

Marking Period 1



Poetry Reading Ladder

Appreciating Poetry

What is poetry? Read the following definitions from famous authors. Circle the ones you like.

“things that are true expressed in words that are beautiful” --Dante

“the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason” --Samuel Johnson

“the best words in the best order” --Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” --William Wordsworth

“musical thought” --Thomas Carlyle

“emotion put to measure” --Thomas Hardy

“If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that it is poetry.” --Emily Dickinson

“speech framed...to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning” --Gerard Manley Hopkins

“a way of remembering what it would impoverish us to forget” --Robert Frost

“a revelation in words by means of the words” --Wallace Stevens

“Poetry is prose bewitched.” --Mina Loy

“not the assertion that something is true, but the making of that truth more fully real to us”
--T.S. Elliot

“the clear expression of mixed feelings” --W.H. Auden

“hundreds of things coming together at the right moment” --Elizabeth Bishop

“anything said in such a way, or put on the page in such a way, as to invite from the hearer or the reader a certain kind of attention” --William Stafford

“Poetry is life distilled.” --Gwendolyn Brooks

“A poem is something that penetrates for an instant into the unconscious.” --Robert Bly

“a machine of words” --William Carlos Williams

Ars Poetica

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit,

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone 5
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds.

*

A poem should be motionless in time 10
As the moon climbs,

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time 15
As the moon climbs.

*

A poem should be equal to:
Not true.

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love 20
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean
But be.

—Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982)

1. How can a poem be “wordless” (7)? How can it be “motionless in time” (15)?

2. The Latin title, literally translatable as “The Art of Poetry,” is a traditional title for works on the philosophy of poetry. What is *this* poet’s philosophy of poetry? What does he mean by saying that a poem should not “mean” and should not be “true”?

3. Do you agree with MacLeish’s philosophy?

Date_____

Brought Song_____

Rung One



*Note: Names of songs go in quotation marks, as do quotations. When quoting 2-3 lines of poetry, show line breaks with a slash. When quoting 4 or more lines, indent and write them out with the line breaks shown in the original text.

How do you define poetry? Feel free to use any of the definitions from the preceding page. _____

What song did you bring in? Write down the title and author. _____

The ancient Greeks would accompany their lyric poems (a short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker) with music played on a lyre. That is where we get the word “lyrics” for songs.

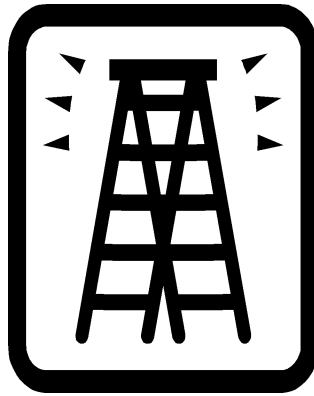
Write down a quotation from the song that applies to your definition of poetry.

Based on your definition, what makes it poetry? Be specific. _____

Date_____

Credit Earned _____
Brought Poem_____

Rung Two



*Note: Names of poems go in quotation marks, as do quotations. When quoting 2-3 lines of poetry, show line breaks with a slash. When quoting 4 or more lines, indent and write them out with the line breaks shown in the original text.

What is the title and author of the name of a poem you remember liking from childhood or your previous studies of poetry? Write them down below:

Write down a quotation from the poem that is especially your favorite_____

What do you like about these lines and why?_____

What are some poetry elements you notice this poet uses and what meaning do they make in the poem? Give an example.

Date_____

Rung Three



*Note: Names of poems go in quotation marks, as do quotations. When quoting 2-3 lines of poetry, show line breaks with a slash. When quoting 4 or more lines, indent and write them out with the line breaks shown in the original text.

