

Units 1 – 4: Poetry of the Modern Time Period

Units 1-4 will focus on poetry of the Modern Time Period through the poets. Students will learn how to analyze a poem through the study of the author, literary devices, and their own imagination. Students will also learn how to recognize an author's work through their style of writing. Each unit will focus on a different poet's life and works: John Keats, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.

At the end of Unit 4, students will be asked to use the skills taught in the previous units to write a poetry explication essay.

Unit 1 - Author Spotlight: John Keats

John Keats was born in London in 1795. He lost both of his parents at a young age, but was provided for by two merchants who made sure Keats was given the opportunity to learn a trade. He was trained to be an apothecary, but never opened a business. He instead devoted his short life to the pursuit of poetry. He was a respected poet among his contemporaries, but a family history of failing health caught up to him early. He fell ill with tuberculosis and passed away when he was only 25 years old. His poetry is his legacy and his pieces some of the most moving of his time period.

- For more information about John Keats, please visit:
<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/john-keats>

Unit 1 – Assignments

- Read Unit 1 – Assignment Background.
- Read “Ode to a Nightingale” by John Keats, found at www.ArtiosHCS.com.

Activity While Reading: As you read the poem, write down in your Reading Journal any words that are unfamiliar to you, and write down their definitions.

- In your Reading Journal:
 1. Write what you think the poem is about. How does the author's biography influence his work?
 2. Write down which literary devices the author used in his poetry. Give examples from the poem.

3. Write an author profile on John Keats. (Instructions on author profiles can be found at www.ArtiosHCS.com.)
- Choose a theme that is discussed in the poem and create a visual display that reflects the theme you've chosen. It can be an original photograph, a painting, an original poem or song, etc. Creativity is encouraged for this project.

Unit 1 – Assignment Background

“Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.” – T.S. Eliot

An Introduction to Poetry – Part 1:

Poetry is unique among literary forms in that it brings out the musicality of language. Poets use words to bring out emotions in the reader. As a painter chooses his colors, so a poet carefully selects his words. Poems are used in literature to express a feeling, a worldview, or an idea. Poetry combines freedom of imagination with the structure of form. Rhythm holds the poem together - sturdy walls bringing order to the chaos - while imagery runs through the poem, hanging curtains and adding color.

This combination of structure and imagination can be seen clearly in modern poetry. There are two main types of modern poetry: Open form and fixed form. Open form poetry allows authors to structure rhythm and rhyme however they like. There is no limit to the number of stanzas, no specific rhythm, and no set rhyme scheme. The author has complete control as to how the poem should be organized. Fixed poetry refers to the “types” of poems already in existence. For example, William Shakespeare invented a specific type of poem – a Shakespearean sonnet. A “sonnet” is a specific type of poem. Sonnets have fourteen lines, a specific rhyme scheme, and a particular rhythm that hopeful sonnet writers must try to follow. A sonnet is a fixed type of poetry. Neither form is better than the other, they are simply different.

Along with rhythm and rhyme, poets also use many other established literary devices in order to construct their work.

The following is an excerpt from an article published by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.:

The Sounds of Words

Words or portions of words can be clustered or juxtaposed to achieve specific kinds of effects when we hear them. The sounds that result can strike us as clever and pleasing, even soothing. Others we dislike and strive to avoid. These various deliberate arrangements of words have been identified.

Alliteration: Repeated consonant sounds at the beginning of words placed near each other, usually on the same or adjacent lines. A somewhat looser definition is that it is the use of the same consonant in any part of adjacent words.

Example: fast and furious

Example: Peter and Andrew patted the pony at Ascot.

In the second example, both *P* and *T* are reckoned as alliteration. It is noted that this is a very obvious device and needs to be handled with great restraint, except in specialty forms such as limerick, cinquain, and humorous verse.

Assonance: Repeated vowel sounds in words placed near each other, usually on the same or adjacent lines. These should be in sounds that are accented, or stressed, rather than in vowel sounds that are unaccented.

Example: He's a bruisin' loser.

In the second example above, the short *A* sound in *Andrew*, *patted*, and *Ascot* would be assonant.

Consonance: Repeated consonant sounds at the ending of words placed near each other, usually on the same or adjacent lines. These should be in sounds that are accented, or stressed, rather than in vowel sounds that are unaccented. This produces a pleasing kind of near-rhyme.

