

Ninth Grade Summer Poetry Assignment: Sherwood High School 2011

Due Date: Tuesday, August 30th

Deadline: Wednesday, August 31st

Rationale for Poetry Reading Assignment:

Throughout the course of the year in ninth grade English, instruction is grounded in the belief that the close reading of poetry supports a deeper understanding of prose. Students will read, interpret, and apply the meanings of several poems to themes which will be studied. Close reading of poetry requires that students explain how an author uses language devices such as similes, metaphors, diction, or syntax to create meaning.

Before reading the poems, look at the tasks which have to be completed. **While reading** the poems, release your imagination and appreciate the beauty of the words chosen by the author. Take notes on the poetry matrix provided. **After reading** the poems, think about how the poems relate to your own life, or the life of someone you know. Read the poems several times to grasp the deeper meaning.

The ninth grade English teachers are looking forward to meeting you and discussing the poems at the beginning of the year.

Directions for Poetry Reading Assignment:

1. Read the poems in this summer reading packet.
2. Select **five** poems and complete the tasks listed below by writing responses on the matrix attached. A model response is provided on the matrix to assist students.

Tasks to Complete for all five poems:

- A. Explain what is happening in each poem.
- B. Identify the speaker in each poem. The speaker is the person who gives a voice to the poem. The speaker is not the author. Readers cannot specifically name the speaker, but readers can identify the characteristics of the speaker. For instance, the speaker in a poem can be characterized as male/female or young/old.
- C. Identify two examples of language devices such as similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, or imagery.
- D. Explain how you connect with each poem. Consider thinking about themes, character traits, or character relationships when connecting your own experiences. Or, jot down questions, thoughts, insights you had while reading each poem.

Evaluation of Poetry Reading Assignment:

Students will earn **20 completion points** for their poetry matrix. Students must show evidence of thoroughly completing each task for **five** poems in the packet.

Her Kind- Anne Sexton

I have gone out, a possessed witch,
Haunting the black air, braver at night;
Dreaming evil, I have done my hitch
Over the plain houses, light by light:
Lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind.
A woman like that is not a woman, quite.
I have been her kind.

I have found the warm caves in the woods,
Filled them with skillets, carvings, shelves,
Closets, silks, innumerable goods;
Fixed the suppers for the worms and the elves:
Whining, rearranging the disaligned.
A woman like that is misunderstood.
I have been her kind.

I have ridden in your cart, driver,
Waved my nude arms at villages gone by,
Learning the last bright routes, survivor
Where your flames still bite my thigh
And my ribs crack where your wheels wind.
A woman like that is not ashamed to die.
I have been her kind.

Rites of Passage - Sharon Olds

As the guests arrive at my son's party
They gather in the living room-
Short men, men in first grade
With smooth jaws and chins.
Hands in pockets, they stand around
Jostling, jockeying for place, small fights
Breaking out and calming. One says to another
How old are you? Six. I'm seven. So?
They eye each other, seeing themselves
Tiny in the other's pupils. They clear their
Throats a lot, a room of small bankers,
They fold their arms and frown. *I could beat you*
Up, a seven says to a six,
The dark cake, round and heavy as a
Turret, behind them on the table. My son,
Freckles like specks of nutmeg on his cheeks,
Chest narrow as the balsa keel of a
Model boat, long hands
Cool and thin as the day they guided him
Out of me, speaks up as a host
For the sake of the group.
We could easily kill a two-year-old,
He says in his clear voice. The other
Men agree, they clear their throats
Like Generals, they relax and get down to
Playing war, celebrating my son's life.

Be a Friend- Edgar A Guest

Be a friend. You don't need money:
Just a disposition sunny;
Just the wish to help another
Get along some way or other;
Just a kindly hand extended
Out to one who's unbefriended;
Just the will to give or lend,
This will make you someone's friend.

Be a friend. You don't need glory.
Friendship is a simple story.
Pass by trifling errors blindly,
Gaze on honest effort kindly,
Cheer the youth who's bravely trying,
Pity him who's sadly sighing;
Just a little labor spend
On the duties of a friend.

Be a friend. The pay is bigger
(Though not written by a figure)
Than is earned by people clever
In what's merely self-endeavor.
You'll have friends instead of neighbors
For the profits of your labors;

You'll be richer in the end
Than a prince, if you're a friend.

The Hand – Mary Ruefle

The teacher asks a question.
You know the answer, you suspect
you are the only one in the classroom
who knows the answer, because the person
in question is yourself, and on that
you are the greatest living authority,
but you don't raise your hand.
You raise the top of your desk
and take out an apple.
You look out the window.
You don't raise your hand and there is
some essential beauty in your fingers,
which aren't even drumming, but lie
flat and peaceful.
The teacher repeats the question.
Outside the window, on an overhanging branch,
a robin is ruffling its feathers
and spring is in the air.

Languages - Carl Sandburg

THERE are no handles upon a language

Whereby men take hold of it
And mark it with signs for its remembrance.
It is a river, this language,
Once in a thousand years
Breaking a new course
Changing its way to the ocean.
It is mountain effluvia
Moving to valleys
And from nation to nation
Crossing borders and mixing.
Languages die like rivers.
Words wrapped round your tongue today
And broken to shape of thought
Between your teeth and lips speaking
Now and today
Shall be faded hieroglyphics
Ten thousand years from now.
Sing--and singing--remember
Your song dies and changes
And is not here to-morrow
Any more than the wind
Blowing ten thousand years ago.

