

**Unit Design (based on 8 units/year, 4/semester in a 2 semester course)**

Unit Title	Exploring Poetry and Poets
Course/Grade Level	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts
Subject/Topic Areas	Poetry, nonfiction: biography/autobiography, formal and informal research, aesthetics, style, content vocabulary, manuscript form
Designed by	Cynde Snider
Time frame	A six-week unit taught in the spring of the second semester in a two-semester course
District/School	

## TEACHING/LEARNING UNIT: NONFICTION (Memoir, Biography, and Autobiography) AND POETRY

### Preparing for Teaching and Learning

#### Suggested Resources:

Memoirs, biographies, autobiographies written by and/or about poets  
Poetry anthologies and poetry collections containing works by living Georgia poets, Southern poets, contemporary American poets, and various other poets

#### Prior Knowledge Connections:

Review students' knowledge of subject matter of poetry (e.g. topic, theme), sound devices (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme), figurative language (e.g., personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole), and structure (e.g., fixed and free forms, rhymed and unrhymed, narrative and lyric) to determine what students know and what they need to know.

Review differences among memoir, biography, and autobiography to find out what students know and what they need to know.

Ask students to share some favorite poems that they have previously read or recited.

#### Entry-level Questions (Use these questions to allow students to discuss life experiences in order to connect poetry to the students' lives):

- Who's your favorite superhero? OR How many of you have seen *Spiderman* or *Spiderman 2*?
- What are your favorite things to do in your spare time? [Use additional questions to lead the students to answers such as baseball, basketball, fishing.]

#### Previewing the Unit:

—Use relevant entry-level questions to lead into the teacher's reading aloud Jim Hall's "Maybe Dats Your Pwoblem Too" and/or poems dealing with students' "favorite things to do" responses, e.g., "The Touch," by Judson Mitcham, dealing with the subject of basketball or "Sign for my Father, Who Stressed the Bunt," by David Bottoms, dealing with the subject of baseball (all in *The Made Thing*; ed. Leon Stokesbury; Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1999). Other poems related to situations, experiences, or emotions common to students, such as "The Chameleon" or "The Lesson of the Sugarcane" by Judith Ortiz Cofer (in *The Latin Deli*; New York: Norton, 1993) are also good choices.

—Stress the diverse nature of poetry, especially contemporary poetry, and show students that poems don't all deal with inaccessible or esoteric subjects and vocabulary. Invite students to explore poems by living Georgia authors such as Mitcham and Bottoms, as well as Judith Ortiz Cofer, Bette Sellers, Leon Stokesbury, John Stone, Alice Walker, etc.; Southern poets such as Hall, Wendell Berry, Susan Ludvigson, Naomi Shihab Nye, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Maya Angelou, James Dickey, etc.; Contemporary American poets such as Richard Wilbur, Pattiann Rogers, Sylvia Plath, Gary Snyder, Adrienne Rich, Robert Bly, etc.

#### Relevant Content Terminology:

- prose—spoken or written language that is not cast in poetical measure or rhythm
- memoir—an autobiographical account of a personal experience recalled from memory, usually written in an informal style; differs from autobiography in scope
- biography—an account of a person's life written, composed, or produced by another
- autobiography—an account of a person's life written, composed, or produced by that same person
- structure—the organizational pattern of a text; structure may be apparent in either content or form or both
- poetry—a genre of literature in which individual works are generally recognizable in terms of form and/or structure (e.g., meter, versification, rhyme, etc.), and/or precise and figurative use of language
- diction—precise word choice; selection of words for specific denotative, connotative, or figurative purposes
- imagery—vivid or figurative language used to represent those things that can be perceived by the five senses: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures, etc.
- symbolism—the practice of representing things or ideas by means of other objects or ideas; attributing symbolic meanings or significance to objects, events, or relationships

- figurative language—speech or writing that departs from literal meaning in order to achieve a special effect or meaning; speech or writing employing figures of speech such as similes or metaphors, etc.
- point of view—the vantage point from which an author tells a story
- selection of detail—those details an author has included in a text
- aesthetic effects—the reactions a reader has to the form, content, and/or beauty of a work and that engender enjoyment or an emotional reaction in that reader
- alliteration—the repetition of initial identical consonant sounds or any vowel sounds in successive or closely associated syllables
- onomatopoeia—words whose sounds suggest their meaning, e.g., “buzz,” “clang,” “drip”
- rhyme scheme—the pattern in which rhyme sounds occur in a stanza or an entire poem
- slant or uneven rhyme—off rhyme where the ending consonants rhyme but the initial sounds do not, e.g., sown/clown; after/brother
- personification—endowing animals, ideas, abstractions, or inanimate objects with human characteristics
- metaphor—a figure of speech, in this case a type of analogy, in which one thing is implicitly and indirectly compared to another, as in “*a sea of troubles*,” where the troubles or problems are so extensive that they are being compared to the size of a sea or ocean
- simile—a figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are explicitly and directly compared, often by *like* or *as*, as in “*my love is like a red, red rose*,” where love is directly compared to the rose
- hyperbole—exaggeration
- fixed form poems—poems that conform to definite, predetermined patterns of line and stanza, e.g., sonnets, ballads, haikus, villanelles, sestinas, etc.
- free form poems—poems that do not follow any predetermined pattern; these poems may have observable patterns of rhyme or rhythm, but these patterns are not predetermined by the definition of a form
- narrative poem—a poem that tells a story
- lyric poem—a poem, generally brief, that imaginatively and melodically creates a single, unified impression; usually one dealing with an emotion

## Balanced Continuum of Assessments

**Informal checks for understanding:** Students initially use a graphic organizer to aid their reading and understanding of a specific poem or poems.

