Come for It! An Introduction to Poetry and Poetics

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Content Objectives

Students' aversion to poetry arises from two deficiencies of study: inadequate training in close-reading and outmoded forms of teaching. Even for enthusiastic young readers of fiction, poetry is different because poetry is "difficult," and it is not uncommon for these readers to cry in anguish after the announcement of an upcoming poetry unit: "Poetry is hard!" "I *hate* poetry!"

"I *too* dislike it," admitted Marianne Moore; in this, the first line of "Poetry," a speaker shares her reader's aversion to poems, a sentiment indicative of a wider cultural ambivalence--if not outright distaste--for abstruse, ambiguous, experimental forms of language. A high school unit that serves as an introduction to poetry should begin by openly confronting our cultural aversion to poetry-- the Poetry Prejudice--through supportive and candid discourse. Once we confront these prejudices, we can articulate a criteria for judgment that may not, in fact, have ever been relevant to the study of poems. Does it make sense to ask of a poem what we would ask of a newspaper article, essay, or story?

As students define their criteria of judgment, the educator will shuttle them through the work of close-reading poetry with the "student-centered" ethos that grounds modern pedagogy. This, what participants in MODPO call "collaborative close reading," is the core pedagogical technique that places the onus of explication on the student. As pedagogue Carol Jago has noted, too often teachers assume the burden of close-reading when they cannot solicit answers from students in the study of poems. What inevitably happens through explication is that students watch a performance of close-reading, concluding that their teacher "gets" poetry, while they "don't"; that teacher is "smart" and they are "dumb." This fallout, antithetical to ethically-minded educators, is all too common. Only when teachers reverse the onus of interpretive responsibility by asking students to collaboratively produce meaning from the poems under study, does that perception vanish, and students feel empowered as readers and interpreters.

In my own approach to poetry pedagogy, I will suggest to students that our common, and often perfectly understandable, aversion to poetry stems not only from "difficult" language, but from an encounter with a highly individualistic, personal vision; and that when we encounter something "rich and strange" we are, yes, sometimes allured, but also sometimes exasperated or befuddled. It takes a certain courage to return to a poem. Acknowledging that, I will persuade students that they possess a latent courage to

make their own meaning from poems. Just as poets have long been conceived as makers, so too will students realize that readers share that responsibility of making simply through acts of reading. Students will know that by co-creating meaning, they remove the "authority" from the "author" and place it on themselves. That should be an empowering, exciting notion: the idea that they can take ownership over a poem, or, for that matter, any written text.

What makes a poem different from other forms of writing? Two generationally different critics--W.H. Auden and Helen Vendler--encapsulate this difference by identifying two gifts poets must possess to create their work. Auden, in his introduction to the poet Robert Horan's *A Beginning,* claims, "to write poetry a man must be endowed with two quite distinct gifts, a love of language and a private vision of the public world" (i). Vendler, in her well-known anthology *Poems, Poets, Poetry*, puts it differently, writing that a poet must "possess two talents: [...] imagination…[and]...a mastery of language" (i). In this unit, students will discuss how radically unique, imaginative "visions" of the world--often reflecting (and in all cases performing) personal, private takes on common experiences--necessarily produce a language that differentiates itself from the requirements of common prose.

In this unit, vision and imagination will be nearly inseparable terms, as students interrogate how each encountered poet "sees" the world. How, we will ask, is the poet's experience similar to, and different from, our own? The primary unit objective is to empower students with refined skills of close-reading, but the educator should anchor lessons in recurring "touchstone" questions that ask students to consider individual poets' voices, technique, and poetics. Class readings pair poems with letters, biographical sketches, essays, interviews, and recordings. At the end of the unit, students will have acquired skills established by the objectives outlined below. Ultimately students will first know that individual vision produces a new kind of language; secondly, that *how* a poem says what it's trying to say *is* what it's trying to say; and finally that reading a poem is an experience, which, in order to make possible, poets must be provocative, experimental, and original. Here are a few general objectives for the unit:

Students will understand the relationship between form and content. This is the primary goal of the course. Students must know that a poem does what it says; in other words, *how* a poem says what it tries to say *is* what it tries to say. In short, form means. As the poet Julia Bloch artfully puts it, we often think of "form" as the mold into which we pour the content; but this isn't really the case. Form itself has meaning. Even in the case of a predetermined organizational pattern such as the sonnet or villanelle, the content of the poem is virtually inseparable from its form. This objective well aligns with both state and national common core standards that emphasize the necessity of understanding the "structure" of written texts ("form" is curiously unmentioned). Thus, asking students to consider how form extends the content (to invoke poet Robert Creeley) merely

refashions a skill they have allegedly been mastering in middle school and early high school.

Students will form aesthetic judgments. Determining criteria for "good" poetry will be a touchstone of this unit. Must we feel as if the tops of our heads have been taken off, as Emily Dickinson suggests? How quickly does this criteria evolve, and to what extent is it historically contingent? Are there objective reasons why some authors are included in a canon, while others are excluded? To form aesthetic judgments, a touchstone of the unit, students will routinely ask what qualities sponsor good, memorable, and original experiences for readers, not only in the realm of literature, but in the engagement of film, television, music, visual art; and perhaps even in firsthand experiences: an afternoon with a friend, a day at the shore, a conversation with a mentor. Students will develop their own taste for poetry through original research and by judging creative work through written reflection, collaborative reading, and discussion. I welcome and hope to see many different criteria evolve throughout the unit.

Students will refine close-reading techniques acquired in middle school and develop new ones. At Bodine High School, most freshman arrive with a decent, if shaky, introduction to figuration, familiar with the major devices of imagery, personification, simile, metaphor, and alliteration; but their skills rarely extend beyond identification. Even those who are skilled at identifying literary devices lack the understanding of their purpose or effect. This is the analytical leap that should separate the perceptive high schooler from the emerging middle schooler. In this unit, students will learn additional terms of figuration to cultivate an understanding of the poet's ear: the decisions that all writers in fact make, governed by sound and denotative and connotative sense. Song lyrics that students admire, especially in the realm of hip-hop, are governed by organizational principles that rest on metonymy, consonance, assonance, internal rhyme, and couplets. These terms are new to high school students of English, and while they are difficult for freshmen and sophomores to master, this kind of ear training should begin in the first years of study. The pedagogical techniques outlined below will hopefully provide ample opportunities for students to identify these figures and contemplate their contribution to textual meaning.

Students will recognize that language is political. Nearly all students are politically and socially conscientious, even if that conscientiousness is nebulous, intuitive, and suggestive. My students are justifiably anxious about the current state of world affairs, and despite the fact that they hardly read the news, they are passionate about issues that matter to them; these include climate change, social inequity, urban violence, and racial disparity, among others. Where does poetry stand in this midst? What can poets, and by extension all writers, do to change the world? Is it all passive response and reflection, or can it enact change? Rather than ending our discussion at Auden's dictum that "poetry makes nothing happen," we'll gravitate towards the line that follows:

it's "a way of happening," as we consider how powerful language can, in fact, help incite social change.

