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Framing Poetry

Sherry Brown
Trinity University

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Unit Title: Framing Poetry

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject/Topic Area(s): English/Creative Writing

Designed By: Sherry Brown

Time Frame: 4 weeks

School District: private

School: TMI – The Episcopal School of Texas

School Address and Phone: 20955 W. Tejas Trail, San Antonio TX 78257 / 210-698-7171

**Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

This is an elective, semester-long creative writing class. In developing a poetry unit, I wanted to provide examples of highly structured forms of poetry and have the students practice using those forms. Through the focus on the essential questions and discussions about the use of structure, I want the students to come to an understanding that structure serves purpose, and that the meaning of a poem is derived from structure, as well as content. In a well-written poem, structure and content work together as a cohesive whole to effectively communicate meaning and emotion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established Goals (e.g., standards)</th>
<th>Transfer</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Essential Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCTE/IRA English Language Arts Standards:</td>
<td>Students will independently use their learning to...</td>
<td>Students will understand that...</td>
<td>How can structure engender freedom?</td>
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<td>- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.</td>
<td>...create original poetry using the guidelines of specific poetic structures in a thoughtful, intentional manner.</td>
<td>...if a poem is only read for comprehension, then the reader misses the pleasure and meaning inherent in the poetry.</td>
<td>What is the purpose of poetry?</td>
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<td>- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.</td>
<td>...meter, rhyme, diction, and other poetic elements all work together to create meaning in a poem.</td>
<td>Why should a writer or aspiring writer learn about the elements of poetic structure?</td>
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<td>- Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.</td>
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<td>- Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).</td>
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<tr>
<th>Acquisition</th>
<th>Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Students will be able to...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will know...</td>
<td>...recognize and name the following metrical patterns: iambic, trochaic, dactylic, anapestic, and the spondee.</td>
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<td>...how and why to use meter and rhyme to structure original poetry.</td>
<td>...recognize and name the following line lengths: trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, and hexameter.</td>
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<td>...when to break from traditional structure in poetry writing.</td>
<td>...recognize and name such literary devices as enjambment, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, allusion, apostrophe, and figurative language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>...how diction and literary elements are used by poets to enhance meaning and create emotional responses to poetry.</td>
<td>...recognize the following poetic types: sonnet, blank verse, pantoun, sestina, and villanelle.</td>
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| Stage 2 – Evidence |
### Stage 3 – Learning Plan

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<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>Evaluative Criteria (for rubric)</th>
<th>Pre-Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (M or T) | Performance Task(s)  
*Students will demonstrate meaning-making and transfer by...*  
...creating three original poems using poetic structure and poetic elements in a meaningful and intentional manner. |
| T | Other Evidence (e.g., formative)  
- Define, identify, and explain the purpose of the metrical patterns, poetic types, and diction and literary devices used in poetry  
- Engage in reflective activities *(observations and sensory experiences)* and engage in protocols which make meaning of the reflective activities |

#### Day 1-2:
- **Chalk Talk “How can structure engender freedom?”**
- **Poem Re-organization Activity** (This activity serves as the hook. In addition, it illustrates how poetic structure can determine tone.) *Students will do this activity in pairs, then 2 pairs will join together to come to a consensus, then whole class discussion.*

#### Day 3:
- **Literary devices pre-assessment quiz** *(each time we look at poems as examples to illustrate the lessons each day, we will also discuss any relevant literary devices)*
- **Assign homework to be due Day 6: *observations and sensory experiences***

#### Day 4:
- **In groups, provide practice for students to identify and scan poems, and to write lines of poetry in the different metrical patterns.**

#### Day 5:
- **Explain the line lengths (trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter) and show how to scan and mark the metrical patterns and line lengths in a poem.**