**Informal checks for understanding:** After reviewing and/or presenting general characteristics of memoir, biography, autobiography, and of poetry, the teacher uses oral questioning techniques as students work individually, in small groups, or in the large group, to assess the students' grasp of content terminology.

**Observation/Dialogue:** Teacher observes small groups of students as they develop understanding of concepts by categorizing and classifying poems according to criteria the group members determine. Groups should be prepared to justify their categories/classifications.

**Observation/Dialogue:** Teacher observes individual students as they engage in exploratory reading of poetry and select poems to include in their anthologies, i.e., as they read many different poems by many different poets in order to determine what they like and why they like it.

**Observation/Dialogue:** Teacher employs reciprocal teaching where students initiate and lead discussion/dialogue about specific poems, asking questions, summarizing, and/or clarifying particular words or phrases that they have selected from their reading for various reasons. They might find a particular passage especially rich in diction and/or imagery; they might find a particular figure of speech that suddenly brings everything together; they might find a line or stanza that clearly demonstrates a particular theme or underlying idea; they might find a poem that connects to prior reading or viewing; or they might select a poem that is complex or puzzling. The teacher assesses understanding by monitoring and observing students' participation as well as the sophistication of their responses and interpretations. Students should be encouraged to pose questions for other students, and the teacher can frame additional questions to help refine comprehension and understanding.

**Observation/Dialogue:** After self-selecting and reading a memoir, biography, or autobiography of a poet, each student selects one or more poems by that poet and evaluates the connections between that poet's life and the selected poems. Students then participate in a discussion seminar that the teacher initiates with the question: *"How can a poet's life affect her or his art?"*

**Quiz/Test:** Students demonstrate understanding of specific content vocabulary via brief quizzes.

**Writing:** Students use personal journals to reflect on poems they like and why and, as they read their self-selected memoir, biography, or autobiography, to reflect on/speculate about connections between the life of the poet and his/her creative work. These reflections become the basis for the discussion seminar during which the teacher assesses understanding. The teacher may also choose to assess a student's progress during the course of the assignment by reading and responding in writing (a dialogue rather than a critical response) to each student's journal.

**Writing:** Each student will compose a 2-3 page preface to introduce her/his anthology. The preface will be written at the conclusion of the exploratory reading process and will take the form of a personal essay that reflects the student's thoughts, observations, and/or feelings about the works she/he has chosen and the process of choosing them, as well as the student's grasp of the impact of the forms, structures, and aesthetics of specific poems on his/her affective or emotional responses to those poems.

**Performance task/project:** Each student compiles a personal poetry anthology that includes a title page, a preface (see writing task) a table of contents, a collection of poems selected to meet specified criteria, an "about the poet" section with brief biographies, and a bibliography following the MLA stylesheet that lists the source for each poem in the collection.

**Performance task/project:** Students hold a poetry reading during which each student reads one to three poems from his/her anthology and explains his/her particular aesthetic response to the subject matter, sound devices, figurative language, or structure; in other words why he/she found the poems appealing and included them in the anthology.



## Sample Pacing Guide for Teaching and Learning Lessons and Activities: April/May 2005

### April 2005

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
11 -Ask entry-level questions -Read poems that correspond to students' interests (such as the ones suggested) -Access prior knowledge	12 -Introduce Personal Poetry Anthology, expectations, assessments, etc. -Provide students with a "tour" of available resources -Provide overview of sample formatted pages	13 -Introduce content vocabulary related to poetry as needed throughout the unit -Provide guidelines for personal journals -Begin exploratory reading	14 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	15 -Ask students to share poems they have found that they really like and why they like them (reciprocal teaching) -Use the graphic organizer to practice "reading" either "The Touch," "The Sign I Made for my Father," or a student's chosen poem
18 -Introduce nonfiction reading assignment -Compare/contrast memoir, biography, & autobiography to/with fiction -Identify possible location(s) of resources -Introduce content vocab relevant to nonfiction assignment	19 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	20 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	21 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals	22 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals
25 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals	26 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals	27 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals	28 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals	29 -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry -Peruse selected personal journals

