**Poetry**

**ELAGSE7RL1**: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**ELAGSE7RL2**: Determine a theme and/or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

**ELAGSE7RL4**: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds.

**ELAGSE7RL5**: Analyze how a drama or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

**EQ**: How can I determine the theme of a text?

**EQ**: How do I determine the meaning of figurative and connotative words and phrases in a text?

**EQ**: How do I analyze the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone?

**EQ**: How do I cite textual evidence to support my inferences drawn from the text?

**Intro to Poetry**

Resource: Elements of Literature textbook, pages 646-653

- How is poetry different from prose?
- Prose is written in sentences and paragraphs. Poetry is written in lines and stanzas.
- A poem has to be read more than once to truly understand it.

What are some sound elements of poetry?

- Alliteration
- Rhythm
- Rhyme scheme

What are some literary devices poetry and prose have in common?

- Figurative language
- Personification
- Metaphor
- Simile
- Imagery
- Symbolism

The 3 types of poems we are going to look at are free verse, narrative, and lyric.

- A narrative poem is “narrative” because it has plot elements and tells a story.
- A lyric poem expresses the speaker’s feelings. Think “song lyrics”.
- A free verse poem has no regular rhythm or rhyme.
Poem 1
The first one is “The Butterfly Story”. Read the poem silently to yourself. Then:
1. Write what you think the topic of this poem is, and see if you can determine a theme. (Just put what you think. We will come back later and see if you have different answers after we analyze the poem together.)

The Butterfly by Pavel Friedman
The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
against a white stone. . . .
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
kiss the world good-bye.
For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found my people here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.
That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
in the ghetto.

Use the link to the Prezi above to analyze the poem together.
Transcript of analysis: (I added some things to the one on the web page with the Prezi) The Butterfly-Symbol of freedom. Remember, the reason we can determine it’s a symbol is because the image of the butterfly keeps being repeated in the poem. The color yellow may be symbolic of friendship. Notice how many times the color yellow is mentioned or how many things that are being described are yellow. Yellow also symbolizes Fear and Sickness; however, in the poem the adjectives attached to yellow are positive, so it probably means friendship. The Sun is usually of symbol of life and hope. The Sun is personified and it is important to note that it is crying. The butterfly, a symbol of freedom, seems to be giving up and goes away. It is personified which may be important because it may represent the mindset of the writer or of the people he knows. The word penned has a very negative connotation attached to it. Animals are the ones that are usually penned up, not people. So, what is the author trying to say that his people are being treated like? These two images are juxtaposed. This means that the author wants us to compare “his people” to “dandelions”. How are people like flowers? What kind of value do people place on dandelions as flowers? It is also important to note that the dandelions are yellow. They are also personified in this poem. What could this mean? The color white shows up several times. White is often symbolic of purity, but it could also mean death. In the poem the color white is always attached with something that has no life. For example, the stone and the dead branches. So, it is more likely that the author is
using white as a symbol of death. So we always see an image of yellow/friendship followed by an image of white/death. The fact that the line is the way it is and not together with the last line maybe significant. It could be a pause for effect, but it could be a double entendre like butterflies do not exist in his world or even in his own heart.

You may have to briefly discuss the holocaust. How did the poem make them feel once they had analyzed it? (mood)

What is the tone of the poem? What words or phrases can they cite as evidence?

Ask the students to look back at the terms discussed at the beginning of the lesson. What are some they find in this poem?

What kind of poem is this? How do you know?

What are some examples of symbolism from the poem?

TOD: Now go back and look at what you originally wrote as the topic and theme for this poem. How have your answers to those two questions changed? Why are your answers different now?
Poem 2
Most students will remember this poem from when they were young. Tell them it’s a narrative poem and that means it tells a story and has a plot. Provide them with a plot diagram to fill in as they go through the poem, or as you go through it as a class.

A. Describe the relationship between the boy and the tree.
B. Does the tree show the boy unconditional love? Explain.
C. Do you have a relationship with anyone who involves such selflessness?
D. What is the theme or moral of this poem?

Do you think there could be another way to look at this poem? A differing perspective as to its meaning?

What are some examples of figurative language from the poem?

