

POETRY PAIR REVIEW

Theme: Identity, Struggle, and What We Hide

Names of group members:

Poems to choose from : poems attached at the end of the handout

1. "Sometimes I Cry" by Tupac Shakur
2. "The Rose That Grew from Concrete" by Tupac Shakur
3. "A Root Out of Dry Ground" by Bernard Ceaser
4. "Where the Sidewalk Ends" by Shel Silverstein
5. "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Your Goal: Your pair will "teach" your chosen poem so that the class understands: *I may have you change your selected poem if needed*

1. What the poem is saying (literal meaning)
 2. What deeper idea it explores (theme)
 3. How the poet uses language and structure to build that idea
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Step 1: Understand the Poem: Read your poem at least 2-3 times.

Discuss:

1. What is happening in the poem?
2. Who is speaking?
3. What emotions are present?
4. What might the speaker be hiding or revealing?

Write a 2-3 sentence summary in your own words :

Step 2: Connect to the Theme to your chosen poem

Circle any one or two of the themes that your poem mainly connect to -

- Identity
- Struggle
- Resilience
- Hidden emotions

Discuss:

1. What is the poem really about beneath the surface and how does your poem connect to the theme(s) you selected above?
2. What message is the poet sending?

2-3 summary line summary:

Step 3: Analyse the poem

Find and explain:

Poetic Devices (at least 2):

1. Imagery (What do we see/feel?)
2. Metaphor / Symbolism (ex: rose, mask, sidewalk, roots)
3. Repetition
4. Tone (hopeful? serious? playful? bitter?)

Structural devices (at least 1):

1. Short lines - what impact does this have on the tone or mood of the poem?
2. Repetition of words or phrases
3. Lack of punctuation or simple structure (free verse – what does this achieve)
4. How the poem looks on the page; what initial impact does this create on the reader?

For each example:

1. Use and example from the poem
2. Explain its effect
 - a. Start by making annotation on your chosen poem; then write down your summary

Template sentence starter:

“The poet uses ___ to show ___, which emphasizes ___.”

2-3 line summary:

Step 4: Look Closely at Symbols

Depending on whichever poem you’ve selected, respond to the questions that apply –

1. What does the rose symbolise?
2. What does the mask symbolise?
3. What might the sidewalk or roots symbolise?
4. What does the act of crying symbolise?

Template sentence starter :

“The ___ symbolizes ___ because ___.”

2-3 line summary:

Step 5: Plan Your 5-Minute Lesson

Your group must include:

1. Strong Reading (30–45 sec)

- a. It does not need to be whole poem; you can select parts to read aloud that you want to focus on
- b. Read with expression (this matters!)
- c. One person from your pair must read the poem aloud

2. Clear Explanation (1 min)

- a. Summarize the poem briefly
- b. State the theme

3. Teach the Devices (2–3 min)

- a. Explain at least 2 devices + 1 structural choice
- b. Focus on the effect these devices have on the poem and its meaning, not just identification

4. Engage the Class (1 min)

- a. Your presentation of the poem should be interesting to engage the class
- b. Ask the class if they have questions (I'll be joining in as well!)
 - i. Sample questions you can ask the class -
 1. For any other symbols that your pair did not talk about
 2. Whether or not anyone disagrees with your theme
 3. Whether or not anyone is able to identify any other theme

Group Roles (Both members need to participate)

Divide responsibilities:

1. Reader
2. Meaning/Theme Explainer
3. Device Analysis
4. Class Engagement Leader
- 5.

Reminders to make your lesson/presentation strong:

- ✓ Explains both meaning and message
- ✓ Connects to the theme (identity, struggle, resilience)
- ✓ Uses evidence from the poem
- ✓ Makes the class participate
- ✓ Speaks clearly and confidently

Avoid

- ✗ Just reading the poem and summarizing
- ✗ Listing devices with no explanation
- ✗ No connection to theme
- ✗ No classroom interaction

For you presentation / “lesson” –

1. You should have a visual – this can be the annotations you’ve made on the poem to explain your points
2. It can be a mini-presentation
3. You can also choose to have only the poem
4. No more than 5 minutes

Poem 1: "Sometimes I Cry" by Tupac Shakur

Sometimes when I'm alone
I cry because I'm on my own
The tears I cry R bitter and warm
They flow with life but take no form
I cry because my heart is torn
and I find it difficult 2 carry on
If I had an ear 2 confide in
I would cry among my treasured friends
But who do u know that stops that long
To help another carry on
The world moves fast and it would rather pass u by
than 2 stop and c what makes u cry
It's painful and sad and sometimes I cry
and no one cares about why.

Poem 2: The Rose That Grew From Concrete

Did you hear about the rose that grew
from a crack in the concrete?
Proving nature's law is wrong it
learned to walk with out having feet.
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
it learned to breathe fresh air.
Long live the rose that grew from concrete
when no one else ever cared.

Poem 3: "A Root Out of Dry Ground" by Bernard Ceaser

Out of the ground
comes a root that has no form-
it has no beauty
in which one can adore-

It was created –
to live in obscurity
and its color has faded
which takes away its delicacy

While springing-up into this world
this root grew tall
and sprouted-as it swirled

and with no one around
to nourish it with care,
this root still prospered
in spite of despair

abused and neglected
it never nestled
nor was it accepted-
and although it carries a sound
still,
it remains,
a root,
out of dry ground.

Poem 4: Where The Sidewalk Ends

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
and before the street begins,
and there the grass grows soft and white,
and there the sun burns crimson bright,
and there the moon-bird rests from his flight
to cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
and the dark street winds and bends.
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
we shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow
and watch where the chalk-white arrows go
to the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
and we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
for the children, they mark, and the children, they know,
the place where the sidewalk ends.

Poem 5: "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
 We wear the mask!