### May 2005

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 -Small group activity: apply content terminology to sort and classify poems -Debrief activity	3 -30 point content vocab quiz; if time remains: -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	4 -Review MLA formats for pagination, margins, spacing, bibliography, etc. -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	5 -Review sample formatted biographical information, -Exploratory reading -Encourage the spontaneous sharing of poems -Encourage conversations about poetry	6 -Review sample title page, and table of contents -Conclude exploratory reading
9 -Writing Lab* • draft preface/pers. essay • prepare poems, title page, table of contents, bibliography, and biographical information • add graphics or illustrations	10 -Writing Lab* • draft preface/pers. essay • prepare poems, title page, table of contents, bibliography, and biographical information • add graphics or illustrations	11 -Writing Lab* • draft preface/pers. essay • prepare poems, title page, table of contents, bibliography, and biographical information • add graphics or illustrations	12 -Writing Lab* • draft preface/pers. essay • prepare poems, title page, table of contents, bibliography, and biographical information • add graphics or illustrations	13 -Writing Lab* • draft preface/pers. essay • prepare poems, title page, table of contents, bibliography, and biographical information • add graphics or illustrations
16 -Poetry readings/discussions -DUE: Personal Poetry Anthologies (w/personal essay/preface)	17 -Poetry readings/discussions	18 -Poetry readings/discussions	19 -Discussion seminar: "How can a poet's life affect her or his art?"	20 -Debrief unit -Revisit and review content vocabulary in context of assignment(s)

\*If no writing lab is available, students will complete this work at home and prepare for the discussion seminar during class.

**Comment:** Note that the rubric is inherent in the guidelines for the assignment.

## Personal Poetry Anthology\* April is National Poetry Month

**Comment:** Requirements can be adjusted as time or available resources warrant.

### Requirements:

- One** poem by a *name of school* student or teacher (not written by you)
- Three** poems by living Georgia authors (either born in Georgia or current, permanent residents)
- Five** poems by Southern authors (either born in South or permanent residents)
- Five** poems by contemporary American authors (must have been living and writing 1945 or later)
- Six** additional poems of your choice (must be published as literary works)

### Guidelines:

- 10 points**--The anthology will be bound securely and permanently so that it does not come apart—plastic spirals, 3 fastener folders, etc. No clear plastic folders with sliding strips please.
- 10 points**--The title page will include a unique title you have created for your anthology, plus the subtitle: *A Personal Anthology*, your name, school, grade, the year. It may include additional information if you choose.
- 60 points**--The preface will introduce your anthology. The preface is a **personal essay** that reflects your thoughts, observations, and/or feelings about the works you have chosen and the process of choosing them, as well as the impact of the of specific poems on your affective or emotional responses to those poems. The preface will be no less than two and no more than three pages typed, double-spaced in 12 pt. Times, with a 1½” left margin and 1” margins top, bottom, and right side. The pages of the preface should be numbered using lower case Roman numerals. The preface comes before the table of contents in your anthology.
- 20 points**--The table of contents must be clearly and logically organized in the order of the category requirements listed above (i.e. *Name of School* Poet, Living Georgia Poets, etc.; titles, authors, and page numbers must be listed in the table of contents. The bibliography and the biographical data pages should be included in the table of contents.
- 10 points**--All works will be neatly typed, hand lettered in black ink on unlined paper; or in exceptional cases (and after obtaining special permission), photocopied very cleanly and neatly with no black edges. If photocopying, it may be necessary to make one copy, then cut and paste that copy to a second sheet and copy again. Format for poems (type face, special bolds for titles, etc.) should be consistent throughout anthology, but poems should be typed just as they appear in their original source (if aligned left, align left; if all lower case, all lower case, etc.). Include poet’s name and pagination on each page.
- 20 points**--A bibliography delineating the source information for each poem will appear at the end of the anthology. The bibliography will follow MLA guidelines and will be in alphabetical order. Record the bibliography information (author & title of poem, book/anthology, page number, editor if applicable, place of publication, date of publication, etc.) on one side of a note card as soon as you locate each poem.
- 20 points**-- Biographical data on each author represented in the collection will be presented in alphabetical order following the bibliography pages. Make sure you can locate biographical information before you choose a poem. Many times this information is available in the book where you find the poem. Record this information on the opposite side of the note card containing the bibliographic information at the same time you copy the poem.
- 10 points**--The anthology will include all required works, and these works will be in the same order as they are listed in the table of contents.
- 20 points**--The contents will strongly suggest a broad range of exploratory reading; no author will be represented more than once; no single source (i.e., same book) may be used more than three times. All poems, except that of the *name of school* author, must be from legitimately published sources--no vanity press poems, no greeting card or calendar poems, no little books of Hallmark, etc., poems.
- 20 points**--The total number of mechanical and grammatical errors shall not exceed an average of two per page.
- 30 points**--Appropriate and artistic illustrations or graphics will accompany at least five of the poems in the anthology.

**TOTAL POSSIBLE = 230 POINTS**

Most of exploratory reading of poetry will be completed during class. Resources will be made available to you in the classroom [or the Media Center]; however, you are not limited to these resources. If you choose to use any outside sources, you must bring those sources to class to work. You must treat all classroom materials with respect.

\* This assignment is adapted from Anne McCrary Sullivan’s “The Personal Anthology: A Stimulus for Exploratory Reading.” *English Journal* 77.8 (Dec. 1988): 27-30.

