your teaching to reach every student in the classroom? | |
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| **THURSDAY** | |
| OBJECTIVES: ***SWBAT…*** | |
| * Use context clues in order to infer the meaning of vocabulary words. * Analyze a poem using a questioning-the-text approach in order to explain what the poem means. | |
| MATERIALS: | STANDARDS: |
| * Copies of the poem that most students liked yesterday * Do Now: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for second 4 words) * HW: Vocabulary wordplay handout (for all 8 words) | **Reading Anchor Standard #4:** *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*  **Writing Anchor Standard #9:** *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*  L 5.2.b  L 5.2.d  L 3.1.h  RL 6.1 |
| DO NOW (~ 4 mins. to do, 4 to discuss): | |
| Students complete a vocabulary wordplay exercise. [See TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.]  Discuss their responses to the Do Now. | |
| INTRODUCTION – HOOK/PITCH🡪I DO (~ 2 mins.): | |
| *Yesterday, during “Speed Dating with a Poem,” most of you seemed to like one particular poem the best. So today we’re going to dig into that one together, using the strategy we learned on Monday, questioning the text. As you know, we’ve been working on writing, too, so today, of course, we’re going to end up writing about this poem. I can’t wait to see what you come up with!*  Hand out the poem. | |
| GUIDED PRACTICE – WE DO (~ 20 mins.): | |
| See Monday’s lesson plan. Repeat the strategy. | |
| INDEPENDENT PRACTICE – YOU DO (~ 4 mins.): | |
| 1. **Ask students to complete this sentence:** *In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_.* 2. **Invite them to compare responses with a partner.** 3. **Cold-call on students to share their responses.** | |
| ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET (~ 10 mins.): | |
| *Turn your argument sentence* (In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_.) *into a paragraph with evidence and explanation.* | |
| HOMEWORK: | |
| * Complete vocabulary wordplay handout for ALL 8 words to prepare for quiz tomorrow [e.g., sentence stems; for resources, see TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>.] * Independent reading | |
| NOTES ON DIFFERENTIATION: How will you extend and differentiate your teaching to reach every student in the classroom? | |
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| **FRIDAY** | |
| OBJECTIVES: ***SWBAT…*** | |
| * Use context clues in order to infer the meaning of vocabulary words. * Analyze a poem using a questioning-the-text approach in order to explain what the poem means. | |
| MATERIALS: | STANDARDS: |
| * Vocabulary Quiz on 8 words. * Copies of 5 poems remaining from “Speed Dating with a Poem” | **Reading Anchor Standard #4:** *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*  **Writing Anchor Standard #9:** *Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*  L 5.2.b  L 5.2.d  L 3.1.h  RL 6.1 |
| DO NOW (~ 8 mins.): | |
| Complete Vocabulary Quiz on 8 words. | |
| INTRODUCTION – HOOK/PITCH🡪I DO (~10 mins.): | |
| *I want to begin with shout-outs to a couple of students who did an exemplary job on yesterday’s poetry analysis. Let’s take a look at what they wrote.*  Use Show Call to highlight 2 exemplary paragraphs. Invite other students to explain what they like about particular sentences and how these students successfully applied things we learned this week such as comma rules and MLA citation format. (5 mins.)  *OK, today we’re going to dive into one more poem, except this time you get to choose which one you want to analyze, and you will work with just two other people to do this.*  Remind students which of the remaining 5 poems they can choose from. Quickly survey students for their preferences and distribute copies of the poems, then arrange students into pairs or trios. (5 mins.) | |
| GUIDED PRACTICE – WE DO (~27 mins.): | |
| *I’m going to make periodic announcements about what your team should be doing. First thing: Select someone to be the facilitator. This person will read the poem out loud, then solicit everyone’s questions. Please note: This person should also write his/her own questions, too. You have the next 7 minutes to read your poem aloud and record individual questions.* (7 mins.)  *OK, now the facilitator should take the next 4 minutes to solicit everyone’s questions.* (4 mins.) Note: After the timer goes off, if they need more time, give them 1-2 more minutes.  *Now as a whole team, you should select three questions to discuss. I will give everyone 90 seconds to do this.* (90 sec.)  *OK, now you all have 8 minutes to discuss your questions as a whole team.* (8 mins.)  *OK, now you all have 3 minutes to finish this sentence:* In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_. (3 mins.)  Since some of the groups will be analyzing the same poem, it may help to solicit responses from the entire class. (3 mins.) | |
| INDEPENDENT PRACTICE – YOU DO (~ ? mins.): | |
| If time permits, students can begin writing the rest of their paragraph. Otherwise, it can be finished for homework. | |
| ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET (~ ? mins.): | |
| See note above. | |
| HOMEWORK: | |
| * *Turn your argument sentence* (In the poem “Name of Poem,” the author tries to convey the message that \_\_\_\_\_\_.) *into a paragraph with evidence and explanation.* Staple your poem with questions and notes underneath your paragraph. * Independent reading | |
| NOTES ON DIFFERENTIATION: How will you extend and differentiate your teaching to reach every student in the classroom? | |
| TBD | |

Sample Vocabulary Hypothesis Sheet**[[2]](#footnote-2)**

**Vocabulary words:** entwine, beckon, silhouette, fragment

**DIRECTIONS: Use the context clues to infer the meanings of the bolded vocabulary words. Underline any CLUE WORDS that help you form your hypotheses.**

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| **VOCABULARY WORDS** | **CONTEXT** | **HYPOTHESIS** |
| entwine | If you want to arm-wrestle, you will need to **entwine** your arm with the person you’re arm-wrestling with. |  |
| beckon | To **beckon** her dog to return to her, the woman called, “Come here, Snoopy!” |  |
| silhouette | When you stand outside a lit window at night, sometimes you can see the **silhouette** of a person watching TV. |  |
| fragment | When I asked him for a cracker, he gave me only a **fragment**, which was not enough to satisfy my appetite. |  |

Speed Dating with a Poem[[3]](#footnote-3)

**You have been invited to speed dating… with a poem!** The rules are simple. You’ll sit across from two poems and will have 3 minutes to go on a “date” with ONE of them. You need to get to know ONE POEM during this brief period. For each speed date round, you will complete the following chart:

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| **TITLE OF POEM** | **First impression of the poem** | **Reaction after reading the poem (positive or negative)** | **Would you like to “get to know this poem”? Why?** |
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1. The “Sample Week of Lesson Plans: Poetry Analysis and Paragraph Writing” can also be downloaded from the TLC “Using Grammar to Improve Writing” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=161>. The questioning-the-text approach outlined in these plans is found in Sarah Tantillo, *Literacy and the Common Core: Recipes for Action* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 124-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For additional vocabulary resources to maintain, reinforce, and assess words, see the TLC “Building Robust Vocabulary” page found at <https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=4>. See also Sarah Tantillo, *The Literacy Cookbook: A Practical Guide to Effective Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Instruction* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 28-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A “landscape” version of this handout can be found on the TLC “Analyzing Literature” page at (<https://www.literacycookbook.com/page.php?id=2>). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)