

English 12

Learning Guides 4 & 5: Poetry

What you will hand in:

- Close reading of poems (5 marks each)
- Paragraph on “Winter is Another Country” (marked out of 6 * 2)
- Essay on Wonderful Poetry (marked out of 6 * 4)
- Two poems of your own (each marked out of 6 * 4)
- A unit test on poetry (with poems from previous provincial exams)

Terms you should know:

Figurative Language Terms

allusion	figurative language	metaphor	rhetorical question
antithesis	hyperbole	metonymy	simile
apostrophe	idiom	oxymoron	symbol
cliché	image	paradox	symbolism
euphemism	imagery	personification	synecdoche
extended metaphor	literal language	pun	understatement

Poetry Terms

alliteration	descriptive	figurative language	quatrain
allusion	didactic	free verse	cinquain
apostrophe	dissonance	iambic pentameter	refrain
assonance	dramatic	literal language	repetition
ballad	dramatic	lyric	rhyme
ballad stanza	monologue	meter	rhyme scheme
blank verse	elegy	mood	rhythm
cacophony	end-stopped	narrative	sestet
caesura	enjambment	octave	sonnet
cinquain	epic	ode	speaker
concrete	epigram	onomatopoeia	stanza
consonance	epitaph	pastoral	triplet
couplet	euphony	poetry	verse

Activity 1: Close reading of poetry

At the end of this learning guide you will find two poems: “Richard Cory” by Edwin Arlington Robinson, and “Winter is Another Country” by Archibald Macleish. These are printed in a larger font so that you can write directly on the poem itself. Answer the following questions:

“Richard Cory”

1. The most important part of any poem is the meaning – everything else the poet does is to get something across to the reader.
 - a. What are the **literal** events of the poem?
 - b. What is the theme of the poem?
2. Make sure you know the difference between poet, speaker, and narrator. Does this poem have a speaker or a narrator? Why?
3. On the poem, identify the rhyme and add a letter to the end of each line. What is the rhyme scheme? Is it regular or irregular?
4. What is the rhythm of the poem (syllables per line)?
5. What is the meter of the poem (pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables)?
6. Find examples of the following sound devices:
 - a. Alliteration
 - b. Assonance
 - c. consonance
7. Find an example of figurative language.
8. What is the level of diction of this poem?
9. How does the author develop imagery?

“Winter is Another Country”

1. Is the rhyme scheme regular or irregular? Is the rhyme scheme regular or irregular? What do we call this type of poetry?
2. In free verse, line breaks are important and help us to see what words are important. What do you notice about the effects of the line breaks?
3. Find an example of alliteration.
4. Imagery is most easily created by invoking the five senses. How many senses are referred to here?
5. What kinds of images are here? Are they generally pleasant or unpleasant?
6. What does winter generally represent?
7. Why would the speaker long for winter to replace autumn? What has happened? How do you know?

Activity 2: Write a paragraph on theme

In a paragraph of about 150 words, explain the theme of “Winter is another Country” by Archibald MacLeish. Make sure you make specific references to the poem. This will be marked as though it were a “Stand-Alone” response to a provincial exam question.

Activity 3: Poetry as Art

- "Death be not Proud" by John Donne (Renaissance, sonnets)
- "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth (Romantic poetry, formal lyric poetry)
- "Invictus" by William Ernest Henley (Victorian Poetry, formal lyric poetry)
- "This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams (Modern Poetry)
- "Eating Poetry" by Mark Strand (Abstract Poetry)

Poetry is a product of the culture, time, and personality of the poets who write it. At different times, people have different tastes in poetry. What we decide is beautiful, or important, or moving, or challenging changes over time.

Attend the seminar on "Poetry as Art." Next, decide what type of poetry means the most to you. Find two famous, important, and published examples of this type of poetry, and write an essay of at least 300 words explaining why this is an excellent type of poetry, in your opinion.

Activity 4: Form in Poetry

- "How do I Love Thee? (Sonnet 43) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- "My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun" (Sonnet 130) by William Shakespeare
- "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas
- "One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop
- "Bonny Barbara Allan: (traditional ballad)
- "The Ballad of Peter Pumpkinhead" by Andy Partridge

In this section, we are going to look at three different forms of poetry: the sonnet, the villanelle, and the ballad. In class, we will go over the features of these forms of poetry.

You are going to write two poems that have SOMETHING to do with your novel.

For your first poem, you have a choice. You may write either a sonnet, a ballad, or a villanelle.

Your second poem **MUST BE FREE VERSE**. This does not mean that your poem has no rules!

The marking criteria are attached at the end of this learning guide.

A sonnet:

- Has 14 lines
- Each line is in iambic pentameter (has 10 syllables)
- is a lyric poem
- uses formal diction and punctuation
- follows a specific rhyme scheme, either Shakespearean (English): ababdcdefef gg or Petrarchan (Italian): ababcdcd efgefg



- uses a mixture of end stopped lines, enjambment, and caesura.

A ballad:

- has a regular rhythm (could be set to music)
- has four line stanzas
- has a regular rhyme scheme
- uses simple diction
- tells a simple story. In order to have room for this, your poem needs to be at least five stanzas long, not counting the chorus.
- should have a chorus, refrain, or repetition – or all three!

