**English 10 American Poetry Unit**

**Mrs. Sutton**

**Essential Questions:**  
How do sound and form impact a poem’s meaning?  
  
What strategies can readers use to increase comprehension and appreciation of poetry?  
  
How can writing and discussing our own poems enhance our experience of reading and studying poetry in general?    
  
**Unit Objectives:**  
1.     Make inferences and determine the central meaning of a poem through close analysis.  
  
2.     Develop inferential questions in response to poem.  
  
3.     Identify patterns in terms of sound, form, and ideas/content within a poem and analyze how the writer’s choices contribute to the poem’s overall meaning.  
  
4.     Define and identify elements of poetry as well as inquiry and reading strategies.  
  
5.     Respond to the text and explore the elements of poetry more in depth through creative writing.

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| **Poets/Poems Include:**  *--Sylvia Plath,*"Mushrooms"  *--Robert Frost,* "Out, Out-"  *--T.S. Eliot,* "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" *--Williams Carlos Williams*, "This Is Just To Say," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "To Waken An Old Lady, "The Last  Words Of My English Grandmother." --*Emily Dickinson*, "I Heard A Fly Buzz- When I Died", "Hope Is A Thing With Feathers," "I Died For Beauty-  But Was Scarce," "I'm Nobody! Who Are You?", "I Felt A Funeral, In My Brain" --*Walt Whitman,* From "I Hear America Singing", From "Song of Myself", "To A Stranger," "We Two Boys  Together Clinging," From "Salut Au Monde!"  --*Ralph Waldo Emerson*, “The Snowstorm”, “The Rhodora”  **A Couple Core Poetry Concepts:** Form/Structure + Content =  Overall Meaning of the Poem & The Effect of the Poem on Reader.  EVERY Choice A Writer Makes is INTENTIONAL and meant to add to the overall meaning of the poem.  Credit: Molly Vasich https://sites.google.com/site/vasichcourses/  **4 Major Elements of Poetry:**  *Figurative Language: occurs whenever a poet uses words in ways that stray from their usual meaning.*  Poets often use figurative language to "help readers move from their familiar prior knowledge to understanding new, unfamiliar text...Metaphors or similes often consist of familiar physical, concrete entitiesthat are used to portray conceptual meanings" (from "Teaching Literature to Adolescents").  *Imagery: Poetry is dense with images, things we can sense: hear, smell, see, taste, feel.  Poets create what T.S. Eliot calls an "objective correlative," an objective, physical world that correlates (links) us to a feeling.  Good poets don't just tell us how they feel; they put us in a world of images that allow us to feel what they feel.  Voice/Attitude/Tone: When you read a poem it is essential that you see two fundamental parts of the poem: the speaker (who is talking?) and the subject (What is the poem about?).  The attitude a speaker takes toward the subject creates her tone or voice.  You should ask: Who is speaking?  What is the subject?  What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject?  Patterns*: *Poetry depends on patterns much more than novels or other prose writing do.  Not that we don't find patterns in novels, but in poetry there is a much higher concentration.  By patters, I mean repetitions of sound.  There are numerous types of patterns, the two with which we're most familiar being rhythm and rhyme.  However, there are many sound techniques.  Poetry also uses a device called parallelism.  This is the repetition of a word, group of words, or even a part of speech.*   **Reading Strategies** 1. *Multiple Readings:* Poetry can be tough to understand!  The first time we read a poem, we often read to understand the plot or the events occurring on the surface of the text.  The second time we read, we often identify a connection between two ideas or spot a phrase we might view as significant.  Multiple readings is especially important in poetry because often the literal is less important than what the writer is implying or trying to express through words and images.    2. *Threading*: Noting words, phrases, or passages that stand out to you is how you make sense of the poem’s meaning.You can do this during your first, second, third reading of the poem.  Don't dismiss your own skill as a reader.  There is a reason why something stands out to you!  It's intentional!  Start to inquire: What about this stands out to me?  3.*Talking Back To The Text:*This strategy is essentially the act of forming interpretative or inferential questions in response to the content and ideas within a poem.  You must ask, “Why?” |

**Unit Formative Assignments:**

**1. Complete the Poetry Elements Chart:** Define all elements of poetry. Use your literature book, dictionary, or poetry site. Make sure you follow all directions on the chart. Your examples can come from poems we studied in class, poems you have read on you own, or original poems of your own creation. This will be included in your portfolio.