What examples of symbolism might be lurking in these lines?

The Giving Tree By Shel Silverstein
Once there was a tree....
and she loved a little boy.
And everyday the boy would come
and he would gather her leaves
and make them into crowns
and play king of the forest.
He would climb up her trunk
and swing from her branches
and eat apples.
And they would play hide-and-go-seek.
And when he was tired,
he would sleep in her shade.
And the boy loved the tree....
very much.
And the tree was happy.
But time went by.
And the boy grew older.
And the tree was often alone.
Then one day the boy came to the tree
and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my shade and be happy."
"I am too big to climb and play" said the boy.
"I want to buy things and have fun.
I want some money?"
"I'm sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money.
I have only leaves and apples.
Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in
the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy."
And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples
and carried them away.
And the tree was happy.
But the boy stayed away for a long time....
and the tree was sad.
And then one day the boy came back
and the tree shook with joy
and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk
and swing from my branches and be happy."
"I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy.
"I want a house to keep me warm," he said.
"I want a wife and I want children,
and so I need a house.
Can you give me a house?"
"I have no house," said the tree.
"The forest is my house,
but you may cut off
my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy."
And so the boy cut off her branches
and carried them away
to build his house.
And the tree was happy.
But the boy stayed away for a long time.
And when he came back,
the tree was so happy
she could hardly speak.
"Come, Boy," she whispered,
"come and play."
"I am too old and sad to play," said the boy.
"I want a boat that will take me far away from here.
Can you give me a boat?"
"Cut down my trunk
and make a boat," said the tree.
"Then you can sail away...
and be happy."
And so the boy cut down her trunk
and made a boat and sailed away.
And the tree was happy...
but not really.
And after a long time
the boy came back again.
"I am sorry, Boy," said the tree," but I have nothing
left to give you -
My apples are gone."
"My teeth are too weak
for apples," said the boy.
"My branches are gone,"
said the tree. "You
cannot swing on them - "
"I am too old to swing
on branches," said the boy.
"My trunk is gone, " said the tree.
"You cannot climb - "
"I am too tired to climb" said the boy.
"I am sorry," sighed the tree.
"I wish that I could give you something....
but I have nothing left.
I am just an old stump.
I am sorry...."
"I don't need very much now," said the boy.
"just a quiet place to sit and rest.
I am very tired."
"Well," said the tree, straightening
herself up as much as she could,
"well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting
Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest."
And the boy did.
And the tree was happy.

**Extended Resource: Life Science Connection/The Giving Tree**
Show these two videos to the class to illustrate an environmental/ health relationship between people and trees.

**What Happens When Trees Disappear?**

**Earth Has Lost Half of Its Trees Since Rise of Humans, Study Says**

Discuss the scientific information in the two videos above by comparing it with the poem.
The article linked below gives a very different perspective on the poem. Read it for discussion points. I don’t recommend giving a printed copy.

Poem 3

Discuss lyric poetry, characteristics of. Song-like qualities of. (song lyrics, emotion)
Have students read the poem first. Remind them it will take multiple reading to begin to make sense.

The Road Not Taken

BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

What do YOU think it means (write silently, share with partner or group first, then some may share with the class).

Has there been a time when you had to make a choice, and always wondered if what you DIDN’T choose might have been better?

Shmoop breaks this poem down line by line and analyses it. Very helpful.


“Most people have been faced with a fork in an actual road or path, and not been sure which path to go down. Of course, today, we can whip out a GPS or cell phone and figure out which is the correct path. But if we're beyond the reach of satellites, we just make a choice, unaided by technology. We might pick the road that gets us where we want to go, or one that takes us somewhere new, but either way, the road we choose takes us to where we are.

Just like trying to pick a path when we're driving or walking, we've all had to choose
from different paths in life: which job to take, which college to go to, which girl or boy to ask to homecoming – the list of life's choices is endless. And for every metaphorical road we take in life, there is a road not taken – the club we didn't join, the class we didn't take, the words we didn't say.

One of the big questions we face is whether or not to take the well-beaten, typical path. Is that the best choice, or should we be non-conformists and take the less-traveled route? Years into the future, after making our decision, how will we feel about the path we've chosen?”