Sample Title Page

*Looking Over the Edge*  
*A Personal Anthology*

Name of Student

Name of School  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Spring 2005

Sample Table of Contents

Looking Over the Edge

**Poem by *Name of School* Poet**  
Title.....1  
Author

**Poems by Living Georgia Poets**  
Title 1.....2  
Author  
Title 2.....3  
Author  
Title 3.....5  
Author

**Poems by Southern Poets**  
Title 1.....7  
Author  
Title 2.....9  
Author  
Title 3.....10  
Author  
Title 4.....12  
Author  
Title 5.....13  
Author

**Poems by Contemporary American Poets**  
Title 1.....15  
Author  
Title 2.....17  
Author  
Title 3.....18  
Author  
Title 4.....19  
Author  
Title 5.....21  
Author

**Poems by Contemporary American Poets**  
Title 1.....23  
Author  
Title 2.....24  
Author  
Title 3.....25  
Author  
Title 4.....26  
Author  
Title 5.....27  
Author  
Title 6.....28  
Author

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## **Bibliography Formats Most Often Used in Poetry Project**

### **Book of Poetry by Single Poet:**

Last Name of Poet, First Name. "Title of Poem." *Title of Poetry Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Page Number for Poem.

Smith, John. "Friendship." *Poems of Humanity*. New York: Sutton, 1999. 26.

### **Anthology of Poetry—Book With Multiple Poets:**

Last Name of Poet, First Name. "Title of Poem." *Title of Anthology*. Edition (if relevant). Ed. Editor's Name (if relevant). Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Page Number for Poem.

Smith, John. "Friendship." *Famous Poems*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Eds. Bill Brown and Jane Doe. New York: Sutton, 1999. 263.

### **Periodical (Published at Regular Intervals):**

Last Name of Poet, First Name. "Title of Poem." *Title of Periodical* (Day or Month or Season) and Year Published: Page Number for Poem.

Smith, John. "Friendship." *Oxford American* (Winter 1999): 6.

## Sample Formatted Bibliography

### Bibliography

- Hall, Jim. "Maybe Dats Your Pwoblem Too." *The Made Thing*. Ed. Leon Stokesbury. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 1999. 124.
- Heaney, Seamus. "The Rain Stick." *The Spirit Level*. London: Faber, 1996. 1.
- Mitcham, Judson. "The Touch." *Somewhere in Ecclesiastes*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1991. 5.
- Silverstein, Shel. "Tattooin' Ruth." *Falling Up*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996. 45.

## Sample Formatted Biographical Information

### Biographical Information

**Jim Hall** was born in Kentucky in 1947, but he has lived in Florida since 1973. He teaches at Florida International University in Miami.

**Seamus Heaney**, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995, is a well-known Irish poet.

**Judson Mitcham** is a professor of psychology at Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Georgia. He received a Pushcart Prize for poetry in 1989.

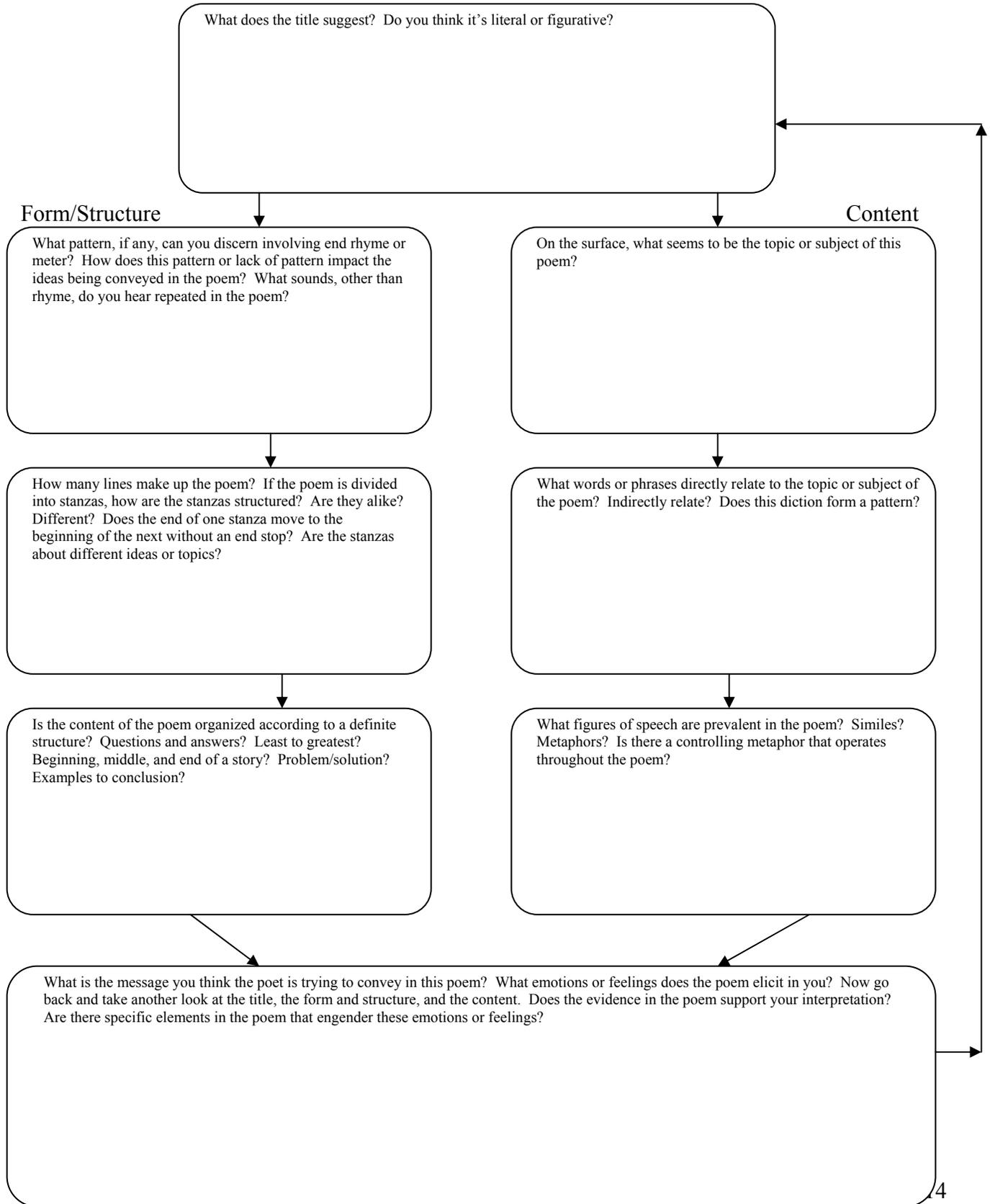
**Shel Silverstein** wrote several popular books of poetry for children including *The Light in the Attic* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Silverstein was born in Chicago; he died in 1999.