#### Day 6:
- **Student self-assessment; exit slip**

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**Progress Monitoring (e.g., formative data)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</table>
| A    | In groups, provide practice for students to identify and scan metrical patterns and line lengths in poems, and to write lines of poetry in the different patterns and lengths.  
Homework assigned on Day 1, due Day 6: observations and sensory experiences  
Journal: Look over your ethnographic notes and write down any words or phrases that you see or that come to mind which might be used in a poem  
Protocol (Three Levels of Text) with ethnographic notes (in triads)  
http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/3_levels_text.pdf |
| M    | Day 7:  
Quiz over scansion  
Finish ethnographic notes protocol.  
Journal: add any words/phrases to the ethnographic notes section. Jot down notes about what kind of poem could come out of these notes – relaying a story, expressing an emotion, capturing a moment, cautioning the reader, etc. |
| M    | Day 8:  
Introduce sonnets.  
Journal: Look over your sacred spaces notes. Highlight or underline (or add) any words or phrases that might be used in a poem.  
Protocol (think-pair-share) with sacred spaces. The partners will consider the question – What did each of you find surprising as you engaged in the sacred spaces activity? Share one another’s notes and discuss – then, whole class discussion. |
| M/T  | Day 9:  
Finish sacred spaces protocol.  
Journal: add any words or phrases to the sacred spaces section. Jot down notes about what kind of poem could come out of these notes – relaying a story, expressing an emotion, capturing a moment, cautioning the reader, etc.  
Introduce blank verse. |
| M    | Day 10:  
Journal: Look over your confined space and unusual perspective notes. Highlight or underline (or add) any words or phrases that might be useful in a poem.  
Protocol with confined space and unusual perspective Individual reflection: chose one of the activities and create a metaphor for your experience.  
Journal: add any words or phrases to confined space and unusual perspective notes. Jot down notes about what kind of poem could come out of these notes – relaying a story, expressing an emotion, capturing a moment, cautioning the |
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| Day 11-13: | - Introduce villanelles, pantouns, and sestinas. Practice identifying and writing portions of each of the types of poems.  
- Revisit the Guiding Question “How can structure engender freedom?” Share the opinions of poets on poetry (William Wordsworth, Robert Frost, and Mary Oliver.) |
| Day 14-16: | - Over the next three days, each student will write three poems. Each of the poems will be a different type. Throughout these 3 days, there will be check-ins and brainstorming/redirection protocols as needed. By the end of Day 16, all three poems will be typed and turned in with the worksheet explaining the choices the student made. One of the poems will be labeled “work in progress”. |
| Day 17:    | - Each student will come prepared with 3 typed copies of his/her “word in progress” poem. The students will gather in triads for peer feedback. Students will use the tuning protocol. In addition, the poems should be looked at through the lens of the rubric, so each student should have a copy of the rubric to which to refer. [http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/tuning.pdf](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/tuning.pdf) |
| Day 18:    | - complete peer feedback.                                                |
| Day 20     | - revised poem due. Turn in the revised poem along with the copies on which feedback was received during the tuning protocol. |
Each of these paragraphs is a poem by a published poet. Rewrite the poem in stanza form.

Where had I heard this wind before change like this to a deeper roar? What would it take my standing there for, holding open a restive door, looking down hill to a frothy shore? Summer was past and the day was past. Sombre clouds in the west were massed. Out on the porch's sagging floor, leaves got up in a coil and hissed, blindly struck at my knee and missed. Something sinister in the tone told me my secret must be known: word I was in the house alone somehow must have gotten abroad, word I was in my life alone, word I had no one left but God.

Go and catch a falling star, get with child a mandrake root, tell me where all past years are, or who cleft the devil's foot, teach me to hear mermaids singing, or to keep off envy's stinging, and find what wind serves to advance an honest mind. If thou be'est born to strange sights, things invisible to see, ride ten thousand days and nights, till age snow white hairs on thee, thou, when thou return'est, wilt tell me, all strange wonders that befell thee, and swear, no where lives a woman true and fair. if thou find'st one, let me know, such a pilgrimage were sweet; yet do not, I would not go, though at next door we might meet, though she were true, when you met her, and last, till you write your letter, yet she will be false, ere I come, to two, or three.

maggie and milly and molly and may went down to the beach(to play one day)and maggie discovered a shell that sang so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles,and milly befriended a stranded star whose rays five languid fingers were; and molly was chased by a horrible thing which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:and may came home with a smooth round stone as small as a world and as large as alone. For whatever we lose(like a you or a me) it's always ourselves we find in the sea
Robert Frost “Bereft”
Where had I heard this wind before
Change like this to a deeper roar?
What would it take my standing there for,
Holding open a restive door,
Looking down hill to a frothy shore?
Summer was past and the day was past.
Sombre clouds in the west were massed.
Out on the porch's sagging floor,
Leaves got up in a coil and hissed,
Blindly striking at my knee and missed.
Something sinister in the tone
Told me my secret my be known:
Word I was in the house alone
Somehow must have gotten abroad,
Word I was in my life alone,
Word I had no one left but God.

John Donne “Song”
GO and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible to see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights,
Till age snow white hairs on thee,
Thou, when thou return'est, wilt tell me,
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear,
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Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know,
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;
Yet do not, I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet,
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maggie and milly and molly and may
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and

milly befriended a stranded star
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)
it's always ourselves we find in the sea
Observations and Sensory Experiences

During this week, you will engage in each of these activities. You will use your notes to guide your participation in activities in class, as well as to use as material for your poetry.