Teaching Strategies

Collaborative Close Reading

Collaborative close-reading is the bedrock of this unit. In the beginning, the teacher models the role of the discussion facilitator by selecting the poem, assigning individual students to address specific words, phrases, or clauses within the poem, and gently guiding the discussion to a productive end by asking further questions and monitoring the classroom discussion. The teacher-facilitator will emphasize in each close-reading how each poem functions as a metapoem: a poem that is either about poetry, about itself, or about the speaker or writer of the poem and the act of writing it. Nearly all of the poems selected for this course can be considered metapoems. The teacher-facilitator will also apprise students of the ways in which a poem's form extends its content: how the arrangement of its words, phrases, clauses, lines, and stanzas both contributes to and constitutes its meaning. Gradually, the teacher will farm out the responsibilities of facilitating discussion to the students. The teacher will organize the students into small groups and train them to democratically participate in the process of close-reading on their own. Each student will be given a copy of the poem as well as any supplementary materials necessary to scaffold learning. These might include structured note-taking templates intended to develop students' skills in listening, speaking, and reading. These templates may include questions relevant to specific poems, recurring "touchstone" questions applicable to all poems, and sentence starters to prompt appropriate responses to a classmate's ideas ("My group member claims that…"; "I agree with…"; "I disagree with…"). This collaborative close-reading method meets the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- CC.1.2.9-10.A Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.C: Apply appropriate strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how an author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.D: Determine an author's particular point of view and analyze how rhetoric advances the point of view.
- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.E: Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text.

- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.K: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.

Comparative Forms

Students will have the opportunity to contemplate and discuss form by carefully studying (close-reading) works of visual art. The Philadelphia Museum of Art makes available to local educators an abundant scope of teaching materials to underscore/complement the skills typically developed in humanities classrooms. The use of visuals is also a primary strategy in reaching E.L.L. students, a handful of which Bodine accepts each year. Additionally, students will be given opportunities to study basic formal features of music from a variety of genres; these include sonata form, ternary form, through-composed programmatic music, and others to be determined at the discretion of the teacher. Students will also, at given times in the unit, be asked to draw (in color) images or "moods" of particular poems. Ample time will be given for students to explain in writing and through speaking their rationale for their choices. By critiquing individual work and the work of others, students will develop the necessary analytical skills typically applied to written texts. These strategies meet the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.G: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- Standard - CC.1.5.9-10.C: Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g. visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

Creative Writing and Performance

In order to fully engage with poetry, students will be given a variety of assignments requiring them to compose original poems inspired by the forms and techniques encountered in this unit. These will include opportunities to practice writing metrically through the composition of a sonnet or ballad; writing a catalog or list poem (metric or in free verse); writing a socially or politically-minded poem on a student-chosen topic; a list poem; a spontaneous O'Haraean "I-do-this-I-do-that" poem; and others to be determined. It is expected that most of the literary devices studied in the unit will be included in these poems; and students will be encouraged to be as formally innovative and creative as

possible. A particularly valuable resource will be Bernadette Mayer's writing experiments (see appendix). These innovative prompts will be especially helpful to reluctant writers who feel at sea when it comes to creative writing. Mayer's vast list of experiments can easily be applied or adapted to a ninth or tenth grade classroom. Many experiments force students, pen in hand, to deconstruct, even violate, pre-existing poems. This complements collaborative close-reading nicely because, like that strategy, the writing experiments remove the "authority" from the author by asking students to alter and experiment with pre-existing texts. By taking ownership over the texts, students learn not only that language is a living, evolving entity, but that a social and literary hierarchy, reinforced by a canon of literature, is an artificial construct capable of being ruptured.

Students will additionally be required to memorize and recite a poem of their choice to the class. The intention here is to apprise students of the necessity to speak and hear poetry aloud. It will hopefully make students aware that poetry, unlike other genres, is something that often needs to percolate in the mind for meaning to be made. This is not always the case, but for the difficult poems students encounter in class, memorization will slow students down and force them to cognitively process each word. This strategy, like the collaborative close-reading, ensures that students dodge superficial reading by requiring them to re-read a single text again and again.

The creative writing and performance activities align with the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.E: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition; use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic; establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.F: Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.M: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.N: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple points of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.O: Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, reflection, multiple plot lines, and pacing, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters; use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, settings, and/or characters.

- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.T: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.U: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

Research and Discovery

Outside of class, students will pursue independent reading and listening on several websites that will function as our online anthologies, including Poetry Foundation, PennSound, and the Poetry Archive. Students will be expected to find a poet whose work resonates with them; then, they will produce a short 500 word introduction to the poet that includes a sample of three representative poems. One of these poems will be memorized and recited in front of the class. This independent work will build on lessons that attune students to the the sonic and performative features of poetry. It is impossible to fully appreciate any poem without speaking or listening to it; as Helen Vendler notes, a poem is there for you to say.

This short research project aligns with the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.W: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Journal Activities

Students will keep two logs throughout the unit. The first will be a daily log of things they do, see, and feel. This might be as little as bulleted notes or observations, or a more thoughtful diary entry. The intention here is to provide students with material for several

of the creative writing assignments they'll produce during the unit. The second log will be devoted solely to student experiences in private reading. Accompanied by selected sentence starters, prompts, or questions, the intention here is to encourage students to experiment with multiple ways of engaging with texts. Questions and prompts will range from simple data collection ("who is the speaker?"; "is there a narrative?"); focused questions on literary devices, form, and technique ("the author uses the following literary device probably in order to…"; "I think this is a sonnet because…"); and questions to inspire reflective thoughts on the reading process ("I'm confused by…," "Why has the author made the choice to…"), self, and world ("I relate to the speaker because…"; "this situation is familiar because…").

The journal activities align with the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.E: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition; use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic; establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.F: Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Whole Body Memorization

This technique of memorization, developed by playwright and drama professor Caleen Jennings, was introduced to participants of the Folger Shakespeare Library's 2019 Teaching Shakespeare Institute. The technique runs as follows: to memorize a passage of text, an actor creates a physical gesture representing each word; the more exaggerated, the more effective it is. The gesture must be the same for each word (e.g. if I spread my arms wide for the word "and," that should always be the gesture for that particular conjunction). The actor puts the text together word by word, line by line, until the whole passage is memorized. Whole Body Memorization lets the actor internalize every word and line by forcing them to slow the process of learning text. Gradually, gestures become more fluent as the brain processes the text ever more quickly. When students practice this technique, they discover the benefits of slow reading without knowing it. Focusing on a bodily gesture forces them to unconsciously process textual meaning. Comprehension will arise seemingly quite naturally, as will deeper understandings of words, phrases, and sentences.

Whole Body Memorization aligns with the following academic standards for grades nine and ten:

- CC.1.2.9–10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.
- CC.1.2.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college- and career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- CC.1.2.9–10.K Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools.

