

Spiders, Spiders, Everywhere

Poetry Analysis: Theme and Metaphor

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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	1-2 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	120 minutes
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature, Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

How much should you try before you give up?

Summary

Metaphors and theme are difficult, yet integral, parts of literature. In this poetry analysis lesson, students will read "A Noiseless Patient Spider" by Walt Whitman. To begin the lesson, students will personally connect with the narrator of the poem by correlating the idea of fortitude and chance to their own lives. After reading the poem, students will identify metaphors and use the metaphors to develop an understanding of theme. Once metaphor and theme have been practiced, students will develop an interpretation of the poem and defend their interpretation using the C.E.R strategy. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 11th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 10 through 12, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students create a Quick Write to begin their thoughts about their own fortitude and personally connect to the poem.

Explore

Students will do a Card Sort activity to familiarize themselves with advanced vocabulary within the piece to support deeper analysis of the poem later in the lesson.

Explain

Students read "A Noiseless Patient Spider" and describe some of the terms/phrases from the poem they can relate to, in order to recognize metaphor within the poem.

Extend

In small groups, students complete a 4-2-1 of the themes they recognized within the text.

Evaluate

Students will develop an interpretation of the poem's theme and support their interpretation with a C.E.R strategy.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

WME302: Interpret basic figurative language as it is used in a passage

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.3.R.3: Evaluate how literary elements impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- setting
- plot structure (e.g., foreshadowing, flashback, *in media res*)
- conflict (i.e., internal, external)
- characters (e.g., protagonist, antagonist)
- characterization (i.e., direct, indirect)
- point of view (e.g., narrator reliability)
- archetypes

10.3.R.4: Evaluate how literary devices impact theme, mood, and/or tone, using textual evidence:
- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance)
- irony (i.e., verbal, situational, dramatic)

10.3.R.7: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.

Attachments

- CER Template_Poetry - Spanish.docx
- CER Template_Poetry - Spanish.pdf
- CER Template_Poetry.docx
- CER Template_Poetry.pdf
- NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER VOCAB - Spanish.docx
- NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER VOCAB - Spanish.pdf
- NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER VOCAB. Card Sort.docx
- NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER VOCAB. Card Sort.pdf
- Noiseless Patient Spider_Whitman - Spanish.docx
- Noiseless Patient Spider_Whitman - Spanish.pdf
- Noiseless Patient Spider_Whitman.docx
- Noiseless Patient Spider_Whitman.pdf

Materials

- A Noiseless Patient Spider copy of poem- attachment
- A Noiseless Patient Spider Vocabulary - attachment
- CER Template - attachment

30 minutes

Engage

Students will begin the lesson by completing a 2-minute Quick Write. A Quick Write is a brainstorm where students can unload any and all ideas about the subject. Students dump their thoughts onto the page without worrying about grammar and spelling, focusing only on their ideas.

Use the following prompt for the Quick Write: Describe something you attempted; something that you may, or may not, have accomplished.

After completing the Quick Write, allow students to work with an Elbow Partner to share their personal story of something they had to attempt multiple times before they did, or did not, succeed. An elbow partner is someone close to them that they can quickly turn to meet.

Teacher's Note

Encourage students to complete all of the exercises/activities on the same sheet of paper for this lesson. By doing this, when completed, they will have a detailed analysis of the poem and their personal relationship to its concepts.

Once students have shared their personal stories of fortitude, inform them that they are going to be reading a poem with similar issues. The ultimate goal is to be able to place themselves in the position of the spider.

30 minutes

Explore

Before students can dive into poetry analysis, it is helpful to support their understanding of the poem by allowing them to explore potentially difficult vocabulary. To help familiarize the students with the more advanced vocabulary within the piece, they will perform a Card Sort activity. The Card Sort strategy will allow students to explore vocabulary by activity engaging with the words. Before the Card Sorts activity, you will need to print the vocabulary words and cut them out into cards. If you have 5 groups doing Card Sorts, you will need 5 sets of cards.

The terms chosen for the poem may depend on the needs of your classroom. However, the following terms have been chosen for this lesson and already created in the handout titled Noiseless Patient Spider Vocab: promontory, isolated, vacant, vast, filament, unreeling, detached, ceaselessly, musing, ductile, gossamer.

Use prepared cards provided with 1 word and 1 definition already printed on each. (For added rigor, give the students blank cards to look up the definitions of each word on their own.) Then, split the students into teams of 3 to sort the terms. Students can choose their own 3 categories in which to arrange the cards. Give students 3-5 minutes to arrange the terms into their designated categories. Then, share out the categories they created and why the words went in each category. After this activity, teacher should write the terms and definitions on the board for the students easy reference while reading the poem.