## Nonfiction Task

- ☞ As you engage in your exploratory reading of poetry, note two, three, or four poets whose work really appeals to you.
- ☞ Locate a published memoir, biography, or autobiography written by or about one of the poets you have selected. See me if you have trouble.
- ☞ Bring your nonfiction book to class each day to read whenever you have down time, need a break, or have to wait on a particular poetry book.
- ☞ As you read this memoir, biography, or autobiography, use your personal journal to reflect on or speculate about any connections you see between the life of the poet and his/her creative work.
- ☞ Select one or more poems that reflect the connections you have noted.
- ☞ On 19 May, be prepared to discuss the following question:  
*“How can a poet’s life affect her or his art?”*

Note: Distribute the rubric for the discussion seminar at the same time the assignment is given.

## Sample Graphic Organizer for “Reading a Poem”



## Sample Student Handout

### Content Vocabulary for Poetry and Nonfiction Unit

Define or provide examples of those terms you already know. Record definitions and examples of new or unfamiliar terms as they are introduced. Ask questions about any terms you don't understand or cannot apply.

- prose—
- memoir—
- biography—
- autobiography—
- structure—
- poetry—
- diction—
- imagery—
- symbolism—
- figurative language—
- point of view—
- selection of detail—
- aesthetic effects—
- alliteration—
- onomatopoeia—
- rhyme scheme—
- personification—
- metaphor—
- simile—
- hyperbole—
- fixed form poems—
- free form poems—
- narrative poem—
- lyric poem—

## Small Group Categorization/Classification Activity

### Teacher Instructions:

1. Prepare packets of 15 to 20 poems, one packet for every three to five students. Poems can be photocopied or printed from online sites. You can often get three or four poems per 8½" x 11" sheet of paper, but cut the sheets so each poem is separate. You may want to laminate the poems for repeated use. Packets do not all have to be exactly the same, but each packet should have a variety of poems that illustrate different concepts encountered in this unit (e.g., rhymed, unrhymed, with definite meter, without definite meter, long, short, narrative, lyric, fixed form, free form, etc.; if including fixed form, be sure to include at least two of the same form—sonnets, sestinas, etc.—in a single packet.).
2. Place students into an even number of groups of three to five students each.
3. Give each group one packet of poems and one set of instructions.
4. Allow each group 15-20 minutes to complete the initial task, then double the size of each group by combining two groups together.
5. Allow each larger group 10-15 minutes to complete the second task.
6. Return students to the whole class group and debrief the activity, reviewing and applying content terminology.

### Student Instructions

1. Divide the poems in your packet into at least three groups with each group of poems having similar and distinct characteristics. For example, a distinct characteristic might be "poems that rhyme." Each group you create must have at least two poems in it. You might want to refer to your content terminology sheet for category ideas.
2. After you have classified or categorized each poem, create a title/heading for each group, list each poem under the appropriate title/heading, and compose a written rationale for each group: What characterizes the poems in each group? How are the poems in a group different from the other groups? How are they like the poems in other groups?
3. You have 15-20 minutes to complete this task. If you finish early, try to arrange the poems into new categories.
4. When instructed to do so, combine forces with another group close to you. Discuss the task you have just completed by comparing and contrasting the categories/classifications you have formed, as well as the rationales for the decisions you made about categories/classifications.
5. Be prepared to justify your categories/classifications to the class.