Ethnographic Field Notes

Choose a location in which you can unobtrusively observe people engaging in every day behaviors. Some suggested locations are a restaurant, mall, airport, auditorium, or fitness center.

You will need a pad of paper and a pen or pencil. Find a place to sit where you most likely will not be noticed, but where you can see people coming and going. You will sit there for approximately 20 minutes and take notes on everything you observe.

Your notes should be objective. Write down what people are wearing, carrying, doing. When possible, write down snippets of conversation which you overhear. Notice how people are interacting with one another.

As soon as possible, type up your field notes, being as detailed and objective as you can.

Sacred Spaces

Go to a sacred space (church, temple, mosque, etc.) and sit quietly. Go there when a religious service is not taking place. This can be a space which is familiar to you or one into which you have never ventured. Take a few minutes to be quiet and center yourself.

First, look around. Is the setting contemporary, well-lit, dark, austere, opulent? Are there people present? If so, what are they doing? Are they aware of the sanctity of the space? Write down your observations.

Second, close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. After a few minutes, open your eyes and jot down notes in your journal.

Third, notice the smells and write them down. Does this space smell the way you expected it to smell?

Fourth, touch the bench/chair upon which you are sitting. How does it feel? What is the feel of the surroundings - cool stone, worn wood, soft velvet, or other sensations?

Lastly, if this is a place that you’ve been before, do you have any memories of tastes which you associate with this place? Does it make you think of other sacred spaces in which taste plays a part of your memories?

Unusual Perspective

Get in a position which will lend an unusual perspective to the place. Perhaps in a tree, or hanging upside down, or lying on your back under a shrub. What is surprising about your new perspective? What do you notice or not notice that is different? Take notes in your journal.

Confining Space

Squeeze yourself into a small space. Some suggested spaces are in a closet, under a blanket, in a copse. Turn inward. What are you feeling and experiencing? (Be safe – do not get into an unsafe situation or cause a panic attack if you feel claustrophobic. Be sure you have a quick exit from your space and that someone knows where you are.) Write down your observations in your journal.
Poem Types


**Sonnet**

*Origin*

Petrarchan (Italian) sonnet was developed in Italy in 1300’s.

Shakespearean (English) sonnet was developed in the late 1500’s.

*Why?*

The purpose of each type of sonnet is a bit different.

The Petrarchan sonnet poses question or problem in the 1st stanza and provides resolution in the 2nd stanza.

The Shakepearean sonnet develops a lyrical association of images in the first 12 lines, then provides a conclusion in the rhyming couplet at the end of the poem.

*Form*

14 lines, usually iambic

Petrarchan sonnet: 1st stanza is an octave of 8 lines, rhyming *ababcdcd*; 2nd stanza is a sestet of 6 lines, rhyming *cdecde*.

Shakespearean sonnet: *ababcdcdefefgg*

*Example*

“Sonnet 134” by Francis Petrarch

“Sonnet 18” by William Shakespeare
Blank Verse

*Origin*

Became popular in English in the 1500’s as an attempt to mimic the form and tone of the classical epic poetry.

*Why?*

It is traditionally associated with dramatic speech and epic poetry.

This is commonly accepted to be the poetic form closest to human speech.

*Form*

iambic pentameter

unrhymed

*Examples*

“Ulysses” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

excerpt from a Shakespearean play
Pantoum

Origin
This form was originally Malayan, and it came to us by way of France.

Why?
This form creates a chain of echoes. It is good for evoking memories or past events. It is a slow verse form, requiring the reader to slow down - 4 steps forward, 2 back.

Form
No specific length
4 line stanzas

2nd and 4th lines of the first quatrain become the 1st and 3rd lines of the next quatrain

2nd and 4th lines of the second quatrain become the 1st and 3rd lines of the third quatrain, and so on

The rhyme scheme is abab

Example
“Pantoum of the Great Depression” by Donald Justice
Sestina

Origin

12th century French troubadours

Why?

This form is witty and clever; it imitates the repetition of informal discourse.

Form

39 lines

6 stanzas of 6 lines each

Poem ends with an envoi of 3 lines (An envoi is a commentary upon the preceding body of the poem)

Unrhymed

The same six end-words must occur in each stanza but in a specific lexical repetition

   Each stanza must use a reversed order of the previous lines

   1st line of the 2nd stanza must pair its end-words with the last line of the 1st.
2nd line of the 2nd stanza must do this with the 1st line of the 1st and so on

   The envoi must use all 6 end-words

Example

“Sestina” by Elizabeth Bishop
Villanelle

Origin

This form originated as an Italian harvest song. It was first popularized as poetry around 1600.

Why?

This form precludes any form of linear development; there is no narrative possibility. It circles around and around the topic.