Conventional Teaching Strategies

The teacher will employ the following tools, already familiar to most ninth and tenth graders, as a way to sponsor authentic learning and intellectual exchange. They include, but are certainly not limited to the following:

- **Think-Pair-Share**: after a teacher poses a question or projects one on the smartboard, students will be required to think through an answer by writing in their notebooks. Students then discuss their answers with nearby colleagues, record their neighbor's response (if different), then share as a whole class.
- **Turn-and-Talk**: this strategy asks students to immediately discuss a question or prompt posed by the teacher or another student.
- **K-W-L Charts**: Used less frequently in this unit, the "Know, Want to Know, Learned" chart functions as something of a baseline assessment. Teachers are able to determine what prior knowledge--or in some cases, misunderstandings--students bring to a particular concept. They can then usefully discover what students "want to know," what interests them, and thus tailor content to student interests. This would be particularly useful for teachers interested in inquiry based pedagogy. The final portion of this chart, which proceeds from the lesson, allows teachers to assess what knowledge students have acquired. This helps teachers plan or modify subsequent lessons.
- **Jigsaw**: In six steps, the jigsaw method (sometimes known as "Jigsaw I," as opposed to its variant "Jigsaw II") forces students to independently research and discuss content before teaching it to each other. A great introduction to the jigsaw method can be found on the *Cult of Pedagogy* YouTube channel (see bibliography), from which I formulate this brief *précis*: students organize themselves into groups of four to six; students are then given a text or document

and asked to read one section. (It's important that the number of sections matches the number of students in each group). Next, students arrange themselves into "expert groups" where they discuss and analyze their responsible content. Following that, students return to their original groups and teach their content to the other group members, who take notes. An assessment covering all of the material should follow to ensure that students have indeed mastered the content.

Formative Assessments

As with the teaching strategies discussed in the immediately preceding section, the formative assessments, while not particularly innovative, serve as useful anchors for learning and assessment on a regular basis. While these are fairly common in secondary classrooms, the following items are mainly pulled from David Wees "56 Examples of Formative Assessments" on Edutopia (see bibliography).

- Exit tickets: students answer a short assessment question on a slip of paper that they turn in at the end of class. This allows the teacher to troubleshoot errors and modify subsequent lessons if necessary.
- Journals: The teacher should collect the student journals (perhaps unannounced) at various points of the unit. This will help gauge student responses to literature and help promote student inquiry at the heart of each lesson.
- Scaffolded notes: Teachers can collect the scaffolded notes template (see appendix), in which students are prompted to synthesize what they've learned from a group discussion or conversation with another student.
- Three things: list three things a fellow student might misunderstand about a topic.
- Venn Diagram: students compare and contrast two items through a venn diagram. This would be especially useful and interesting when comparing a particular poem to another genre or artistic form, such as a sculpture or painting--especially if both items addressed the same subject.

Summative Assessments

The final assessment of the unit is divided into four parts: a digital class anthology of original student poetry, and final exam that incorporates student-led collaborative close reading of one poem, followed by an individual written explication of at least 250 words. To this end, students have the opportunity to demonstrate skills they have developed in literary analysis along with those they have mastered as poets themselves. Both portions of the summative assessment follow Bloom's Taxonomy by asking students to analyze

and create written work at the conclusion of the unit. Please consult the annotated bibliography for a resource of action verbs to help implement Bloom's Taxonomy in daily instruction.

Classroom Activities

Guiding Questions for Instructional Planning

While planning or modifying lessons, teachers should ask the following three questions; all should be answered affirmatively in order to execute a lesson the aligns with the stated objectives and overall philosophy of the unit:

1. Am I letting the form of the poem direct my teaching strategy for this lesson?
2. Am I stepping back during the lesson to let students engage with the poem and make discoveries for themselves?
3. Am I asking students to reconsider prior knowledge about language and representation?

Unit Overview (duration: five weeks; grade: nine)

Week One: *Confronting Our Aversions to Poetry*. The first week introduces students to the technique of collaborative close-reading and invites them to consider the advantages of contemplative reading. Exercises force students to slow down, to carefully consider individual words, phrases, and sentences of poems. During close-reading activities, the instructor asks students to consider the difference between denotative and connotative sense, as well as reflect on the relationships between words within a single poem. This is likely to be a fairly new experience for students accustomed to reading a text once with the expectation that full comprehension necessarily follows. Many students err in this way, believing a text is impossible to understand if meaning remains obscure after a cursory reading. As Kelly Gallagher notes in his book *Deeper Reading*, teachers must scaffold learning if students are to pass through surface-level reading and acquire habits that foster nuanced and complex readings of texts. The consistent practice of collaborative close-reading, first involving the entire class but culminating in small, student-led groups at the unit's end, supports students through increasingly independent stages of reading.

Also in this week, students openly discuss common aversions to poetry. The instructor invites students to discuss their prior experience with poetry in (or outside of) elementary and middle schools. This conversation leads to a major tenet of the unit: that the manner in which a poem expresses a subject is, in fact, more important than the subject itself; in short, *how* a poem says is more important than *what* it says. Poetry, the instructor should underscore, seems difficult because it reflects an original and often

highly-charged poetic vision. Poems force readers to radically reconsider the capabilities of language through abstraction, juxtaposition, and unconventional aesthetic principles that challenge traditional semantic meaning. This poetry unit introduces to many different artistic visions; like a gallery tour, students stroll from room to room, encountering an assembly artworks that, in Auden's words, each offer a private vision of the public world. This tour involves independent and group activities; and to that end, the instructor should in this week introduce students to the unit overview and the parameters of the major projects.

The poems this week, all metapoems, consciously address readers and take poetry itself as their subject. The speaker of John Ashbery's "Just Walking Around" asks its reader to consider "[t]hat the longest way is the most efficient," a notion introduced by a poem students encounter in week two, Emily Dickinson's "Tell All The Truth But Tell It Slant." The metaphors of these poems, "walking around" and "telling it slant," are touchstones of the unit; both accentuate the pronoun "it" as a signifier dependent on a reader and a writer to charge it with meaning.

Terminology: close-reading, denotation, connotation, metapoem/metapoetry, form, content, paradox, subject, object, subjectivity.

- Poems: John Ashbery, "Just Walking Around"; John Yau, "830 Fireplace Road"; Cid Corman, "It isnt for want"; Lorine Niedeker, "Grandfather advised me" or "Poet's Work."

Monday: Introduction to subjectivity; attuning ears to a world mediated by language; "Walking Around" activity in the schoolyard; freewriting; introduction to concepts of close-reading and denotative/connotative sense. Homework: notate the sounds you hear, phrases, language.

Tuesday: Collaborative close-reading of Ashbery's "Just Walking Around."

Wednesday: Class discussion on cultural aversions to poetry. Collaborative close-reading of Cid Corman's "It isnt for want."

Thursday: "Writing Through" compositions; students "close-read" a painting by Pollack; "830 Fireplace Road." Homework: students pick one sentence from Ashbery, Corman, or Niedeker for the next day's in-class writing assignment.

Friday: "Writing Through" poets. Students are given time to take their sentence, rearrange it, and add to it. Homework: students reflect on this process in their journals, and address how word substitutions and rearrangements affected meaning.

Week Two: *Metapoetry, Form, and Content.* This week, students discover the relation between form and content, seeing them not as separate entities, but as extensions of each other. We continue our study of metapoems to determine how poetic language differs from prose (acknowledging that false binarism), and to consider what assumptions we bring to different genres. When we read a blog or a book, we have corresponding expectations of language. Poetic language typically defies those expectations through a poet's formal and verbal choices.

