

Reading Toolkit: Grade 6 Objective 3.A.4.d

Standard 3.0 Comprehension of Literary Text

Topic A. Comprehension of Literary Text

Indicator 4. Analyze elements of poetry to facilitate understanding and interpretation

Objective d. Identify and explain other poetic elements, such as setting, mood, tone, etc. that contribute to meaning

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Lesson Seeds

Reading Grade 6 Objective 3.A.4.d

Activities

Prior to this activity the teacher should select a series of poems that have distinct settings and then find a picture of a setting that matches or nearly matches the setting of the poem. To begin, the teacher will read aloud one of the selected poems and then show students the picture that matches the setting. With teacher guidance students should select words, phrases, or lines of the poem that are reflected in the picture. Next the teacher should display the remaining pictures, perhaps including some pictures that do not match any setting in the poems. Students should read the next poem and then select the matching picture again finding words, phrases, or lines of poetry that are reflected in the picture.

Each student will need a disposable copy of an age appropriate poem where a distinctive setting and mood are present and two different colored highlighters. Teacher and students should read the selected poem aloud and discuss the general meaning of the poem. Next, with teacher guidance, students should highlight details in the poem that address the setting. Then using a different colored highlighter students should highlight details in the poem that reflect the mood. Finally, teacher and students should discuss the elements of setting and mood in the poem, whether or not they match, and how their match or mismatch affects a reader's understanding of the poem.

To introduce students to mood in poetry, the teacher should play a variety of musical selections and have students respond to them by telling how the music made them feel. Next the teacher should read aloud a poem that has been selected for its distinctive mood and then play a musical selection that reflects the mood of the poem. With the assistance of the music, students should be able to identify the mood of the poem and select from it words, phrases, or lines of poetry that reflect the mood. Finally, teacher and students should read an additional poem, again selected for a distinctive mood. This time the teacher will play three musical selections and have students determine which selection best reflects the mood of the poem. Students should be able to isolate words, phrases, and lines of poetry that reflect the mood of the poem and match the mood of the music.

The teacher will give students copies of a narrative poem that has a dominant mood. Working in small groups, students will read the poem and identify its mood. For younger or struggling students, the teacher can provide a list of words that would describe a mood from which they can make a selection. Once students have identified the mood, they will need to find text support for their selection and explain why that mood is appropriate to that poem. These details can be recorded on a chart like the one below. After the chart is complete, students and teacher should discuss their findings.

| Title of Poem | Identified Mood |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Text Support | Explanation of Text |
| | |

After multiple readings of a narrative poem, the teacher will give students a chart where the first column, which is lines from the poem, is already complete. Then students will analyze each given line to determine whether the line reflects elements of setting, mood, tone, or a combination of elements. Students may work on this individually, with a partner,

or in a small group. When the chart has been completed, teacher and students should discuss the details.

| Lines from Poem | This line reflects setting because | This line reflects mood because | This line reflects tone because | This line is a combination of elements because |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

The teacher and students should read the Langston Hughes's poem "Mother to Son" and discuss how Hughes felt about perseverance and hard work. Students will return to the poem and find words and phrases that support Hughes's feelings. The teacher will explain that those words reflect the poet's tone or attitude toward perseverance and hard work. Next, the teacher will place students in small groups and give them an additional poem where the tone is distinctive. Some suggestions are Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and John McL's "There's This That I Like About Hockey, My Lad." Students will follow the same procedure by isolating words and phrases that reflect the author's tone toward his subject. Class discussion will determine the accuracy of student responses. An extension of this activity is to have students complete an "I am..." poem that will help them define the author's tone. Any combination of the lines below will assist students in defining tone.

I am (name of character in the poem)

I am (two qualities of the character)

I wonder (something the character is curious about)

I hear (an imaginary or actual sound the character hears or would have heard)

I see (an imaginary or actual sight the character sees or would have seen)

I want (a desire of the character)

I am (name of the character)

I pretend (something the character would want)

I feel (actual emotions or physical feelings)

I touch (a tangible or metaphorical object)

I worry (a concern the character has)

I cry (about something, for something, someone)

I am (name of the character)

I understand (something the character comprehends)

I say (something the character has said)

I dream (something the character wants to happen)

I try (something the character attempts to do)

I hope (a wish or belief the character has)

I am (name of the character)

Clarification

Reading Grade 6 Indicator 3.A.4

To show proficiency of the skills stated in this indicator, a reader will demonstrate an understanding of the elements of poetry which are the components through which poetry is structured and composed. Identification of each component and its relationship to all other components in a poem assist a reader in comprehension of the entire text of the poem. When a poem requires more complex thought processes, a reader advances from identification of poetry elements to the explanation, analysis, and evaluation of those elements. Thinking about all the elements of a poem and determining how they fit together allow a reader to understand a poem in all of its complexity.

