

Module: Reading

Lesson Title: Understanding Literary Text: What’s in a Sonnet?

Standards

Florida Adult Basic Education Reading Standards	Level Expectation
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.) (CCR.RE.ABE.9)	NRS Level 4 - Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. (CCR.RE.ABE.9.4)

Interpreting the Standard

1 Standards	2 Skills Included in the Standard	3 Concepts Included in the Standard	4 Through a Particular Context	5 Cognitive Demand/Levels of Thinking	6 Sample Activity
Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (CCR.RE.ABE.9)	analyze	themes in texts	literary texts (sonnets)	high complexity	Use sonnets to teach organizational patterns, vocabulary, and author’s approach to ideas

Objectives of the Lesson

Students will:

- Read and understand the organizational pattern of a Shakespearean sonnet
- Understand the rhyme scheme in a sonnet
- Analyze the author’s point of view
- Compare the author’s point of view of one sonnet to another
- Analyze specific vocabulary authors use to convey meaning and their point of view

Materials

- Handouts: Sonnets 18 and 130
- Handout: Poetry Analysis TP-CASTT
- Pen and paper

Instructional Plan

Overview

The teacher will provide some background knowledge on Shakespearean sonnets for students. The following is a short script to provide basic knowledge for the instructor.

The Sonnets are Shakespeare's most popular works, and a few of them, such as Sonnet 18 (*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*), have become one of the most widely-read poems in all English literature.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, likely composed over an extended period from 1592 to 1598. The majority of the sonnets (1-126) are addressed to a young man, with whom the poet has an intense romantic relationship. The poet spends the first seventeen sonnets trying to convince the young man to marry and have beautiful children that will look just like their father.

The final sonnets (127-154) are addressed to a promiscuous and scheming woman known to modern readers as the *dark lady*. Both the poet and his young man have become obsessed with the raven-haired temptress in these sonnets.

The question remains whether the poet is expressing Shakespeare's personal feelings.

Shakespeare's sonnets are written predominantly in a meter called **iambic pentameter**, a rhyme scheme in which each sonnet line consists of ten syllables. The syllables are divided into five pairs called iambs or iambic feet. An iamb is a metrical unit made up of one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed syllable. An example of an iamb would be good BYE. A line of iambic pentameter flows like this:

baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM / baBOOM.

There are fourteen lines in a Shakespearean sonnet. The first twelve lines are divided into three quatrains with four lines each. In the three quatrains the poet establishes a **theme** or problem and then resolves it in the final two lines, called **the couplet**. The rhyme scheme of the quatrains is **abab cdcd efef**. The couplet has the rhyme scheme **gg**. This sonnet structure is commonly called the **English sonnet** or the **Shakespearean sonnet**.

Although love is the major theme in the sonnets, there are three specific underlying themes: (1) the shortness of life, (2) beauty is momentary, and (3) desire and lust. The first two of these underlying themes are the focus of the early sonnets addressed to the young man (in particular Sonnets 1-17) where the poet argues that having children to carry on one's beauty is the only way to conquer the ravages of time. In the middle sonnets the poet tries to immortalize the young man through his own poetry. In the late sonnets there is a shift to *pure love* as the solution to mortality.

Process

It is important teachers review vocabulary that is essential for students to have a better understanding of the sonnet. For Sonnet 18 teachers will review the following vocabulary:

- temperate
- lease
- hath
- dimm'd
- fair
- ow'st

The teacher will remind students of the **rhyme scheme** Shakespearean sonnets have and that Sonnet 18 is no different. Teachers will point out the rhyme scheme in Sonnet 18 and make note of the couplet (the last two lines).

a
b
a
b
c
d
c
d
e
f
e
f
g
g

The teacher will also remind students that Shakespearean sonnets deal with the topic of love. Students need to analyze the sonnet for the poet's stance or viewpoint above love. This is where close attention to the vocabulary and analysis of Shakespeare's choice of words in both sonnets is crucial.

The teacher will begin by reading Sonnet 18. The teacher can play an audio with script by logging onto the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngZY8coaWMg> as students follow along on their copy of the sonnet.

As students follow along have them notice the **rhyme scheme** and have them label it on their copy of the sonnet. Have students note the **couplet** at the end as well.

Using Sonnet 18, the teacher will model how to analyze the sonnet line 1 through line 4. Then, the teacher will have students join in with the teacher to continue analyzing the sonnet line 5 through line 14. The teacher can use a Promethean, Smartboard, or LCD projector to model for the class to observe. The teacher will pose the following questions and provide time for students to work in pairs or small groups.