## Sample Content Vocabulary Quiz

### Quiz: Applying Content Vocabulary

(30 points)

#### Adrienne Rich - Aunt Jennifer's Tigers\*

Aunt Jennifer's tigers prance across a screen,  
Bright topaz denizens of a world of green.  
They do not fear the men beneath the tree;  
They pace in sleek chivalric certainty.

Aunt Jennifer's fingers fluttering through her wool  
Find even the ivory needle hard to pull.  
The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band  
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.

When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie  
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.  
The tigers in the panel that she made  
Will go on prancing, proud and unafraid.

\*full-text available online at:  
[http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/adrienne\\_rich/3826](http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/adrienne_rich/3826)

#### Langston Hughes - Mother to Son \*\*

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
It's had tacks in it,  
And splinters,  
And boards torn up,  
And places with no carpet on the floor—  
Bare.  
But all the time  
I'se been a-climbin' on,  
And reachin' landin's,  
And turnin' corners,  
And sometimes goin' in the dark  
Where there ain't been no light.  
So, boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps.  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now—  
For I'se still goin', honey,  
I'se still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

\*\*full-text available online at:  
<http://www.favoritepoem.org/poems/hughes/>

**Instructions**—Select concrete examples from either of the two poems printed above and use these examples to explain any **FIVE** of the following terms: diction, imagery, symbolism, figurative language, point of view, slant or uneven rhyme, metaphor, simile.

**Sample Graphic Organizer for Close Reading a Poem** [Explanation following oral reading performance.]

**Sample Rubrics**

<b>Rubric for Poetry Reading</b>				
Masterful, Profound, Dynamic, Sophisticated, Insightful,	Skilled, Revealing, Forceful, In-depth, Reflective	Able, Practiced, Entertaining, Appropriate, Interpretative	Apprentice, Uneven, Aware, Complete, Literal,	Novice, Unpracticed, Apathetic, Haphazard, Naive
50...49...48...47...46	45...44...43...42...41	40...39...38...37...36	35...34...33	32...0

<b>Rubric for Discussion Seminar*</b>				
Sophisticated: an unusually thorough account that is fully supported, verified, and justified; deep and broad; goes well beyond the obvious; profound thinking is exhibited	In-depth: A thoughtful and revealing account that goes beyond what is obvious or what was explicitly stated; makes subtle connections; well supported; critical thinking is exhibited	Developed: An explanation that reflects some in-depth and individual ideas; the student has synthesized ideas here, but lacks sufficient evidence and argument to be as convincing as desired	Incomplete: An account with apt ideas that extend and deepen some of what was learned, some “reading between the lines,” but one that is overly generalized and unsupported.	Superficial: More descriptive than analytical; a fragmentary or sketchy account that appears to be based on unexamined hunches, unsupported or unsupportable speculations, or a lack of effort
50...49...48...47...46	45...44...43...42...41	40...39...38...37...36	35...34...33	32...0

\*During the discussion seminar, use a seating chart to record codes (e.g., a ⊙—bullseye—for a contribution that is “sophisticated,” etc., a +—plus—for one that is “in-depth,” etc., a ✓—checkmark—for one that is “developed,” etc., a ?—question mark—for one that is “incomplete,” etc., or a -—minus sign—for one that is “superficial,” etc.) or for comments regarding each student’s participation, then use this information to complete a rubric for each student.

**Note:** Distribute the rubric for the discussion seminar at the same time the assignment is given.

For more descriptive words appropriate for assessment rubrics, see Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design*, Alexandria, VI: ASCD,1998, 76-77.

## READING AND LITERATURE

Focusing on a study of literary genres, the student develops initial understanding of both the structure and the meaning of a work of literature. The student develops initial understanding of the way the form of a work of literature affects the meaning of the work and of the process of interpretation of a text. The student reads thoughtfully and purposefully, constantly checking for understanding of the author's intent and meaning in order to determine a sound interpretation.

**ELA9RL1 The student demonstrates comprehension by identifying evidence (e.g., diction, imagery, point of view, figurative language, symbolism, plot events) and main ideas in a variety of texts representative of different genres (e.g., poetry, prose [short story, novel, essay, editorial, biography], and drama) and using this evidence as the basis for interpretation. The texts are of the quality and complexity illustrated by the Grade Nine reading list.**

The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction and/or informational materials and provides evidence from the text to support understanding; the student:

- a. Analyzes and applies knowledge of the characteristics of memoir, biography, and/or autobiography.
- b. Analyzes and explains the purpose, structure, and elements of nonfiction works, including memoir, biography, and autobiography.
- c. Analyzes and evaluates the effects of language (e.g., diction, imagery, symbolism, figurative language), structure, point of view, and selection of details in memoir, biography, and/or autobiography.