In order to identify poetry as a literary form and be able to distinguish a particular poem from other types of poetry, a reader must identify and use a poem's structural features. Poems can tell stories, describe the positive and negative elements of a character, place, or thing, argue a position, express emotions, or create an image. Knowing the structure of a poem helps a reader determine a purpose for the poem and comprehend it in literal and abstract ways.

Structural Features

A line or verse is a single line of poetry.

A stanza is two or more lines of poetry.

A refrain is a series of words or a line of poetry that is regularly repeated within the poem.

A rhyme is a repetition of sounds at the end of words.

A rhyme scheme is an arrangement of end rhymes in a poem. A pattern is organized by assigning a letter of the alphabet to each line. The first line of a poem is assigned the letter A. Each following line of poetry that rhymes with the first line is also assigned the letter A.

Types of Poems

A ballad tells a story and is meant to be sung or recited aloud.

A cinquain is based on syllable or word count. A traditional cinquain moves by line from two syllables to four syllables to six syllables to eight syllables and concludes with two syllables. The more current form of cinquain moves by line from one word to two words to three words to four words and concludes with a single word.

A diamante moves from a subject in the first line of the poem to a completely different subject in the last line of the poem. The structure of a diamante by line goes from one noun, the subject, two adjectives, three participles, four nouns, three participles, two adjectives, and concludes with one noun which is different from the noun in the first line.

An elegy is a sad poem which shows grief for the dead.

A haiku is a form of Japanese poetry which has three lines focused on a single element.

A lyric poem can appear in a variety of forms and shows the thoughts and feelings of one speaker.

A narrative poem tells a story in verse.

A shape poem has the form of its subject. For example a poem about a tree is shaped like a tree.

To understand a poem fully with all of its complexities a reader should focus on the meaning/s of each word within that poem that will lead to an understanding of individual lines and continue to understanding of an entire stanza. Poets choose their words with purpose and care. Reviewing the multiple meanings of words and attending to how a word is used contextually helps a reader discern shades of meaning within an individual word. Knowing the denotation of a word is an important first step, but knowing connotations of a word is critical to a reader of poetry. A reader should also be aware of the symbolic value of words in poetry. Knowing that an object or person symbolizes a quality or idea is essential to comprehension.

A critical reader understands that the speaker of the poem is not always the poet. The speaker is the creation of the poet and voices the words of the poem. The speaker has a personality and attitude that is discernable to a reader. Being attentive to the qualities and attitude of the speaker and connecting them to the words of the poem assists a reader with comprehension.

The organization of the words in a poem is another clue for a reader. The actual placement of a word within a line of poetry can be pivotal to understanding. The length of a poem's lines can focus a reader on the importance of certain words within a poem. The division between stanzas of a poem can signal the conclusion of one idea to move to another or the strengthening of an initial idea that continues to evolve throughout the poem. Because the words of a poem are more compact than prose, the placement, denotation, connotation, symbolism, and speaker of the words all become vital elements to creating meaning for a reader.

Because poetry is meant to be read or spoken aloud, the sound of the words is a critical piece of understanding. Listening to the rhyming of words, the organization of the rhyming words, the repetition of sounds, the imitation of natural sounds, and the relationship among these sound devices and how they contribute to the meaning of a poem are all elements a critical reader must explore. Discovering the bond between the sound and sense of a poem assists a reader with comprehension.

A rhyme is a repetition of sounds at the end of words.

A rhyme scheme is an arrangement of end rhymes in a poem. A pattern is organized by assigning a letter of the alphabet to each line. The first line of a poem is assigned the letter A. Each following line of poetry that rhymes with the first line is also assigned the letter A.

A poem's rhythm is created by the organization of sound from the placement of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry. The difference between stressed and unstressed syllable concerns the degree of emphasis when words are spoken.

Alliteration is a repetition of beginning consonant sounds in words.

Assonance is a repetition of vowel sounds in words.

Consonance is the pleasing arrangement of sounds in words.

Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound like the natural noises they name.

A poet may use a sound device to emphasize a particular idea, create a melodious sound to foster a pleasant mood, or put together a series of harsh sounds to establish an angry tone. When a critical reader can determine a purpose for the poet's use of sound devices, a reader has constructed meaning from a poem.

In a narrative poem or ballad, the setting of that poem is integral to a reader's understanding. The setting addresses the time and place of the poem's action and plays a role in establishing the mood of a poem. The mood is the feeling of a poem. Mood is created by the poet's choice of words, sensory detail, and rhythm. The attitude of the poet or speaker toward his/her subject is the tone of the poem. Again, the poet's choice of words, sensory detail and rhythm help a reader determine the attitude toward the subject. For more detailed information about setting and mood, consult the Literary Clarification for Indicator Three, and for more detailed information about tone, consult the Literary Clarification for Indicator Seven.

Sample Item #1 Brief Constructed Response (BCR) Item with Annotated Student Responses

Question

Read the poem 'At The Library' and answer the following question.

Explain how the speaker in "At the Library" feels about reading. In your response, use details and examples from the poem that support your explanation. Write your answer on your answer document.