Sample Debriefing Questions

- What is the poet's point of view on love? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- What is the theme or central idea in the sonnet?
- What evidence (textual or informational) most strongly supports your analysis?

Review the students' responses to the above questions. Provide a brief review and discussion of the students' ideas.

Continue the same process as above with Sonnet 130.

The teacher will begin by reading Sonnet 130 or can play an audio with script by logging onto the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=thTNNnx5xqM>. Have students follow along on their copy of the sonnet.

Modifications for Different Levels

This lesson is for students with higher reading levels. For students at lower reading levels the teacher should select other pieces of poetry at a lower readability but with a similar topic with contrasting points of view. Teachers may also wish to utilize the TP-CASTT handout as a scaffold for students, if necessary.

Assessments/Extensions

Provide students with two pieces of poetry on a similar topic. Have students identify the topic both poems have in common. Have students analyze each poem individually and identify the author's point of view in both poems. Next, have students identify the use of specific vocabulary that the author utilizes to convey meaning and point of view.

Sonnets

<p>SONNET 18</p> <p>by William Shakespeare</p> <p> Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate: Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, And summer's lease hath all too short a date: Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; And every fair from fair sometime declines, By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimm'd; But thy eternal summer shall not fade Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade, When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st; So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. </p>	Empty grid for student response
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<p>SONNET 130</p> <p>by William Shakespeare</p> <p>My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; Coral is far more red than her lips' red; If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. I have seen roses damask'd, red and white, But no such roses see I in her cheeks; And in some perfumes is there more delight Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. I love to hear her speak, yet well I know That music hath a far more pleasing sound; I grant I never saw a goddess go; My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground: And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare As any she belied with false compare.</p>	

Poetry Analysis – TP-CASTT

T	Title	Before you even think about reading the poetry or trying to analyze it, speculate on what you think the poem <i>might</i> be about based upon the title. Often time authors conceal meaning in the title and give clues in the title. Jot down what you think this poem will be about.
P	Paraphrase	Before you begin thinking about meaning or trying to analyze the poem, don't overlook the literal meaning of the poem. One of the biggest problems that students often make in poetry analysis is jumping to conclusions before understanding what is taking place in the poem. When you paraphrase a poem, write in your own words exactly what happens in the poem. Look at the number of sentences in the poem— your paraphrase should have exactly the same number. This technique is especially helpful for poems written in the 17th and 19th centuries. Sometimes your teacher may allow you to <i>summarize</i> what happens in the poem. Make sure that you understand the difference between a <i>paraphrase</i> and a <i>summary</i> .
C	Connotation	Although this term usually refers solely to the emotional overtones of word choice, for this approach the term refers to any and all poetic devices, focusing on how such devices contribute to the meaning, the effect, or both of a poem. You may consider imagery, figures of speech (simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, etc.), diction, point of view, and sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, and rhyme). It is not necessary that you identify all the poetic devices within the poem. The ones you do identify should be seen as a way of supporting the conclusions you are going to draw about the poem.
A	Attitude	Having examined the poem's devices and clues closely, you are now ready to explore the multiple attitudes that may be present in the poem. Examination of diction, images, and details suggests the speaker's attitude and contributes to understanding. You may refer to the list of words on <i>Tone</i> that will help you. Remember that usually the tone or attitude cannot be named with a single word Think <i>complexity</i> .
S	Shifts	Rarely does a poem begin and end the poetic experience in the same place. As is true of most us, the poet's understanding of an experience is a gradual realization, and the poem is a reflection of that understanding or insight. Watch for the following keys to shifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key words, (but, yet, however, although) • punctuation (dashes, periods, colons, ellipsis) • stanza divisions • changes in line or stanza length or both • irony • changes in sound that may indicate changes in meaning • changes in diction
T	Title	Now look at the title again, but this time on an interpretive level. What new insight does the title provide in understanding the poem.
T	Theme	What is the poem saying about the human experience, motivation, or condition? What subject or subjects does the poem address? What do you learn about those subjects? What idea does the poet want you take away with you concerning these subjects? Remember that the theme of any work of literature is stated in a complete sentence.

Poetry Analysis – TP-CASTT

T	Title	
P	Paraphrase	
C	Connotation	
A	Attitude	
S	Shifts	
T	Title	
T	Theme	