The speaker reflects on how he plans to take the road that he didn't take another day, but suspects that he probably won't ever come back. Instead, far off in the future, he'll be talking about how his decision was final and life changing.

The speaker really wants to go down both paths – he's thinking hard about his choice. He's staring down one road, trying to see where it goes. But he can only see up to the first bend, where the undergrowth, the small plants and greenery of the woods, blocks his view.

This is where we start to think about the metaphorical meanings of this poem. If our speaker is, as we suspect, at a fork in the road of his life, and not at an actual road, he could be trying to peer into his future as far as he can. But, since he can't really predict the future, he can only see part of the path. Who knows what surprises it could hold?

Context clues: Then we get a tricky little phrase to describe this road. It's "as just as fair." Read without the first "as," this phrase is clear, if you think of fair as meaning attractive, or pretty. But the first "as" makes the phrase a little more difficult. Combining the words "just" and "fair" in the same phrase is a play on words – both of these words have multiple meanings. The phrase could mean something like "as just as it is fair," as in proper, righteous, and equal. But this doesn't quite apply to a road.

Yet we trust that our speaker wouldn't let things get awkward without meaning it. We're guessing that he means the road is just as pretty, but that in the metaphorical world of this poem, he thinks he made the fair, or right, choice. But it's not fairer – it's just as fair. So he was choosing between two roads, or futures, that were different but potentially equally good

Is the poem really about a fork in the path in the woods? What does it symbolize? What is the tone of the poem? What words/phrases support your answer?

- Line 1: This line sets the scene for the literal and metaphorical fork in the road that the speaker faces. The road splitting in the woods is a metaphor for a choice. Wherever the speaker's life has taken him so far, he has come to the point where, to go any farther, he needs to make a choice that takes him down one path and precludes him from taking the other. Because the fork in the road is a metaphor for choices throughout the poem, it's called an extended metaphor.
Lines 4-5: This description of the road is a metaphor for the future. Just like we can only see a path in the woods for so far, we can only see the consequences of our decisions for a short while into our future.

Line 6: Here, the speaker decides that, even though he's spent a long time looking down one road, he's going to take the other, which seems just as interesting. This is probably a metaphor for a sudden decision – when we think about doing one thing, like, say, staying with a boyfriend or girlfriend, for a long time. But then, all of a sudden, we find ourselves doing something else – dumping the boy or girl, and setting out on a new path. We don't know why we did it, other than that we thought we'd be just as happy with one choice as the other.

Lines 13-15: The speaker wants to be able to take both roads, but realizes that the nature of these roads is such that he probably will never be able to come back to this place. This is a metaphor for a decision that changes everything – once you've made it you can never go back.

Lines 18-20: The repetition of the first line brings us back to the beginning of the extended metaphor, and then the last two lines conclude the metaphor. In line 19, one of the roads is being affirmed as less traveled, even though the narrator seemed unsure before. And then we get the famous line "and that has made all the difference," which solidifies the figurative level of this poem by saying that taking the road that the speaker took, making the choice that he made, has changed his life.

Line 1: This line gives us the setting of the poem. The speaker tells us the woods are yellow, so we can infer that it's autumn. The metaphorical significance of this poem taking place in autumn could be that the speaker is making this choice in the fall of his life, when he's beginning to grow old.

Line 5: We find out here that these woods must be pretty thick, because a road can disappear in the undergrowth. Metaphorically, the undergrowth could represent aspects of the speaker's future that are unclear.

Lines 7-8: The speaker is biased in favor of nature. He thinks one path could be better because fewer people have worn it down. These lines are not just about nature, but are a metaphor for a decision that is less commonly made.

Lines 11-12: Here, we see the autumn imagery continue, and we find out that it's morning. We also see a contradiction of the earlier claim that one path is less worn than the other. This line shows us that the leaves have freshly fallen – perhaps masking which path was more or less traveled the day before. So, metaphorically, this line points out that sometimes there's no way to tell which decision is better.

Line 18: The first line is repeated here. The detail that the woods are yellow is left out, but the repetition shows that nature is still important to the speaker.