Annotated Student Responses

I think the speaker feels like she is in the
book and really likes to read because it makes her
feel like shes in a whole other world. I think this
because she says "...I smile because I see
me in her eyes..." This shows that she
relates to the character. Also, it says "...I find a
paradise where birds can talk..." this shows
that she imagines herself in the book and
not just reading it. After reading this I wonder
if she ever sees herself in boy characters.

Annotation: The reader answers the question "really likes to read because it makes her feel like shes in a whole other world." This is supported with text "...I smile because I see me in her eyes..." which "shows that she relates to the character." The reader offers further text support "I find a paradise where birds can talk..." that "shows that she imagines herself in the book..." To improve this response, the reader should establish firmer links among being in another world, relating to the character, and being in a paradise. Then the reader should expand upon the relationship between the quotes from the text and the reader's judgment about them telling how "I see me in her eyes" indicates relating to a character and how "a paradise where birds can talk" shows the speaker imagines herself in the book.

I think the speaker feels that
 reading is a world where anything can happen.
 Also I think the speaker sees herself in these
 books because books reflect and define
 her. I feel after reading this poem
 I could say that the speaker loves
 to read and a library is like a
 home for her.

Annotation: The reader answers the question "reading is a world where anything can happen" and expands upon the idea by stating "the speaker sees herself in these books because books reflect and define her" and concludes that "the speaker loves to read and a library is like a home for her." The ideas that "books reflect and define" the speaker and that "a library is like a home for her" are reasonable conclusions that can be expanded. To further improve this response the reader needs to supply text support for his/her conclusions.

I think that speaker feels excited
 to read. In the text it says that
 she can find a paradise. Usually
 if you don't like something
 you wouldn't keep coming
 back and describing as a
 paradise. I think that this author
 loves to explore books. So im
 wondering what she will do
 to inspire others to read.

Annotation: The reader answers the question "speaker feels excited to read" and then offers minimal text support that "she can find a paradise" through her reading. Then the reader draws the valid conclusion that "usually if you don't like something you wouldn't keep coming back and describing as a paradise." The reader concludes "that this author loves to explore books" and speculates about what the author might do to get others to read." To improve this response, the reader should elaborate upon the relationship between finding a paradise and the excitement of reading and offer additional text support for that idea. In addition the reader should define the difference between the speaker of the poem and the author/poet.

I think the speaker feels enthusiastic about the poem. For example, the text states "I find paradise" it also states "where children fly." And I think that is very enthusiastic and the author is very creative. So now I think the author is very creative about her stories.

Annotation: The reader answers the question "the speaker feels enthusiastic about the poem" and offers minimal and ineffective text support "I find paradise" and "where children fly." The reader continues, "the author is very creative" and "creative about her stories." To improve this response, the reader needs to establish the difference between the speaker of the poem and the author/poet. The feeling of enthusiasm by the speaker of the poem should be supported by text and a conclusion drawn about the enthusiasm and its relationship to the selected text.

In this poem the speaker is feeling like she's in the book. The speaker seems very tranquil while she's writing the poem. I say this because it seems as though she's forgotten the world around her while she writes this poem. It says 'I flip the pages of a book and slip inside'. Sounds to me like the author is writing a fantasy book about herself.

Annotation: The reader answers "the speaker is feeling like she's in the book" and "seems very tranquil while she's writing the poem" confusing the speaker of the poem and the author/poet. Then the reader concludes that the poet has "forgotten the world around her while she writes this poem" and it seems "like the author is writing a fantasy book about herself." To improve this response, the reader should establish the difference between the speaker of the poem and the poet and then provide text support for the idea that "the speaker is feeling like she's in the book." Then the reader should draw a conclusion about how text support shows that the speaker is "in the book."

Handouts

At the Library

By Nikki Grimes

I flip the pages of a book and slip inside,
where crystal seas await and pirates hide.
I find a paradise where birds can talk,
where children fly and trees prefer to walk.
Sometimes I end up on a city street.
I recognize the brownskin girl I meet.
She's skinny, but she's strong, and brave, and wise.
I smile because I see me in her eyes.

Rubric - Brief Constructed Response (BCR)

Score 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the complexities of the text.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Effectively uses text-relevant¹ information to clarify or extend understanding

Score 2

The response demonstrates a general understanding of the text.

- Partially addresses the demands of the question
- Uses text-relevant¹ information to show understanding

Score 1

The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the text.

- Minimally addresses the demands of the question
- Uses minimal information to show some understanding of the text in relation to the question

Score 0

The response is completely incorrect, irrelevant to the question, or missing.²

Notes:

¹ Text-relevant: This information may or may not be an exact copy (quote) of the text but is clearly related to the text and often shows an analysis and/or interpretation of important ideas. Students may incorporate information to show connections to relevant prior experience as appropriate.

² An exact copy (quote) or paraphrase of the question that provides no new relevant information will receive a score of "0".

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