

Teacher Lesson Plan 2

Objectives:

- summarize a poem
- determine the theme of a poem

Materials: *What Does This Poem Mean?* Student Worksheet, teacher-selected poem for class analysis

Possible poems:

- “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” by Maya Angelou
- “Your World” by Georgia Douglas Johnson

Time: one 40-minute class period

Essential Question: How does analyzing a poem help us to understand it better?



- 3 Read** the poem out loud once to model fluent reading, then have students read the poem out loud to a partner.
- 4 Explain** that understanding what happens in the poem is the first step in analyzing poetry. As a class, paraphrase the poem, either by assigning each stanza to a small group of students or by completing a think-aloud as a whole class.
- 5** If necessary, stop to **define** any terms in the poem that are unfamiliar to students.
- 6 Point out** that understanding the feeling of the poem is an important step in analyzing it. Reread the poem, focusing on the question “What type of feeling or mood does this poem have?” Use think-pair-share to collect students’ ideas. Invite students to circle the words or punctuation marks that helped create the mood of the poem.
- 7 Reread** the poem, focusing on the question “What message is this poem sending?” Use think-pair-share to collect students’ ideas, and mark the words and phrases that support the theme.

- 8 Have** students complete the *What Does This Poem Mean?* Student Worksheet to apply these skills to a new poem.

Lesson Steps:

- 1 Explain** to students that poetry is a way that writers express themselves. We often understand poetry better if we read or hear it several times and analyze it, or look closely at the meaning.
- 2 Display** the selected poem, either written on chart paper or projected on a screen.

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WHAT DOES THIS **Poem** MEAN?

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was an American writer who used poetry to express herself. Read her poem “Autumn” and answer the questions about the meaning of the poem.

“Autumn” by Emily Dickinson

The morns are **meeker** than they were,
The **nuts** are getting brown;
The berry’s cheek is **plumper**,
The **rose** is out of town.
The maple wears a **gayer** scarf,
The field a **scarlet** gown.
Lest I should be **old-fashioned**,
I’ll put a **trinket** on.

- 1 Read the poem one time. What happens in this poem?

- 2 Read the poem again. Circle three descriptive words. What moods or feelings do these words give the poem?

- 3 Read the poem one more time. Put a star next to two details that gave you a clue about the person speaking. What do these clues tell you about the speaker and what she is speaking about?

- 4 What do you think is the message or theme of the poem? Why?