Teacher's Note

Some examples of categories students might create for the Card Sort: 1- Things that are found in the military; 2 - Words you might see in a video game title; 3- Words I've heard in song lyrics; 4 - Things I've heard my grandparents say

Card Sort explained

30 minutes

Explain

In this portion of the lesson, allow for students to briefly describe their thoughts or ideas of the definition of a metaphor. Ask them to share their understanding of metaphors with the class. Teacher should confirm there is a general consensus of the idea.

Next, have one or two students read the poem aloud. After hearing the poem aloud, each students should read it again silently to themselves. Then, have each student write down at least 2 words or phrases from the poem they believe are a metaphor. Allow about 7-10 minutes for this and have a few students share out what they chose and why. With each of the examples provided, the teacher will be able to expound the concept of metaphor and help assist the students to recognize them within the piece.

For ELL and SPED students, this could allow for additional scaffolding by using sentence frames such as: I think the spider could be the same as _____. I know this because _____.

Teacher's Note

This poem is made up of two stanzas of five lines each. The separation of stanzas in this poem represents a shift from literal (the speaker watching the spider make its web on the rock) to figurative (the speaker addressing his soul's attempts to make connections in the world). The aim of the poem is to draw the comparison between the speaker's soul and the spider, which is why the two stanzas mirror each other in size and structure. In the first stanza, the speaker vividly describes the experience of watching the spider weave its web, allowing the reader to share his fascination. In the second stanza, he elevates these images into metaphors for his soul's figurative desires. In this poem, the spider and the speaker's soul both face a similar plight. They must use their skills to build connections, searching for meaningful and effective bonds.

50 minutes

Extend

Before students begin the Extend section, connect the idea of metaphors to theme. Remind students that the theme of a piece can be found by examining things like word choice, symbolism, structure, etc... Metaphors are one way to gain an understanding of a theme. If all the metaphors symbolize uniqueness, the theme might be something like "It's okay to be different".

Students will now explore possible themes of the poem by engaging in a 4-2-1 strategy. This activity allows students to collaboratively share their thoughts with their peers and narrow down the groups' thoughts through evaluation.

First, allow students to get into small groups. The group should create 4 possible themes of the poem. These themes should be based upon the metaphors in the poem. Next, the partners will narrow down their 4 themes to just 2. These should be the 2 strongest of the 4 discussed originally. Encourage the groups to choose the 2 themes that could be best supported by the metaphors in the text. Last, the groups will have to debate which of the 2 remaining themes is the absolute strongest and most significant in the poem. They will need to choose just 1 theme as their final answer.

4-2-1 Activity explained

30 minutes

Evaluate

The last 10 minutes of class will be a discussion of the students' various interpretations of the themes in the poem. Allow students to briefly share out the 1 theme they all agreed upon in their group and why they felt this was the major theme.

Next, students will complete a C.E.R. paragraph arguing their idea of the poem's metaphor/s. In a C.E.R. paragraph the "C" stands for claim, the "E" stands for evidence, and the "R" stands for reasoning. The C.E.R. instructional strategy assist students in identifying a claim, evidence to support the claim, and reasoning for the evidence. This will allow for students to showcase their understanding of metaphor and theme while also writing a well-developed expository paragraph. Additionally, this will give the opportunity to allow for any additional guided explanation of the content/concepts needed.

Inform students that they should first write down their stance on the overall theme. This is the theme they discussed and finalized in their small groups during the 4-2-1. Next, they should discuss the metaphors that support this theme. Last, the students will provide reasoning for how the metaphors support that theme. The reasoning section of the paragraph is essentially the commentary of the students- their own thoughts on how the metaphors connect to the overall theme of the poem. (Distribute the C.E.R Template, attached to this lesson, if students need additional support for writing the paragraph. This C.E.R. template will assist students in building their paragraph.)

Students will then turn in their completed sheet with all of the following: their initial free write, 4-2-1 exercise, and final literary analysis C.E.R. paragraph.

For added rigor: Have students circle back to the initial EQ "How much should you try before you give up?", give a brief personal answer and then connect their personal experiences to those of the spider in the poem.

C.E.R. explained

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Quick write. Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1127
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card sort. Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/147
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow partners. Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). 4-2-1. Strategy. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/142
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- http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45473
- http://cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides5/Spider.html