Students begin this week to take ownership over the close-reading process, breaking out into small groups led by student facilitators. Twice, students will engage in a "jigsaw" collaborative close reading (see descriptions above and below). To practice this exercise, students read the Mother Goose rhyme "Jack and Jill" followed by a whole-class discussion of meaning: what is in the poem and what is left out. In a subtle introduction to a theoretical lense, students compose a "feminist" response to "Jack from Jill." A "jigsaw" reading of Dickinson's "Tell All The Truth" introduces students to collaborative close-reading with more difficult material. The lesson on Robert Creeley's poem "The Sentence" includes additional creative writing opportunities, asking students to think about how "sentences" (and indeed all grammatical units) typically function and what they represent. Students will be asked to compose a sentence that they extend over the course of an entire poem that represents who they are.

- Poems: Mother Goose, "Jack and Jill"; Emily Dickinson, "Tell All The Truth But Tell It Slant"; Robert Creeley, "The Sentence"; John Ashbery, "Just Walking Around."

Monday: Introduce final project and let students research poets that interest them. Tutorial on Poetry Foundation, the Poetry Archive, PennSound, and the Academy of American Poets website.

Tuesday: Nursery rhyme jigsaw reading: "Jack and Jill"; feminist reading of the nursery rhyme. Homework: compose a nursery rhyme from Jill's perspective.

Wednesday: Jigsaw Collaborative Close Reading of "Tell All the Truth." Connect Dickinson's ideas about truth and discovery to Ashbery and Corman's.

Thursday: "Warm Up" activity on love poems and syntax [the instructor projects the following sentences on the smartboard: "We're going to memorize a love poem today"; "Today, we're going to memorize a love poem"; "Today, a love poem we're going to memorize"; "A love poem we're going to memorize today."; "A poem we're going to love today; memorize!"]; slow reading practice through "Whole Body Memorization"; anchor poem: Robert Creeley, "The Sentence."

Friday: Whole-class discussion: Was Creeley's poem a love poem? Activities include any of the following prompts: Write a love poem from Jack to Jill or from Jill to Jack; write from the perspective of the pail of water, write from the perspective of the water pail. Try to write metrically. What do love poems say, and how do they say it? Homework: write one sentence that expresses who you are. Make careful use of lineation to express the meaning of your poem--and yourself.

Week Three: *"The Rhythm is the Rebel": Responding to Our World.* In week three, we think about the "how" of poetic expression by comparing poetry and prose that address the same subject. Though we're again continuing the false poetry/prose binarism, the premise is a means to an end. We continue our discussion of metapoetry with Public Enemy's "Louder Than A Bomb." We then transition to more politically driven poems by Amiri Baraka, Countee Cullen, and (time permitting) Imtiaz Dharker. "Louder Than A Bomb" is a transitional text, both metapoetic and politically-minded. Students consider the differences in the purpose of writing: what sentences do (i.e. how they function) in different genre contexts. We consider urban violence and homicide by reading short excerpts of Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*, which features a scene between a police detective and a witness to the murder of a young black male at the hands of a police officer; here, as in Baraka and Cullen, "incident" carries tension as a pacifying euphemism for the death of a young man. Students compare Baraka's "Incident" to the report and discuss the different treatment of the subject and their effect on the reader. Students are solicited to explain how the form of "Incident" carries its meaning. Then, they are asked to find a local issue that matters to them, bring in a representative article, and compose a poem inspired from it.

- Poems: Amiri Baraka, "Incident"; Countee Cullen, "Incident"; Imtiaz Dharker, "Purdah."
- Supplementary texts: Baraka, "How You Sound???"; Public Enemy, "Louder than a Bomb"; excerpt from *The Hate U Give.*
- Creative writing: "One-sentence" poem; politically/socially-minded poem.

Monday: Students close-read "Louder than a Bomb." The instructor should ask students to prepare for the day's lesson by listening to the song and reading its lyrics the night before.

Tuesday: Whole-class discussion of *The Hate U Give*; additional topics include media representations of the African American community and journalistic reports of homicides; whole-class reading of "How You Sound???" and ensuing discussion.

Wednesday: Collaborative close-reading of Baraka's "Incident." Homework: students should find an article that covers a political or social issue that matters to them.

Thursday: Students write an original poem based on a news article they've brought to class. Students share the article with a partner, jointly find a song on a similar subject, and compare the two with guided questions provided by the instructor.

Friday: Jigsaw reading of Countee Cullen's "Incident."

Week Four: *Conceptual Poetry, Aleatory Poetry, and Digital Technology*. This week, students discover techniques of conceptual and aleatory poetry as a means to broaden their understanding of what a poem can be. They view contemporary art from a variety of museums and galleries worldwide, and integrate the use of digital technology in their own compositions. Student groups collaboratively close-read Instagram poems by any number of contemporary poets who use the platform to publish their work.

- Poems: Erica Baum, from *Card Catalogues* and *Dog Ear*; H.D. "Oread"; Maram al-Masri, "Have you seen him?"; Rupi Kaur, selections from Instagram.
- Creative Writing: students compose original poems to be uploaded on the school's literary magazine Instagram account (outlet_bodine). The instructor invites them to write something succinct and imagistic, and/or a metapoem that addresses an online reader or the habits of online reading.

Monday: Introduction to early-twentieth century imagists poets; close reading of "Oread." Homework: students break down H.D.'s poem by inserting word substitutions and analyzing differences in meaning.

Tuesday: Introduction to poetry on social media; close-reading of a recent Instagram poem by Rupi Kaur.

Wednesday: Exercise: writing from an image. Students journey to schoolyard and take photographs they then attempt to recreate through language. Homework: students read and analyze Maram al-Masri's poem "Have you seen him?"

Thursday: Introduction to aleatory poetry; Reddit activity: students rearrange lines they've recorded from Reddit and turn them into a poem; students share out their work at the conclusion of class. Homework: reflection on today's classwork.

Friday: Independent research with chromebooks to select poems to memorize and include in class anthology. Homework: read selections of Erica Baum's *Card Catalogue* with guided reading instructions provided by the instructor.

Week Five: *Independence.* The final week continues student explorations of conceptual poetry in the school library. Students interact with disused or under-used materials by taking artful photographs of book titles, book pages, card catalogues, nearly anything with text. The images should provoke viewers and raise questions about the resources

available to urban students, and the place of material texts in society today. At home, students should be gearing up for their final exam, a small-group collaborative close-reading of self-selected poems, the recitation of a single poem in class, and the publication of the class poetry anthology. It's a busy but rewarding week.

Monday: Class begins in the library; students engage with materials as instructed by teacher (see lesson plan below). Homework: develop "conceptual" poem.

Tuesday: Free choice: students can polish original work or continue to develop their short explication due at the conclusion of the week.

Wednesday: Collaborative close-reading final exam.

Thursday: Collaborative close-reading final exam.

Friday: Poetry recitation and poetry slam.

Sample Lessons

Week 1, Lesson 1: Introduction to "Slow-Reading"

Objectives: SWBAT reflect on denotations and connotations of specific words IOT approach deeper levels of reading comprehension.