Examples: boats into the past : cool soul

Cacophony: A discordant series of harsh, unpleasant sounds helps to convey disorder. This is often furthered by the combined effect of the meaning and the difficulty of pronunciation.

Example: My stick fingers click with a snicker
And, chuckling, they knuckle the keys;
Light-footed, my steel feelers flicker
And pluck from these keys melodies.
—“Player Piano,” John Updike

Euphony: A series of musically pleasant sounds, conveying a sense of harmony and beauty to the language.

Example: Than Oars divide the Ocean,
Too silver for a seam—
Or Butterflies, off Banks of Noon
Leap, plashless as they swim.
—“A Bird Came Down the Walk,” Emily Dickenson (last stanza)

Onomatopoeia: Words that sound like their meanings. In *Hear the steady tick of the old hall clock*, the word *tick* sounds like the action of the clock. If assonance or alliteration can be onomatopoeic, as the sound ‘*ck*’ is repeated in *tick* and *clock*, so much the better. Sounds should suit the tone – heavy sounds for weightiness, light for the delicate. *Tick* is a light word, but transpose the light *T* to its heavier counterpart, *D*; and transpose the light *CK* to its heavier counterpart *G*, and *tick* becomes the much more solid and down-to-earth *dig*.

Example: boom, buzz, crackle, gurgle, hiss, pop, sizzle, snap, swoosh, whir, zip

Repetition: The purposeful re-use of words and phrases for an effect. Sometimes, especially with longer phrases that contain a different key word each time, this is called *parallelism*. It has been a central part of poetry in many cultures. Many of the Psalms use this device as one of their unifying elements.

Example: I was glad; so very, very glad. :

Example: Half a league, half a league, Half a league onward...

Example: Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them,
Volley'd and thunder'd...

Example: For without cause they hid their net for me;
Without cause they dug a pit for my life. (Psalm 35:7 ESV)

Unit 2 – Author Spotlight: Edgar Allen Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809. His mother died when he was two years old, resulting in his being adopted by Mr. John Allan. Allan and Poe had a rough relationship, with Mr. Allan wanting Poe's life to head in one direction, while Poe wanted to go in another. Poe eventually reconciled with Allan, but their relationship remained strained. Poe did not come to fame quickly. In fact, he was a struggling writer for many years. As a writer, Poe was enthralled with the study of the macabre, the darker side of life. Many of his poems and short stories are studied today as an example of Gothic (dark) writing in the early nineteenth century. Even though Poe struggled in his lifetime, he is one of the most studied authors in American literature today.

- For more information on Edgar Allan Poe, please visit:
<https://www.poemuseum.org/pdfs/Poes-timeline.pdf>

Unit 2 – Assignments

- Read Unit 2 – Assignment Background.
- Read “*The Bells*” by Edgar Allan Poe: found at www.ArtiosHCS.com.

Activity While Reading: As you read the poem, write down in your Reading Journal any words that are unfamiliar to you, and write down their definitions.

- In your Reading Journal:
 1. Write down what you think the poem is about.
 2. Write down which literary devices the author used in his poetry. Give examples from the poem.
 3. Write an original poem, of at least eight lines, in the style of Edgar Allan Poe.
 4. Write an author profile on Edgar Allen Poe. (Instructions on author profiles can be found on the [Artios Home Companion](#) website in the **Resources** section.)

Unit 2 – Assignment Background

An Introduction to Poetry – Part 2:

The following is an excerpt from an article published by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

A poet uses words more consciously than any other writer. Although poetry often deals with deep human emotions or philosophical thought, people generally don't respond very strongly to abstract words, even the words describing such emotions and thoughts. The poet, then, must embed within his work those words which *do* carry strong visual and sensory impact, words which are fresh and spontaneous but vividly descriptive. He must carefully pick and choose words that are just right. It is better to *show* the reader than to merely *tell* him.

Imagery: The use of vivid language to generate ideas and/or evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but of sensation and emotion as well. While most commonly used in reference to figurative language, imagery can apply to any component of a poem that form sensory experience and emotional response, and also applies to the concrete things so brought to mind.