Now find a poem you have never read before and write down the title and name of the author here. _____

Write down a quotation from the poem that is especially your favorite _____

What do you like about these lines and why? _____

What are some poetry elements you notice this poet uses and what meaning do they make in the poem? Give an example. _____

Reading Poetry

Introduction to Poetry

By Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Eating Poetry
By Mark Strand

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.
Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

1. What does Collins suggest should be done with a poem?
2. What does he say “they” like to do with it instead? Who do you think he means?
3. What does Strand do with poetry? Is he being literal or figurative? In what way?
4. What does the librarian think? Who does she represent?
5. Who do they imply truly appreciates poetry?
6. How do you think poetry should be read?

TSFFAT—An Acronym to help you analyze poetry

T—Title—Look at the title and read the poem. How does the title relate to the poem?

S—Summary—Summarize what is happening in each stanza in a sentence or two.

F—Form—What do you notice about the form of the poem and how does it create meaning? (Meter, rhyme scheme, refrain, punctuation, the way it looks on the page, etc.)

F—Figurative Language—What figurative language do you notice and what does it mean? (Simile, metaphor, imagery, personification, symbolism etc.)

A—Attitude—What is the attitude of the narrator? How do you know?

T—Theme—What is the theme or message of the poem?

Sample TSFFAT: “The Eagle”

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from the mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

--Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Title: The title is “The Eagle.” This lets the reader know the poem is about an eagle. Otherwise one might think it’s about a man.

Summary: In the first stanza, the eagle sits on a high cliff by the sea. In the second stanza, he watches the sea and dives down, presumably to catch his prey.

Form: This poem has two stanzas, each with three lines. It is a short poem, which makes it accessible to the reader. It creates brief images of the eagle in nature, much as a haiku might. The regular rhyme scheme, which is aaa bbb, and meter, which is iambic tetrameter (there are eight syllables per line and every other syllable is stressed), make the poem pleasing to the ear. Again, this makes the poem accessible; even the common man can understand and appreciate it. The alliteration of the “c” sound in the first stanza emphasizes the strength of the eagle, and contrasts with the alliteration of the “w” sound in the second stanza, which emphasizes the calmness of the sea. The form not only draws the reader in, but reinforces the message of the poem.

Figurative Language: The most obvious use of figurative language comes from the simile in the last line, “like a thunderbolt.” This compares how the eagle dives to a thunderbolt, giving the eagle strength and power. This is also an allusion to Norse mythology, as Thor carries a thunderbolt. He is the most powerful god, so the reader can assume the eagle is the most powerful bird. To further this idea, Tennyson used personification in the first stanza, by saying the eagle “clasps” the crag with “hands.” Hands are a human attribute, and by endowing the eagle with hands, Tennyson makes the eagle as significant as a human. We tend to think of animals as being below us on the food chain. Of course there is imagery, but in the interests of time, I didn’t get a chance to go into that.

Attitude: The narrator has an attitude of awe.

Theme: The eagle is a great and powerful bird.

Date_____

Rung Four



Choose a poem to TSFFAT. Write down the name and author of it here._____

T--_____

S--_____

F--_____

F--_____

A--_____

T--_____

Credit Earned _____

Writing Poetry

Define the types of poems below.

Ode--

Ballad--

Villanelle--

Sonnet--

Heroic Couplet--

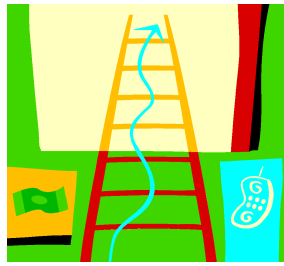
Free Verse--

Choose one type and write an original poem below.

Credit Earned _____

Date_____

Rung Five



Write down the names and authors of the 20 poems you read independently this marking period below (they should not be poems from the packet). If you read a book in verse, write the title of the book below instead of individual poems names.

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

What else did you read this marking period? Be specific about texts and pg. #'s.

How many pages did you read this marking period? Estimate each poem at a page unless you read something longer and include all 8 poems from the packet.-----

How many pages per week did you read? Take an average.-----

How do you feel about your reading progress? Do you think you are a more thoughtful reader? What reading goals do you have for next next marking period?-----

Credit Earned _____