Standards: CC.1.3.9–10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts; CC.1.3.9–10.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools; CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Materials Needed: Copies of John Ashbery's "Just Walking Around"; index cards containing one word from Ashbery's poem "Just Walking Around; scotch tape; colored markers or pencils; student journals.

Step One: Teacher distributes cards that each contain one word from Ashbery's poem. Students record a definition of that word in their own words on the front of the card.

Step Two: Students explore the area of the schoolyard on foot without speaking, meditating on their word and allowing any thoughts to enter and leave the mind. After ten minutes, students are asked to record their experience in their journals for ten minutes. The first word of their entry should be their assigned word, but they can go in any direction after that. The entry should feel like a stream-of-consciousness.

Step Two: *Back in the classroom.* Cards in hand, each student writes five things they associate with their word on the reverse side. The teacher passes out scotch tape. Students then attach their card around the classroom. For the next ten minutes, students approach as many cards as they can to add to the denotations and connotations of each word.

Step Three: Class reflection on their experience. The teacher should draw students' attention to the fact that a) we carry subjective associations with individual words, b) our attention to detail relies on time; thinking deeply about words elongates a chain of associations (or signifiers), and c) our definitions are just as adequate and mobile as anyone's else's.

Homework: The teacher instructs students to walk around a safe public place for twenty minutes and take notes on what they hear: sounds of the city, conversation, television, anything they pick up. This can include the return trip home on foot, by bus, trolley, or subway.

Week 2, Lesson 2: Introduction to Collaborative Close-Reading

Objectives: SWBAT reflect on denotations and connotations of specific words IOT approach deeper levels of reading comprehension.

Standards: CC.1.3.9–10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts; CC.1.3.9–10.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools; CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Materials Needed: Copies of John Ashbery's "Just Walking Around"; YouTube access with *Poetry U.S.A.* episode cued; smartboard/chalkboard; student journals.

The class begins with the following quotations written on the Smartboard: *In the television program U.S.A.: Poetry, John Ashbery comments that his poetry is an "[attempt] to put things back together." In his poems, he "[tries] to make concrete passing states of mind."*

Step One: Play excerpt of *USA: Poetry Kenneth Koch and John Ashbery* (1966).

Step Two: Students share out their journal entries from yesterday's class and discuss their experience walking around the schoolyard.

Step Two: Teacher distributes a copy of Ashbery's poem to each student. A student-friendly definition of the term "close-reading" is projected on smartboard: (e.g. "*close reading is when we carefully consider the meaning of individual words, phrases, and*

sentences within a text, as well as their relationship to each other"). The teacher then has two options: he or she can ask any student to address a word, phrase, line, or sentence of a poem; or s/he can assign students to address the words they reflected on in the previous class. All students should take notes on their classmates' responses in their notebooks. For a model of collaborative close-reading, consult Week 1 of Modpo on Coursera, which is included in the annotated bibliography.

Week 2, Lesson 6: "Telling It Slant"

Objectives: SWBAT close-read a text independently and in small groups IOT take ownership over texts and authors by establishing subjective interpretations of a text.

Standards: CC.1.3.9–10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts; CC.1.3.9–10.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools; CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Materials Needed: Pre-marked copies of Emily Dickinson's "Tell All The Truth"; class notebooks; smartboard/chalkboard.

Step One: Jigsaw Collaborative Close-Reading. Students are arranged in groups of four. Each student receives a copy of Dickinson's poem with two lines circled. Students first read the poem allowed twice; then, each person focuses on their assigned lines to become "experts." Students receive the following prompts projected on the smartboard:

- What are the denotative and connotative meanings of each word? Ignore articles (the, a, an).
- Does capitalization change the meaning of certain words?
- Do the line breaks affect meaning? If so, how?
- Do the dashes carry meaning? If so, how?

Step Two: After students have annotated their lines, they rearrange into "expert groups" and create a collaborative close reading of the poem. Then, they return to their original group and the whole group produces a more conclusive reading.

Variation: The teacher posts chart paper around the room, each containing two lines from the poem. Students then go around the room and record what their groups have discovered. The chart paper should become fuller and fuller as each group successively adds to the chart paper.

Step Three: Whole class discussion to arrive at a more conclusive reading of the poem. Invoke John Ashbery's "Just Walking Around" as a point of comparison. The teacher

should draw students' attention to linear and circular images ("slant"; "success in circuit lies"; "the longest way is the most efficient"; "traveling in a circle"; "swooping open like an orange").

Homework: Formative Assessment/writing Prompt: Compare and contrast John Ashbery and Emily Dickinson's approaches to writing, thinking, learning, and discovery. What metaphors do they use to convey these approaches?

Week 3, Lesson 12: How Does Poetry Say Differently?

Prior Reading: Students will have been assigned a recent article from The Philadelphia Inquirer that reports on a local homicide.

Objective: SWBAT evaluate how an author presents an objective news report and analyze how that information is received by the reader.

Standards: CC.1.2.9–10.C Apply appropriate strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how an author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them; CC.1.2.9–10.D Determine an author's particular point of view and analyze how rhetoric advances the point of view; CC.1.2.9–10.E Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text; CC.1.4: Writing: Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-designed perspective and appropriate content.

Materials Needed: colored pencils, pre-assigned printout of news article, slideshow presentation.

Step One: Warm Up: Teacher projects an image and the following statements on the smartboard to assess student understanding of the difference between subjectivity and objectivity:

- Image: an apple.
- Prompt: *Identify which of the following statements is an objective description of the image you see and which statement is subjective. Explain your reasoning.*
- "The red apple: approximately 4 ounces."
- "The red apple: average in size."

Step Two: The teacher projects the questions below on the smartboard and asks the students review the responsibilities these questions prompt via "turn and talk." The teacher solicits answers from students after discussion in pairs.

- Scanning and Previewing the Text: can I determine what genre I am reading?
- Bias: What expectations do I have of this genre?
- What can I predict the experience of reading this text will be?
- What outcomes can I assume will result from reading this text?

The Teacher and students look over the article and annotate using colored pencils. After articulating the article's main idea and supporting points, students discuss how the author has structured the article. The teacher projects the following post-reading questions on the smartboard:

- What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
- How did the author organize information?
- What details did the author include?
- What information was foregrounded, what information was subordinated that could have received further elaboration?
- Describe your reading experience. What questions did you ask as you read, and how did you feel emotionally at various parts of the article and afterward?

Week 3, Lesson 13: Close-Reading Baraka's "Incident"

Objective: SWBAT articulate how the form of a poem extends its content.

Standards: CC.1.3.9–10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts; CC.1.3.9–10.I Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools; CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression; CC.1.2.9–10.D Determine an author's particular point of view and analyze how rhetoric advances the point of view.

Materials: copies of Amiri Baraka's "Incident"; student handout; smartboard/chalkboard.

Step One: The teacher projects Cleanth Brooks' quotation on the board: "poetry tries to make us see and hear a thing and therefore to have a feeling about it." The teacher says, *let's figure out what methods ("literary devices") poets use to make readers "see" and "hear" their subject.*

Step Two: The teacher passes out copies of Amiri Baraka's poem "Incident" to each student. Before engaging in a collaborative close-reading, s/he elicits the following instructive: *This poet's treatment of a homicide is very different from the news report we*

read yesterday. Let's try to determine what the FORM of the poem is telling us about the experience of engaging in urban violence.