Your Catfish Friend – Richard Brautigan

If I were to live my life
in catfish forms
in scaffolds of skin and whiskers
at the bottom of a pond
and you were to come by
 one evening
when the moon was shining
down into my dark home
and stand there at the edge
 of my affection
and think, "It's beautiful
here by this pond. I wish
 somebody loved me,"
I'd love you and be your catfish
friend and drive such lonely
thoughts from your mind
and suddenly you would be
 at peace,
and ask yourself, "I wonder
if there are any catfish
in this pond? It seems like
a perfect place for them

Ballad - Sonia Sanchez

After Spanish

forgive me if i laugh
you are so sure of love
you are so young
and i too old to learn of love.

the rain exploding
in the air is love
the grass excreting her
green wax is love
and stones remembering
past steps is love,
but you. you are too young
for love
and i too old.

once. what does it matter
when or who, i knew
of love.
i fixed my body
under his and went
to sleep in love
all trace of me
was wiped away

forgive me if i smile
young heiress of a naked dream
you are so young
and i too old to learn of love

A Dream Deferred – Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore –
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat
Or crust and sugar over –
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Making a Fist – Naomi Shihab Nye

For the first time, on the road north of Tampico,
I felt the life sliding out of me,
a drum in the desert, harder and harder to hear.
I was seven, I lay in the car
watching palm trees swirl a sickening pattern past
the glass.
My stomach was a melon split wide inside my skin.

"How do you know if you are going to die?"
I begged my mother.
We had been traveling for days.
With strange confidence she answered,
"When you can no longer make a fist."

Years later I smile to think of that journey,
the borders we must cross separately,
stamped with our unanswerable woes.
I who did not die, who am still living,
still lying in the backseat behind all my questions,
clenching and opening one small hand.

The Poet's Occasional Alternative – Grace Paley

I was going to write a poem
I made a pie instead it took
about the same amount of time
of course the pie was a final
draft a poem would have had some
distance to go days and weeks and
much crumpled paper

the pie already had a talking
tumbling audience among small
trucks and a fire engine on
the kitchen floor

everybody will like this pie
it will have apples and cranberries
dried apricots in it many friends
will say why in the world did you
make only one

this does not happen with poems

because of unreportable
sadnesses I decided to
settle this morning for a re-
sponsive eatership I do not
want to wait a week a year a
generation for the right
Consumer to come along

Ballad of Birmingham – Dudley Randall

"Mother dear, may I go downtown
Instead of out to play,
And march the streets of Birmingham
In a Freedom March today?"

"No, baby, no you may not go,
For the dogs are fierce and wild,
And clubs and hoses, guns and jails
Aren't good for a little child."

"But, mother, I won't be alone.
Other children will go with me,
And march the streets of Birmingham
To make our country free."

"No, baby, no, you may not go,
For I fear those guns will fire.
But you may go to church instead
And sing in the children's choir."

She has combed and brushed her night-dark hair,
And bathed rose petal sweet,
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,
And white shoes on her feet.

The mother smiled to know that her child
Was in the sacred place,
But that smile was the last smile
To come upon her face.

For when she heard the explosion,
Her eyes grew wet and wild.
She raced through the streets of Birmingham
Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,
Then lifted out a shoe.
"O, here's the show my baby wore,
But, baby, where are you?"

Mermaid Song – Kim Addonizio

Damp-haired from the bath, you drape yourself
upside down across the sofa, reading,
one hand idly sunk into a bowl
of crackers, goldfish with smiles stamped on.
I think they are growing gills, swimming
up the sweet air to reach you. Small girl,
my slim miracle, they multiply.
In the black hours when I lie sleepless,
near drowning, dread-heavy, your face
is the bright lure I look for, love's hook
piercing me, hauling me cleanly up.

9th Grade Summer Reading Poetry Analysis

Poem and Author	Explain what is happening in the poem or what it is about.	Identify the speaker of the poem.	Identify two language devices and give examples from the poem.	Explain how you connect to the poem.
<p><i>Example</i></p> <p>“A Dream Deferred”</p> <p>Langston Hughes</p>	<p>The speaker is questioning what happens to dreams that are put on hold. The speaker lists consequences resulting from an unfulfilled dream.</p>	<p>The speaker appears to be someone who has lost a sense of hope. It appears the speaker is lost because he/she imagines a dream rotting and eventually exploding.</p>	<p>Personification- In the poem, a dream is given human qualities with the use of verbs such as “dry”, “run”, and “stink.”</p> <p>Simile- In the poem, a dream is “like a raisin in the sun”, “like rotten meat”, and “like a syrupy sweet.”</p>	<p>There are times in my life when I feel as if I fall short of my dreams. Like the speaker, I wonder if my dreams are lost or damaged. The poem makes me think about the importance of dreams.</p>
<p>1.</p>				
<p>2.</p>				

Poem and Author	Explain what is happening in the poem or what it is about.	Identify the speaker of the poem.	Identify a language device and give an example from the poem.	Explain how you connect to the poem.
3.				
4.				
5.				