The student identifies and responds to differences in style and subject matter in poems by a variety of contemporary and canonical poets; the student:

- a. Identifies and responds to the aesthetic effects of subject matter (e.g. topic, theme), sound devices (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme scheme), figurative language (e.g., personification, metaphor, simile, hyperbole), and structure (e.g., fixed and free forms, rhymed and unrhymed, narrative and lyric) in a variety of poems.
- b. Sorts and classifies poems by specified criteria (e.g., fixed and free forms, rhymed and unrhymed, narrative and lyric, and/or universal themes and topics).

**ELA9RL2 The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of theme in literary works from various genres and provides evidence from the works to support understanding. The student**

- a. Applies knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection represents a universal view or comment on life or society and provides support from the text for the identified theme.
- b. Evaluates how an author's choice of words advances the theme or purpose of a work.

**ELA9RL3 The student deepens understanding of literary works by relating them to contemporary context or historical background. The student**

- a. Relates a literary work to non-literary documents and/or other texts from its literary period.

**ELA9RL4 The student employs a variety of writing genres to demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of significant ideas in sophisticated literary works. The student composes essays, narratives, poems, or technical documents. The student**

- a. Demonstrates understanding of significant themes in specific literary works.
- b. Supports important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references or allusions to the text.
- c. Includes a formal works cited or bibliography when applicable.

**ELA9RL5 The student understands and acquires new vocabulary and uses it correctly in reading and writing. The student**

- a. Identifies and correctly uses idioms, cognates, words with literal and figurative meanings, and patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or functions.
- b. Uses knowledge of Greek and Latin prefixes, suffixes, and roots to understand the meanings of new words.
- c. Uses general dictionaries, specialized dictionaries, thesauruses, or related references as needed to increase learning.

## READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

After the elementary and middle grades years, the student seriously engages in reading for learning. This process sweeps across all disciplinary domains, extending even to the area of personal learning. The student encounters a variety of informational and fictional texts and reads texts in all genres and modes of discourse. In the study of various disciplines of learning (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies), the student must learn, through reading, the communities of discourse of those disciplines. Each subject has its own specific vocabulary, and for a student to excel in all subjects, he or she must learn the specific vocabulary of all subject areas *in context*.

Reading across the curriculum develops the student's academic and personal interests in different subjects, as well as his or her understanding and expertise across subject areas. As the student reads, he or she develops both content and contextual vocabulary and builds good habits for reading, researching, and learning. The Reading Across the Curriculum standards focus on the academic and personal skills a student acquires as the student reads in all areas of learning.

ELA9RC1 The student reads a minimum of 25 grade-level appropriate books or book equivalents (approximately 1,000,000 words) per year from a variety of subject disciplines. The student reads both informational and fictional texts in a variety of genres and modes of discourse, including technical texts related to various subject areas.

ELA9RC2 The student participates in discussions related to curricular learning in all subject areas. The student

- a. Identifies messages and themes from books in all subject areas.
- b. Responds to a variety of texts in multiple modes of discourse.
- c. Relates messages and themes from one subject area to those in another area.
- d. Evaluates the merits of texts in every subject discipline.
- e. Examines the author's purpose in writing.
- f. Recognizes the features of disciplinary texts.

ELA9RC3 The student acquires new vocabulary in each content area and uses it correctly. The student

- a. Demonstrates an understanding of contextual vocabulary in various subjects.
- b. Uses content vocabulary in writing and speaking.
- c. Explores understanding of new words found in subject area texts.

ELA9RC4 The student establishes a context for information acquired by reading across subject areas. The student

- a. Explores life experiences related to subject area content.
- b. Discusses in both writing and speaking how certain words and concepts relate to multiple subjects.
- c. Determines strategies for finding content and contextual meaning for unfamiliar words or concepts.

## WRITING

All modes or genres are practiced at each grade level; however, in order to achieve mastery, each grade level has a particular writing focus. Technical writing is the focus for 9<sup>th</sup> grade; by the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the student will demonstrate competency in technical writing. The student writes coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective or tightly-reasoned argument. The writing exhibits the student's awareness of audience and purpose. When appropriate, the texts contain introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. The student regularly progresses through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing successive versions).

ELA9W1 The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals closure. The student

- a. Establishes a clear, distinctive, and coherent thesis or perspective and maintains a consistent tone and focus throughout.
- b. Selects a focus, structure, and point of view relevant to the purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.
- c. Constructs arguable topic sentences, when applicable, to guide unified paragraphs.
- d. Uses precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and active rather than passive voice.
- e. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.
- f. Uses traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- g. Supports statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

ELA9W2 The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.

The student produces narrative writing and applies polished narrative strategies acquired in grades 6-8 to other genres of writing such as reflective compositions, historical investigative reports, and literary analyses, by raising the level of critical thinking skills and rhetorical techniques.