Step Three: Students form jigsaw reading groups of six students preselected by the teacher. Each group has an appointed facilitator who will assign portions of the text to the other five members. The class engages in a close-reading.

Step Four (Formative Assessment/Exit Slip): As a whole class, students first reflect on the process of close-reading by answering the following questions on a piece of paper. These should be typed on the first side:

- Which questions were the most helpful to ask?
- Which answers helped us formulate meaning from the text?
- What do I know about the characters in the poem? What don't I know? What do I want to know?

The class then engages in a discussion of their experience, taking notes on their peers' comments.

During the discussion, students should respond to the following prompt on the reverse side of the handout:

- My classmate _____said that_____. I found this helpful because_____.
- The form of Baraka's poem tells me that_____.

Week 4, Lesson 17: #poetry on Social Media

Objective: SWBAT summarize how poets social media to publish work; SWBAT analyze how Instagram predetermines or influences a poet's choices in form and language; SWBAT hypothesize how Instagram poems invite viewers to engage in a slower, perhaps deeper, forms of online reading.

Standards Met: CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression; CC.1.4.9–10.R Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; CC.1.4.9–10.S Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research, applying grade-level reading standards for literature and literary nonfiction.

Materials: Al-Jazeerah video cued on smartboard; smartphones loaded with Instagram application; reading journals; student handout.

Step One: Teacher distributes handout (see appendix) that contain listening questions pertaining to the short news clip to be shown in class.

Step Two: Students watch video and answer questions on handout. Class discussion follows to check responses.

Step Three: Students start following three listed poets on Instagram (see *Huffington Post* article in annotated bibliography).

Step Four: Students then break out into groups of four or five and select one poem to close-read together. If the teacher feels that students lack focus this way, s/he may prefer to select one poem and poet to follow, and then engage in a collaborative close-reading as a class.

Homework: Find one Instagram poet who speaks to you. Read several poems. Then, copy your favorite poem in your reading journal. Answer the following prompt:

1. If possible, determine whether there is a story being told; summarize that story.
2. Identify as many literary devices employed in the poem.
3. Explain how the author uses these literary devices to convey a thought, mood, feeling, or expression.
4. Describe your emotional and intellectual response to the poem.
5. If present, describe how visuals/illustrations extend, complement, or contradict the meaning of the poem.
6. Explain how Instagram itself may have determined the author's formal choices.

Week 4, Lesson 19: Aleatory Poetry & Reddit

Prior Work: For homework, students have been asked to go onto Reddit over the course of two successive days and transcribe the text of 10 reddit posts on a handout created by the teacher (see appendix). They can access Reddit at anytime of day and write whatever prompts appeal to them.

Objective: SWBAT transcribe "found" or ambient language in order to compose original aleatory poems.

Standards: CC.1.3.9–10.A Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text; CC.1.3.9–10.F Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts; CC.1.3.9–10.J Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and

phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Materials Needed: "Reddit" handout; journals; scissors; paper bags; exit slips.

Warm Up: In their notebooks, students respond to the following prompt on the smartboard:

- *If the internet were to speak, what would it say?*

Step One: The teacher asks students to take out their handout of 20 Reddit posts. Students are asked to select one to read aloud to the class. Once each students reads their post in succession, the teacher asks students to make the following observations with a partner:

- Are there any literary devices present in my post (alliteration, rhyme, consonance, assonance).
- Is the post humorous? If so, why?
- Is the author doing anything creative with the language?
- Can I construct a persona from this post?

Step Two: The teacher passes out scissors and a paper bag to each pair. Students then cut their posts up into twenty strips (each post should remain unaltered) and places them in a bag. Students should randomly draw five slips of paper (thus five posts) out of the bag.

Step Three: Students arrange and rearrange poems on their desk and transcribe the poem into their notebook. The teacher should project the following prompts from the smartboard:

- Pay attention to sound, presentation of images, and strange juxtapositions.
- As you transcribe your poem, consider its presentation. Think about how you want to present the poem on the page. Where will you break lines? What words will you capitalize? Will you arrange the poem into stanzas?

Step Four: Teacher asks students to read their poems to the class. A discussion should follow that connects the results of this process, the poems, to the prompt from the warm up.

Exit Slip: The teacher should distribute pieces of paper with any of the following prompts:

- Through this assignment, I learned the following about myself:

- I used to think the internet was_____, but now I think_____.
- Aleatory poetry is only _____% random because_____.

Week Five, Lesson 23: Conceptual Poetry

Note: Students will have been pre-assigned readings of Erica Baum's "Card Catalogue" and "Dog Ear."

Objective: SWBAT collect and combine library materials IOT create original works of poetry and visual art.

Standards Met: CC.1.4.9-10.U: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically; CC.1.4.9–10.D Organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text; include formatting when useful to aiding comprehension; provide a concluding statement or section; CC.1.4.9–10.F Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling; CC.1.4.9–10.H Write with a sharp, distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.

Materials Needed: Smartphones, library materials (books, card catalogue, periodicals); notebooks.

Step One: Students arrive at the Bodine Library. The instructor asks students to find a book with a title that stands out to them (a weird title; a familiar title; a title in a subject of interest; a title with intriguing graphic design; there is no right or wrong). Students note the date of publication, the book title and subject, and the date of the book's last check-out. In their journals, students write a page-length response to one of the following prompts:

- It is possible that you are the first person to open this book since the date indicated on the "due date" notecard. Imagine your book, anthropomorphized, has the ability to speak. What does it say to you? How does it sound? (Perhaps it's groggy; it has just woken up).
- Who was the last person to check out this book? Create their character. What were they like at Bodine, and where are they now?

Step Two: The instructor tells students that they should take artful photographs of whatever catches their eye. Remind students that their images must incorporate language,

and that the words within their images should present opportunities for viewers to construct original meanings based on presentation and juxtaposition.

Homework: Students choose one of their images, edit and refine it, and post it to the online anthology and student literary magazine Instagram account. Then, they should compose a one-page explanation of their image that relates the purpose of their work and/or the questions they are asking through photography.

Summative Assessments

Independent Collaborative Close-Reading: The first of four summative assessments. To assess students' ability as independent close-readers, the teacher will ask students to form groups to collaboratively close-read a single poem. Each student will prepare a poem to read and discuss with their group. On the day of the assessment, the teacher will randomly select one student to lead the discussion.[1] As students engage in the close-reading, the teacher will observe each group to assess each student's engagement. Students will be given a handout (see appendix) that requires them to record their comments, as well as those of their group members; here, the goal is to keep students accountable and focused, and provide additional feedback for the teacher.

Reading Log: The second of four summative assessments. Throughout the unit, students will keep reading logs that offer a place to reflect on their assigned and independent readings. The logs will often take the shape of informal journal entries that give students the opportunity to record their candid reactions to and questions about the poems we study. To differentiate instruction and nurture strategies that develop skills in productive critique, the teacher should offer students a handout containing question-starters and thinking routines applicable to all poetry (e.g. "Is there a story?"; "I hear the following sounds most frequently…"; "the lineation might be used to…" etc.). The teacher should assess the reading log twice during the unit: in the middle and at the end.