Poetry works its magic by the way it uses words to evoke “images” that carry depths of meaning. The poet's carefully described impressions of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch can be transferred to the thoughtful reader through imaginative use and combinations of diction. In addition to its more tangible initial impact, effective imagery has the potential to tap the inner wisdom of the reader to arouse meditative and inspirational responses.

Related images are often clustered or scattered throughout a work, thus serving to create a particular *mood* or *tone*. Images of disease, corruption, and death, for example, are recurrent patterns shaping our perceptions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Examples:

- **Sight:** Smoke mysteriously puffed out from the clown's ears.
- **Sound:** Tom placed his ear tightly against the wall; he could hear a faint but distinct *thump thump thump*.
- **Touch:** The burlap wall covering scraped against the little boy's cheek.
- **Taste:** A salty tear ran onto her lips.
- **Smell:** Cinnamon! That's what wafted into his nostrils.

Synesthesia: An attempt to fuse different senses by describing one kind of sense impression in words normally used to describe another.

Example: The sound of her voice was sweet.

Examples: a loud aroma, a velvety smile

Tone, Mood: The means by which a poet reveals attitudes and feelings, in the style of language or expression of thought used to develop the subject. Certain tones include not only irony and satire, but may be loving, condescending, bitter, pitying, fanciful, solemn, and a host of other emotions and attitudes. Tone can also refer to the overall mood of the poem itself, in the sense of a pervading atmosphere intended to influence the readers' emotional response and foster expectations of the conclusion.

Another use of tone is in reference to pitch or to the demeanor of a speaker as interpreted through inflections of the voice; in poetry, this is conveyed through the use of connotation, diction, figures of speech, rhythm and other elements of poetic construction.

Unit 3 – Author Spotlight: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in 1807 in America. He was born into privilege, with his father being a lawyer and politician in Boston. Longfellow received top marks in college, and after graduation toured Europe which greatly influenced his work. Upon returning to America, he continued to write and teach for the remainder of his life. He was married twice, but lost both wives to illness and was the primary caregiver of his children. The latter part of his life was spent in translating Dante’s “Divine Comedy” into English. He is considered by some to be the best American poet of his time.

- For more information on Longfellow, please visit:
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow>
http://www.hwlongfellow.org/life_overview.shtml

Unit 3 – Assignments

- Read Unit 3 – Assignment Background.
- Read “*The Children’s Hour*” by Longfellow, found on www.ArtiosHCS.com in **Formats, Models, and Literature Resources**.
- Read the information on poetry explications found on the **Artios Home Companion** website.
- In your Reading Journal:
 1. Write down what you think the poem is about and write a paraphrase of the poem.
 2. Tell what rhyme scheme the poem has, how many stanzas it contains, and what the overall tone of the poem is.
 3. List the literary devices which the author used in his poetry. Give examples from the poem.
- Write an author profile on Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Instructions on author profiles can be found on the **Artios Home Companion** website.

Unit 3 – Assignment Background

An Introduction to Poetry – Part 3:

The following is an excerpt from an article published by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

Most words convey several meanings or shades of meaning at the same time. It is the poet's job to find words which, when used in relation to other words in the poem, will carry the precise intention of thought. Often, some of the more significant words may carry several layers or "depths" of meaning at once. The ways in which the meanings of words are used can be identified.

Allegory: A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning. Sometimes it can be a single word or phrase, such as the name of a character or place. Often, it is a symbolic narrative that has not only a literal meaning, but a larger one understood only after reading the entire story or poem.

Allusion: A brief reference to some person, historical event, work of art, or Biblical or mythological situation or character.

Ambiguity: A word or phrase that can mean more than one thing, even in its context. Poets often search out such words to add richness to their work. Often, one meaning seems quite readily apparent, but other, deeper and darker meanings, await those who contemplate the poem.

Example: Robert Frost's "The Subverted Flower"

Analogy: A comparison, usually something unfamiliar with something familiar.

Example: The plumbing took a maze of turns where even water got lost.

Apostrophe: Speaking directly to a real or imagined listener or inanimate object; addressing that person or thing by name.

Example: O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done...

Cliché: Any figure of speech that was once clever and original but through overuse has become outdated. If you've heard more than two or three other people say it more than two or three times, chances are the phrase is too timeworn to be useful in your writing.