A villanelle:

- The villanelle's 19 lines form five triplets and a quatrain, using only two rhymes throughout the whole form.
- The entire first line is repeated as lines 6, 12 and 18 and the third line is repeated as lines 9, 15 and 19—so that the lines which frame the first triplet weave through the poem like refrains in a traditional song, and together form the end of the concluding stanza. With these repeating lines represented as A1 and A2 (because they rhyme together), the entire scheme is:

A1

b

A2

a

b

A1 (refrain)

a

b

A2 (refrain)

a

b

A1 (refrain)

a

b

A2 (refrain)

a

b

A1 (refrain)

A2 (refrain)

Poem Two:

- must be free verse

- must use line breaks effectively
- must be at least 15 lines long – longer if your lines are very short.
- must have something in common with the first poem – and this has to be more than just a word or two in common (unless the word is truly unusual!)

Activity 5: Complete a unit test

This test will have questions on some of the poems studied in this learning guide, and will also include the poetry section from two previous provincial exams.

Analyzing Poetry

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean-favoured and imperially slim.



And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good Morning!" and he glittered when he walked.

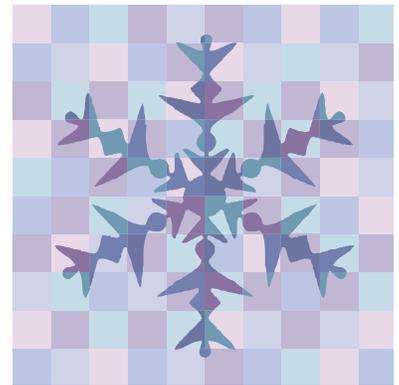
And he was rich, yes, richer than a king,
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine -- we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked and waited for the light,
And went without the meat and cursed the bread,
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet in his head.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

WINTER IS ANOTHER COUNTRY

If the autumn would
End! If the sweet season,
The late light in the tall trees would
End! If the fragrance, the odour of
Fallen apples, dust on the road,
Water somewhere near, the scent of
Water touching me; if this would end
I could endure the absence in the night,
The hands¹ beyond the reach of hands, the name
Called out and never and never answered with my name:
The image never seen with sight.
I could endure this all
If autumn ended and the cold light² came.



ARCHIBALD MACLEISH, 1948

¹ **the hands** – presumably the hands of someone very dear to him who has died

² **cold light** – winter morning

Poetry is Art

“Death be not Proud”

DEATH, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so:
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be, 5
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell; 10
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

~by John Donne

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed--and gazed--but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

~William Wordsworth

“Invictus”

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell³ clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings⁴ of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

~ by William Ernest Henley

“This is Just to Say”

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

~by William Carlos Williams

³ Fell: (archaic) wicked

⁴ bludgeonings: a bludgeon is a short heavy club, usually of wood, that is thicker or loaded at one end. Bludgeoning means to beat someone as though with such a club. It has come to be used metaphorically. In this case, it means heavy blows that have almost destroyed the speaker.

Eating Poetry

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth.
There is no happiness like mine.
I have been eating poetry.

The librarian does not believe what she sees.
Her eyes are sad
and she walks with her hands in her dress.

The poems are gone.
The light is dim.
The dogs are on the basement stairs and coming up.

Their eyeballs roll,
their blond legs burn like brush.
The poor librarian begins to stamp her feet and weep.

She does not understand.
When I get on my knees and lick her hand,
she screams.

I am a new man.
I snarl at her and bark.
I romp with joy in the bookish dark.

~ by Mark Strand

Form in Poetry

"How do I Love Thee? (Sonnet 43) by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right.
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

SONNET 116 by William Shakespeare

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Form in Poetry

"Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rage at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

"One Art" by Elizabeth Bishop

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

—Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

Form in Poetry

"Bonny Barbara Allan: (traditional ballad)

IT was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Græme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town, 5
To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

O hooly, 1 hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying, 10
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

"O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan:"
"O the better for me ye's never be, 15
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

"O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?" 20

He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing:
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

And slowly, slowly raise she up, 25
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said, she could not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing, 30
And every jow that the dead-bell gied,
It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me to-day, 35
I'll die for him to-morrow

Form in Poetry

"The Ballad of Peter Pumpkinhead" by Andy Partridge

Peter Pumpkinhead came to town
Spreading wisdom and cash around
Fed the starving and housed the poor
Showed the Vatican what gold's for

But he made too many enemies
Of the people who would keep us on our knees
Hooray for Peter Pumpkin
Who'll pray for Peter Pumpkinhead?

Peter Pumpkinhead brought to shame
Governments who would slur his name
Lusts and sex scandals failed outright
Peter merely said, "Any kind of love is all right"

But he made too many enemies
Of the people who would keep us on our knees
Hooray for Peter Pumpkin
Who'll pray for Peter Pumpkinhead?

Peter Pumpkinhead was too good
Had him nailed to a chunk of wood
He died grinning on live TV
Hanging there he looked a lot like you, and an awful lot like me!

But he made too many enemies
Of the people who would keep us on our knees
Hooray for Peter Pumpkin
Who'll pray for Peter Pumpkinhead?

Hooray for Peter Pumpkin
Who'll pray for Peter Pumpkin?
Hooray for Peter Pumpkinhead
Oh my, oh my, don't it make you want to cry, oh