Performance: The third of four summative assessments. In the first week of the unit, students should be given an opportunity to explore the course's online resources (detailed in the annotated bibliography below) in order to explore the work of poets that interest them. It is recommended that teachers spend at least one class period offering a tutorial on how to search for poetry by subject matter and poets by nationality, gender, and time period. Ideally, students will independently survey a wide variety of poems and latch onto a poetic voice that resonates with them. Once students explore the work of this poet in more detail, they will complete two tasks: first, they will select one poem to memorize and recite in front of the class; secondly, they will prepare a short written introduction to

[1] Alternatively, teachers wishing to differentiate their instruction might intentionally select one student to lead the discussion.

the poet, his or her work, and their chosen poem. This information will be compiled in the online anthology that will include the work of published, professional poets and the original poems students write over throughout the unit.

Classroom Anthology: The final of four summative assessments. To celebrate the culmination of the unit, students will submit three pieces that the teacher will compile into a digital anthology using a website builder platform (e.g. WordPress, Weebly, Wix, etc.). These pieces include an original student poem and a poem of another poet with an accompanying short introduction. Ideally, students will be able to consult this anthology in perpetuity, reading the submissions of their peers in other course sections, as it grows annually with each subsequent class.

Resources

Works Cited

Auden, Winston Hugh. Forward. *A Beginning*, by Robert Horan. New Haven: Yale UP, 1948.

Gallagher, Kelly. *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12.* Portland [ME]: Stenhouse Publishers, 2004.

Jago, Carol. "Agents of Imagination: Science Fiction Poems in the Classroom." *Poetry Foundation.* 23 Aug, 2018.

Moore, Marianne. "Poetry." *Complete Poems.* New York: Penguin, 1994.

Vendler, Helen. *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

Annotated Bibliography

Baldwin, Jessica. "Why are more youth in the West turning to poetry? *Al Jazeerah*. March 31, 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/youth-west-turning-poetry-190331143421046.html. Accessed April 18, 2019. This two-and-a-half-minute video grounds the first activity in lesson seventeen. It covers the rise of student interest in creating and publishing poetry through social media, and contains useful interviews with poets Imtiaz Dharker and Ben Okri. Teachers should prepare questions drawn from the video to engage students in active viewing; this will help direct the ensuing activities.

"Bloom's Taxonomy of Measurable Verbs." *Utica College.* www.utica.edu/academic/Assessment/new/Blooms%20Taxonomy%20-%20Best.pdf. Accessed 21 May 2019. An eight-page document detailing the

action verbs teachers can use to guide instruction in each level of Bloom's original 1956 taxonomy. The verbs are intended to help teachers create meaningful learning experiences that will move students throughout the taxonomy from the lowest stage (knowledge) to the highest stage (evaluation) as a way to engage in higher-order thinking and subject mastery. The document contains a pie chart that aligns level with action verbs and relevant potential assessments (for example: evaluation [stage], judge [verb], conclusion or self-reflection [assessment]). It also contains a useful chart of verbs that are *not* measurable and thus make the assessment of true higher-order thinking difficult, if not impossible.

British Council Literature. literature.britishcouncil.org. An easily searchable website of writers listed by age, gender, nationality, and genre. It includes bibliographies, media links, and good critical introductions to each writer included in the website catalogue.

Dickinson, Emily. *Selected Letters.* Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986. Dickinson's letters are a wonderful resource for understanding her poetics and the direction of American poetry and poetics in the twentieth century.

Gonzalez, Jennifer. "The Jigsaw Method." *Cult of Pedagogy.* YouTube. Published April 15, 2015. https://youtu.be/euhtXUgBEts. Accessed 10 May 2019. This instructional video introduces the jigsaw method (and a variation) to educators unfamiliar with this teaching strategy.

Mayer, Bernadette. "Bernadette Mayer's List of 56 Writing Experiments." *Electronic Poetry Center.* http://www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Mayer-Bernadette_Experiments.html. Accessed 2 April, 2019. Mayer's writing experiments are a terrific resource for students. Not only do they open students' minds regarding the scope and possibilities of poetry, they also serve as helpful, structured exercises for students struggling to begin writing original poems.

Modern and Contemporary U.S. Poetry. The University of Pennsylvania. www.coursera.org/learn/modpo. Accessed 19 May 2019. The "Modpo" site contains Al Filreis' entire Modern and Contemporary U.S. Poetry course: seminar discussions, course materials, written assignments, webcast schedules, and discussion forums for course participants. Periodically updated throughout the year, the site includes *The Teacher Resource Center,* a vast archive of resources, including video discussions of thoughtful pedagogues discussing teaching strategies, pedagogical issues, and experiences teaching complex poems to secondary school students and college students. The *TRC* contains sample lesson plans, teaching materials, and links to related content. Modpo contains links to, among others, *Poem Talk,* a valuable resource for thinking about poetry, discovering new poets, and thinking deeply about poetry pedagogy.

PennSound. The Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing at the University of Pennsylvania. www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound. Accessed 18 May 2019. Penn Sound, another invaluable resource from Penn, contains a vast audio collection of poets, authors, teachers, and critics reading and discussing poetry. The website, continually updated, is broken down into an archive of author readings and programs from the Kelly Writers House, anthologies and collections, radio programs (such as Charles Bernstein's *Close Reading*), experimental films, and a "classics" page of poets, authors, actors, and teachers reading canonical poems.

The Poetry Archive. www.poetryarchive.org. Accessed 18 May 2019. An initiative of Andrew Motion during his poet laureateship of the United Kingdom, the Poetry Archive is another vast resource of archival recordings of poets reading their work. What is nice about the website is that it feels like an intimate public reading, as most of the poets speak to the listener by introducing each recorded poem. The site, a great resource for students interested in British and world poets, is a nice complement to Penn Sound. The website contains short essay introductions for each poet included in the archive; teaching resources (including sample lesson plans); books for purchase; links to related media online; curated collections by poets and authors; and hard-to-find recordings not available elsewhere. The Poetry Archive would function well as an online anthology for students; access is somewhat limited, however, as many recordings must be purchased for download.

Poetry Foundation. www.poetryfoundation.org. Accessed 18 May 2019. Since its establishment in 2003, the Poetry Foundation has sought to deliver the best poetry to the widest possible audience. The foundation oversees the publication of *Poetry* magazine, the Poetry Out Loud recitation competition, and the Poetry Foundation website. The foundation's increasing digital presence best carries out its mission through a variety of digital poetry collections and anthologies, essays, interviews, author biographies, collections of world poetry and recordings, and teacher resources. The "Poem Sampler" series, which functions as a curated introduction to both celebrated and obscure poets (i.e. "Marilyn Nelson 101") are great vessels for students to explore the work of particular poets. Like many of the online resources cited here, the Poetry Foundation website serves as an online anthology for this course, and a source from which students will compile their research.