Example: busy as a bee

Connotation: The emotional, psychological or social overtones of a word; its implications and associations apart from its literal meaning. Often, this is what distinguishes the *precisely correct* word from one that is merely acceptable.

Contrast: Closely arranged things with strikingly different characteristics.

Example: He was dark, sinister, and cruel; she was radiant, pleasant, and kind.

Denotation: The dictionary definition of a word; its literal meaning apart from any associations or connotations. Students must exercise caution when beginning to use a thesaurus, since often the words that are clustered together may share a *denotative meaning*, but not a *connotative* one, and the substitution of a word can sometimes destroy the mood, and even the meaning, of a poem.

Euphemism: An understatement, used to lessen the effect of a statement; substituting something innocuous for something that might be offensive or hurtful.

Example: She is at rest. (meaning, she's dead)

Hyperbole: An outrageous exaggeration used for effect.

Example: He weighs a ton.

Irony: A contradictory statement or situation to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true.

Example: Wow, thanks for the expensive gift...let's see: did it come with a Fun Meal or the Burger King equivalent?

Metaphor: A direct comparison between two unlike things, stating that one *is* the other or *does the action* of the other.

Example: He's a zero.

Example: Her fingers danced across the keyboard.

Metonymy: A figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing is referred to by something closely associated with it.

Example: The White House stated today that...

Example: The Crown reported today that...

Oxymoron: A combination of two words that appear to contradict each other.

Examples: a pointless point of view; bittersweet

Paradox: A statement in which a seeming contradiction may reveal an unexpected truth.

Example: The hurrier I go the behinder I get.

Personification: Attributing human characteristics to an inanimate object, animal, or abstract idea.

Example: The days crept by slowly, sorrowfully.

Pun: Word play in which words with totally different meanings have similar or identical sounds.

Example: Like a firefly in the rain, I'm de-lighted.

Simile: A direct comparison of two unlike things using "like" or "as."

Example: He's as dumb as an ox.

Example: Her eyes are like comets.

Symbol: An ordinary object, event, animal, or person to which we have attached extraordinary meaning and significance – a flag to represent a country, a lion to represent courage, a wall to symbolize separation.

Example: A small cross by the dangerous curve on the road reminded all of Johnny's death.

Synecdoche: Indicating a person, object, etc. by letting only a certain part represent the whole.

Example: All hands on deck.

Unit 4 – Author Spotlight: Gerard Manley Hopkins

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in London in 1844. He grew up the eldest of nine children and was profoundly influenced by the Catholic faith. Hopkins was a popular poet during his college years, but after he graduated, he went in search of a way to deepen his faith. He eventually became a Jesuit priest, and for a time, did not write any poetry because he felt it was too self-serving. He did return to poetry, but his work came first, and many of his pieces were not published during his lifetime. He is considered a poet of the Romantic time period, and as such was a man who deeply struggled with his identity in God’s tapestry. He worked out that struggle through the written word.

- For more information on Gerard Manley Hopkins, please visit this link:
<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/hopkins/hopkins12.html>

Unit 4 – Assignments

- Read Unit 4 – Assignment Background: An introduction to Poetry - Part 4.
- Read “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins found at www.ArtiosHCS.com.
- Write an author biography on Gerard Manley Hopkins. Remember, instructions on author profiles can be found on the **Artios Home Companion** website.
- In your Reading Journal:
 1. Write down what you think the poem is about.
 2. Write down which literary devices the author used in his poetry. Give examples from the poem.
 3. Write a paraphrase of the poem.
 4. Tell what rhyme scheme the poem has.
 5. Using the information gathered from these units and www.ArtiosHCS.com, write a poetry explication paper on one of the poems studied in Units 1-4. Make sure it is proofread, and free of any grammatical errors. Use the rubric on the **Artios Home Companion** website to help you.

Unit 4 – Assignment Background

An Introduction to Poetry – Part 4

The following is an excerpt from an article published by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

Arranging the Words

Words follow each other in a sequence determined by the poet. In order to discuss the arrangements that result, certain terms have been applied to various aspects of that arrangement process. Although in some ways these sequences seem arbitrary and mechanical, in another sense they help to determine the nature of the poem. These various ways of organizing words have been identified.