**2. Complete a TPCASTT Analysis:** Follow the instructions on the TPCASTT handout to analyze a poem we have studied in class.

**3. Personification Poem**: In his poem, "Out, Out," Frost gives a buzz saw human-like characteristics.  Effectively, the saw can be viewed as a symbol for danger, tragedy, or brutality of life.  Plath also uses personification in the poem, "Mushrooms."  As the speaker in the poem, mushrooms seem to assume quiet power, self-respect, and determination.  For this assignment, you need to compose a poem in which an ordinary object has human-like characteristics.   ***Here are the parameters****:*  
-10 line minimum  
-title required  
-at least one object or animal is personified*in order to bring another level meaning into the poem*(for instance, the saw is both a saw and a symbol for the brutality and danger in life).  
  
4. **Responding to T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."**  On page 713 of your red textbook, answer questions 1-10.

5. **Imagery Poem**:  In his poem, "The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock," T.S. Eliot uses different forms of imagery to get across certain emotions and feelings.  Since "It's impossible to say just what I mean," Eliot tries to convey meaning by appealing to his readers' physical senses.  For this assignment, you need to compose a poem that uses varied forms of imagery (descriptions of sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and sights) in order to describe a particular emotion or metaphysical (intangible) concept.  
  
**Here are the parameters:**  
-At least 15 lines, three stanzas (minimum)  
-Use at least two different kinds of imagery  
-titled  
 **6. Found Poem:**Found poems take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. The literary equivalent of a collage, found poetry is often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems.  Poets, including T.S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams, have also incorporated found elements in their poetry.  
  
The writer Annie Dillard has said that turning a text into a poem doubles that poem's context. "The original meaning remains intact," she writes, "but now it swings between two poles" (from poets.org).    
  
**Here are the parameters:**  
-Refashion, reorder, and present a text that you select into a meaningful poem.    
-As always, your decisions as you refashion the poem should be intentional and meant to add to the overall meaning of the poem.  Consider: What do you want your poem to say?  How do you want readers to react?  
-You decide if you want to add your own words into the found poetry.  You can either only use the found text's words, or you can intermix your own.  
-*Your poem must contain at least 1 example of some type of figurative language.*  
-At least 10 lines (minimum)  
-typed   
-titled

**7.  The Tongue Twister**Your assignment is to create a tongue twister out of repeated words or sounds.  Try a little of each if you can:   
• Use alliteration such as: Crisp crusts crackle crunchily.   
• Use consonance such as: Lily ladles little Letty's lentil soup.   
• Use assonance such as: Old oily Ollie oils old oily autos.   
Answer these: What makes some harder to say?  Would you want your poem to be hard to read? Why?   
  
Try to avoid tongue twisters that will make your classmates say naughty, inappropriate things:   
I am not the pheasant plucker,   
I'm the pheasant plucker's mate.   
I am only plucking pheasants   
'cause the pheasant plucker's late.   
   
Tongue twisters taken from: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html> **8. List Poem**This poem assignment is inspired by Walt Whitman's tendency towards making lists.  You can take this assignment in a number of directions, but you can also model your poem after "I Hear America Singing" (1 line intro, list/pattern, 1 line conclusion).  You could even begin with "I hear America..." and then replace "singing" with some other verb.  
**Here are the parameters:**   
10-15 lines  
Use *repetition* to create *a pattern*among the lines by beginning each line in a similar way (see "I Hear America Singing").  
-Use as much descriptive imagery as possible.  
 **9. Photograph-Inspired/Postcard Poem**

Your inspiration for this assignment is a printable picture/photograph/image of your choice. You have more freedom with this poem than any of the others.

**Here are the parameters:**

-10-15 lines

-Use and incorporate as much as you can of what you have learned during this unit.

**Unit Culminating Project:**  
Students will draft, workshop, and edit ***FIVE original poems of different forms*** to include in a writing portfolio.  Students will ***select at least one poem to post on Mrs. Sutton’s Classroom Blog. Each student must offer critical commentary on at least one classmate’s poem. The commentary should offer constructive criticism or encouraging praise. Buffer the “grow” with the “glow”. Use appropriate digital citizenship.***