"Poetry U.S.A.: Kenneth Koch and John Ashbery." *YouTube,* uploaded by Cody Carvel, 4 Sept. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X47xNOlG9g&t=1725s. Accessed 10 May 2019. This television program, first broadcasted in 1966, forms the basis of activity one, lesson two. Educators have a degree of flexibility where they choose to start and stop playing the program. The segment on Koch should be disregarded, as the lesson focuses on John Ashbery. Ideally, the educator will capture portions where Ashbery discusses his own poetics. As with most videos

incorporated in lessons, the teacher should provide students with targeted questions to engage them in active viewing.

Poets.org. The Academy of American Poets. www.poets.org. Accessed 18 May 2019. The website of the Academy of American Poets serves as one of the digital anthologies for the course. It contains a substantial collection of poetry and essays written by poets from all over the world. The website also contains a library of audio recordings and a wide selection of educator resources, including ready-made lesson plans.

Pinsky, Robert. *The Sounds of Poetry.* New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 1999. Former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky's anthology examines poetry as a performative, "bodily" art and invokes the work of 50 different poets to discuss syntax and line, rhyme, meter, accent and duration, blank and free verse. It's a useful guide for educators interested in attuning themselves to the sounds of poetry as means of eventually conveying the information to students.

-----. *Singing School: Learning to Write (and Read) Poetry by Studying with the Masters.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. The publisher's description states that this anthology "respects poetry's mysteries in two senses of the word: techniques of craft and strokes of the inexplicable." Pinsky's annotated, short book contains a selection of 80 poems from various nations and time periods. Each contain an introduction that aims to encourages readers to make meaning without the aid of additional resources, such as dictionaries, thesauruses, or literary criticism. Pinsky also includes short exercises inspired by the selected poems under discussion.

Wees, David. "56 Examples of Formative Assessment." *Edutopia.* December 10, 2012. Accessed 2 April 2019. https://www.edutopia.org/groups/assessment/250941. This slideshow offers educators a wide variety of useful formative assessments to effectively gauge student understanding at various points during a lesson. Several are peppered throughout this unit plan; teachers should feel open to substitute these assessments for others better suited to their individual classes.

Student Reading List

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Appendix

Alignment with Pennsylvania Common Core Standards

CC.1.2.9-10.A: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. Students master the skill of determining and analyzing the development of a central idea through collaborative close-reading. The instructor helps students determine the central idea by modeling and facilitating the close-reading process, then gradually relinquishes responsibilities from him or herself to place greater interpretive responsibility of the student.

Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.C: Apply appropriate strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate how an author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. To help students independently explicate texts, the teacher will guide students through various thinking routines by asking recurring questions. “Is there a story in this poem?” is one example of a question designed to help students determine (or hypothesize) events and ideas to make meaning from a poem.

Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.D: Determine an author’s particular point of view and analyze how rhetoric advances the point of view. As with the previous standard, determining a poetic speaker’s perspective--what information he or she includes, how she or he focuses her vision--will be a recurring question designed to help students analyze the poetry under study.

Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.E: Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text. Students will read slowly and carefully to examine the way poets order and develop ideas into sentences and stanzas. Students will be required not to read or quote a line (which so often is only part of a clause or sentence) but to derive meaning at the sentence level; and then determine how the lineation expresses poetic meaning.

Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts. Collaborative and independent close-reading skills will be developed in each lesson. Students will sometimes be asked to rearrange or substitute words in a line of verse to determine how new words (or an absence of words) affect textual meaning.

Standard - CC.1.2.9-10.K: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies and tools. In the early weeks of the unit, the instructor will spend considerable time to elucidating the difference between denotation and connotation; this makes it possible for students to welcome and invoke the chain of

signifying associations carried by the words they encounter within a poem. The instructor may choose to directly define words, or she may ask students to determine meaning based on context.

CC.1.4: Writing: Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-designed perspective and appropriate content. Each student is required to complete at least one of the following writing assignments: a creative piece, a written reflection, a short written explication of one or more texts, and a short biography of a poet. Each of these assignments, which vary in their degrees of formality, is one of three modes students are required to develop in their secondary education: explanatory, persuasive, and creative. The students' audience will include not only peers and teachers within their school community, but also a wider reading public online through the culminating anthology.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.E: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition; use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic; establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms of the discipline in which they are writing. Students writing their short introductions to poets and their work will be required to use relevant terminology, write relatively impartially, and demonstrate their analytical skills by presenting a short explication of a particular poem.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.F: Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Students will be required to submit work that adheres to the conventions of standard English grammar, style, and punctuation.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.M: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events. This standard will be met through oral as well as written discourse, as students seek to extract meaning from poems by hypothesizing relevant narratives.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.N: Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple points of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters. Students will master this objective by writing their original creative work, which will prompt them to take on a specific (or multiple) point(s) of view.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.O: Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, description, reflection, multiple plot lines, and pacing, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters; use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, settings, and/or characters.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.T: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. Students will be given multiple opportunities to revise their creative work. The instructor will give oral and written feedback to individual students, and students will be required to critique the work of their peers in class.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.U: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically. Students will write original poems intended for publication on Instagram. At the end of the course, students will combine additional written work into an online anthology at the conclusion of the course.

Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.V: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. Students will complete an ongoing project to discover one poet, compose a short biographical introduction, and write a critical explication of one poem.

CC.1.5: Speaking and Listening: Students present appropriately in formal speaking situations, listen critically, and respond intelligently as individuals or in group discussions. Close-reading groups consisting of at least four students will develop textual explications in class. Structured worksheets may be provided to help students develop skills in listening and speaking. At the end of the unit, students will be required to present a short introduction to a poet of their choice and recite one poem that is fully memorized.

Materials for Classroom Use

English 1: Mr. McClung

Name, date, class period:

Creating Aleatory Poems with Reddit

*In order to compose an aleatory poem of language culled from the internet, you must complete this handout. Over the next two days, go onto reddit anytime you wish and write down the words of posts that appeal to you--or, if you like, choose posts completely at random. You must record **ten** posts before our class period on the following date: _____. Include the author of the post in parenthesis, as shown:*

Example: *If you could take a bath in anything you wanted, what would it be? (posted by un/anadventurous guy).*

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

6._____

7._____

8._____

9._____

10._____

Your name, date, class period:

Student author: Title of composition:

I detect the following literary devices: *circle the appropriate device and transcribe it during subsequent hearings*

Metaphor	Simile	Personification	Tone
Rhyme	Alliteration	Imagery	Anaphora (repetition)

I liked:

I would suggest:

These prompts are adapted from the Imagist manifesto.

Are you using the best words possible? Explain why one word seems to be the exact word. Find a lesser word, think of a better one, and explain your reasoning:
Are you presenting a clear image? If so, explain how it's produced. If not, explain how the author could get there:
Is the poem "concentrated?" What words can be omitted? Cut at least THREE words and examine the difference. Write the words below and explain why you cut them:

Name, class period, date:

Poet: Poem Title:

Copy out your poem here:

Answer the questions below:

1. Is there a story being told? If so, summarize it:

2. What kind of a persona has your poet created?

3. What literary devices are used?

4. To what effect are these literary devices used?

5. How does the lineation impact meaning?

6. What did you feel and/or think as you read this poem?