The student produces technical writing that reports technical information and/or conveys ideas clearly, logically, and purposefully to a particular audience; the student:

- a. Engages the interest of the reader.
- b. Provides clear and purposeful information logically and correctly in order to address an intended audience appropriately.
- c. Uses appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style to take into account the nature of the relationship with, and the knowledge and interests of, the recipients.
- d. Uses varied levels, patterns, and types of language to achieve intended effects and aid comprehension.
- e. Provides detailed and accurate information or specifications to anticipate readers' problems, mistakes, and misunderstandings.
- f. Follows style conventions for specific types of documents (e.g., résumé, memorandum, letter, e-mail, user manual) and uses page formats, fonts, spacing, highlighting, and images that contribute to the readability and impact of the document.

- g. Combines text, images, and sound as well as other information from many sources (e.g., television broadcasts, videos, films, books, newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMs, the Internet, electronic media-generated images).
- h. Polishes and refines documents using such aids as advanced publishing software and graphic programs.
- i. Provides closure.

**ELA9W3 The student uses research and technology to support writing. The student**

- a. Formulates clear research questions and utilizes appropriate research venues (e.g., library, electronic media, personal interview, survey) to locate and incorporate evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- b. Uses supporting evidence from multiple sources to develop the main ideas within the body of an essay, composition, or technical document.
- c. Synthesizes information from multiple sources and identifies complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, or technical documents).
- d. Integrates quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.
- e. Uses appropriate conventions for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to an appropriate style manual (e.g., *Modern Language Association Handbook*, *The Chicago Manual of Style*).
- f. Designs and publishes documents, using aids such as advanced publishing software and graphic programs.

**ELA9W4 The student practices both timed and process writing and, when applicable, uses the writing process to develop, revise, and evaluate writing. The student**

- a. Plans and drafts independently and resourcefully.
- b. Revises writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective.
- c. Revises writing for specific audiences, purposes, and formality of the contexts.
- d. Revises writing to sharpen the precision of word choice and achieve desired tone.
- e. Edits writing to improve word choice, grammar, punctuation, etc.

## CONVENTIONS

**Conventions are essential for reading, writing, and speaking. Instruction in language conventions will, therefore, occur within the context of reading, writing, and speaking, rather than in isolation.**

The student writes to make connections with the larger world. A student's ideas are more likely to be taken seriously when the words are spelled accurately and the sentences are grammatically correct. Use of standard English conventions helps readers understand and follow the student's meaning, while errors can be distracting and confusing. Standard English conventions are the "good manners" of writing and speaking that make communication fluid.

ELA9C1 The student demonstrates understanding and control of the rules of the English language, realizing that usage involves the appropriate application of conventions and grammar in both written and spoken formats. The student

- a. Demonstrates an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, diction, and syntax.
- b. Correctly uses clauses (e.g., main and subordinate) and mechanics of punctuation (e.g., end stops, commas, semicolons, and quotation marks).
- c. Demonstrates an understanding of sentence construction (e.g., subordination, proper placement of modifiers) and proper English usage (e.g., consistency of verb tenses).

ELA9C2 The student demonstrates understanding of manuscript form, realizing that different forms of writing require different formats. The student

- a. Produces writing that conforms to appropriate manuscript requirements.
- b. Produces legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct use of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization.
- c. Reflects appropriate format requirements, including pagination, spacing, and margins, and integration of source material with appropriate citations (e.g., in-text citations, use of direct quotations, paraphrase, and summary, and weaving of source and support materials with writer's own words, etc.).
- d. Includes formal works cited or bibliography when applicable.

## **LISTENING, SPEAKING, AND VIEWING**

The student demonstrates an understanding of listening, speaking, and viewing skills for a variety of purposes. The student observes and listens critically and responds appropriately to written and oral communication in a variety of genres and media. The student speaks in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas.

**ELA9LSV1** The student participates in student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and group verbal interactions. The student

- a. Initiates new topics and responds to adult-initiated topics.
- b. Asks relevant questions.
- c. Responds to questions with appropriate information.
- d. Actively solicits another person's comments or opinions.
- e. Offers own opinion forcefully without domineering.
- f. Volunteers contributions and responds when directly solicited by teacher or discussion leader.
- g. Gives reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- h. Clarifies, illustrates, or expands on a response when asked to do so; asks classmates for similar expansions.
- i. Employs group decision-making techniques such as brainstorming or a problem-solving sequence (e.g., recognizes problem, defines problem, identifies possible solutions, selects optimal solution, implements solution, evaluates solution).
- j. Divides labor to achieve the overall group goal efficiently.

**ELA9LSV2** The student formulates reasoned judgments about written and oral communication in various media genres. The student delivers focused, coherent, and polished presentations that convey a clear and distinct perspective, demonstrate solid reasoning, and combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description.

**When delivering and responding to presentations, the student:**

- a. Delivers narrative, expository, or persuasive presentations that incorporate the same elements found in that mode or genre of writing.
- b. Applies appropriate interviewing techniques (e.g., prepares and asks relevant questions; makes notes of responses; uses language that conveys maturity, sensitivity and respect; responds correctly and effectively to questions).
- c. Delivers oral responses to literature that incorporate the same elements found in written literary analysis.
- d. Uses props, visual aids, graphs, or electronic media to enhance the appeal and accuracy of presentations.