Point of View: The author’s point of view concentrates on the vantage point of the speaker, or “teller” of the story or poem. This may be considered the poem’s “voice” — the pervasive presence behind the overall work. This is also sometimes referred to as the *persona*.

- 1st Person: the speaker is a character in the story or poem and tells it from his/her perspective (uses “I”).
- 3rd Person limited: the speaker is not part of the story, but tells about the other characters through the limited perceptions of one other person at a time.
- 3rd Person omniscient: the speaker is not part of the story, but is able to “know” and describe what all characters are thinking.

Line: The line is fundamental to the perception of poetry, marking an important visual distinction from prose. Poetry is arranged into a series of units that do not necessarily correspond to sentences, but rather to a series of metrical feet. Generally, but not always, the line is printed as one single line on the page. If it occupies more than one line, its remainder is usually indented to indicate that it is a continuation.

There is a natural tendency when reading poetry to pause at the end of a line, but the careful reader will follow the punctuation to find where natural pauses should occur.

In traditional verse forms, the length of each line is determined by convention, but in modern poetry the poet has more latitude for choice.

Verse: One single line of a poem arranged in a metrical pattern. Also, a piece of poetry or a particular form of poetry such as *free verse*, *blank verse*, etc., or the art or work of a poet.

The popular use of the word *verse* for a stanza or associated group of metrical lines is not in accordance with the best usage. A stanza is a *group* of verses.

Stanza: A division of a poem created by arranging the lines into a unit, often repeated in the same pattern of meter and rhyme throughout the poem; a unit of poetic lines (a “paragraph” within the poem). The stanzas within a poem are separated by blank lines.

Stanzas in modern poetry, such as *free verse*, often do not have lines that are all of the same length and meter, nor even the same number of lines in each stanza. Stanzas created by such irregular line groupings are often dictated by meaning, as in paragraphs of prose.

Stanza Forms: The names given to describe the number of lines in a stanzaic unit, such as: *couplet* (2), *tercet* (3), *quatrain* (4), *quintet* (5), *sestet* (6), *septet* (7), and *octave* (8). Some stanzas follow a set rhyme scheme and meter in addition to the number of lines and are given specific names to describe them, such as, *ballad meter*, *ottava rima*, *rhyme royal*, *terza rima*, and *Spenserian stanza*.

Stanza forms are also a factor in the categorization of whole poems described as following a *fixed form*.

Rhetorical Question: A question solely for effect, which does not require an answer. By the implication the answer is obvious, it is a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct statement.

Example: Could I but guess the reason for that look?

Example: O, Wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Rhyme Scheme: The pattern established by the arrangement of rhymes in a stanza or poem, generally described by using letters of the alphabet to denote the recurrence of rhyming lines, such as the *ababbcc* of the *Rhyme Royal* stanza form.

Capital letters in the alphabetic rhyme scheme are used for the repeating lines of a refrain; the letters *x* and *y* indicate unrhymed lines.

In quatrains, the popular rhyme scheme of *abab* is called *alternate rhyme* or *cross rhyme*. The *abba* scheme is called *envelope rhyme*, and another one frequently used is *xaxa* (This last pattern, when working with students, is generally easier for them to understand when presented as *abcb*, as they associate matched letters with rhymed words).

Enjambment: The continuation of the logical sense — and therefore the grammatical construction — beyond the end of a line of poetry. This is sometimes done with the title, which in effect becomes the first line of the poem.

Form: The arrangement or method used to convey the content, such as *free verse*, *ballad*, *haiku*, etc. In other words, the “way-it-is-said.” A variably interpreted term, however, it sometimes applies to details within the composition of a text, but is probably used most often in reference to the structural characteristics of a work as it compares to (or differs from) established modes of conventionalized arrangements.

Open: poetic form free from regularity and consistency in elements such as rhyme, line length, and metrical form.

Closed: poetic form subject to a fixed structure and pattern.

Blank Verse: unrhymed iambic pentameter (much of the plays of Shakespeare are written in this form).

Free Verse: lines with no prescribed pattern or structure — the poet determines all the variables as seems appropriate for each poem.

Couplet: a pair of lines, usually rhymed; this is the shortest stanza.

Heroic Couplet: a pair of rhymed lines in iambic pentameter (traditional heroic epic form).

Quatrain: a four-line stanza, or a grouping of four lines of verse.