Form

19 lines

6 stanzas – the first 5 stanzas have 3 lines, the last stanza has 4 lines

1st line of the 1st stanza is repeated as the last line of the 2nd and 4th stanzas

3rd line of the 1st stanza is repeated as the last line of the 3rd and 5th stanzas

The 1st and 3rd lines of the 1st stanza make up the last two lines of the poem

The rhyme scheme is aba

Example

“Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” by Dylan Thomas
Making Metaphor

Choose either your “unusual perspective” or “confining space” notes.

Look at what you’ve written and see how it could be applied to something unlike yourself.

Brainstorm a list of things which could be in that space. You should include animals, plants, inanimate objects, household items, abstract ideas. Feel free to be outrageous, but not illogical.

Then consider what that thing or object could be experiencing....seeing, hearing, etc.

Next, imagine what that thing could be feeling. What are its emotions?

Lastly, give the object a quote. What is it thinking to itself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location (place, time of day, time of year, etc.)</th>
<th>Animal/object/etc.</th>
<th>Experiencing “seeing, hearing, etc.”</th>
<th>Feeling (emotions)</th>
<th>Saying “....”</th>
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<td>FORM/STRUCTURE</td>
<td>EXEMPLARY</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISHED</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>BEGINNING</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure is intentionally chosen to enhance the meaning and purpose of the poem. Structure is faithfully adhered to. Any exceptions to the form are intentional and add to the overall effect of the poem.</td>
<td>Structure is intentionally chosen to match the meaning and purpose of the poem. Structure is adhered to for the most part. Departures from the form do not detract significantly from the overall effect of the poem.</td>
<td>Structure does not interfere with the meaning and purpose of the poem. There are a few departures from the form which detract a bit from the overall effect of the poem.</td>
<td>There is a disconnect between the structure of the poem and the meaning and purpose of the poem. The structure is not consistently adhered to.</td>
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| WORD USAGE | Each word is chosen for its effectiveness and each word contributes to the tone, style, and meaning of the poem. | There are very few superfluous words which detract from the tone, style, and meaning of the poem. | Some words are chosen due to their adherence to the structure of the poem in spite of their suitability for the tone, style, and meaning of the poem. | A number of words are misused, or detract from the poem’s style, purpose, tone, and/or structure. |

| POETIC DEVICES | Poetic devices are an integral part of the poem and add complexity and engagement on the part of the reader. | Poetic devices are used effectively; however, they do not add significantly to the overall meaning or purpose of the poem. | Some poetic devices are used but they seem unconnected with the purpose, structure, and/or meaning of the poem. | There is no use of poetic devices, or their use shows a lack of understanding of the devices. |

| CONVENTIONS | Any unusual or incorrect spelling, grammar, or syntax is intentional and adds to the effectiveness of the poem. | There are few errors in grammar, syntax, or spelling, and these errors do not detract from the poem in any significant manner. Intentional departure from standard conventions is interesting but is not quite effective. | There are errors which are distracting to the reader and do not add to the meaning or purpose of the poem. Intentional errors in syntax or grammar are intended to cause the poem to fit the chosen structure; however, the errors are distracting, ineffective, or forced. | There are significant errors which interfere with an understanding of the poem. |

| EFFORT | There is evidence that care was taken to match structure and literary devices to the meaning and purpose of the poem. There are no errors in form or content. | There is evidence that some care was taken to match structure and literary devices to the meaning and purpose of the poem. There are some errors in form or content. | Errors in form or content seem to be due to a lack of effort on the part of the poet. | There is no evidence that thought or care was taken in the choice of structure and/or content. There are numerous errors. |

| CREATIVITY | The structure is manipulated in a fresh or surprising way, while still staying true to the structure itself. The tone and style of the poem is consistent, unless inconsistency is intentional and achieves a specific purpose. All components of the poem (such as structure and content) contribute to a cohesive whole which causes a targeted emotional response in the reader. Exceptions and risk-taking are effective and add to the meaning of the poem and the response of the reader. The theme and topic may be deceptively simple, but have many levels of meaning, rewarding a reader who reads the poem numerous times. | The structure seems interesting, not stilted. The tone and style are consistent throughout the poem. Although perhaps not reaching a cohesiveness throughout the poem, all components of the poem work together at times to elicit a targeted emotional response in the reader. The theme and topic have some complexity and nuance, causing a reader to revisit the poem more than once. | There is an effort to use the structure in an original manner. There are moments of cohesiveness in the poem. The reader is able to understand the emotional response which the poem is trying to elicit. The poem is not predictable or staid. The theme and topic can work on two levels, causing the poem to be memorable. | The poem is predictable and shows no evidence of original thought. The theme and topic are superficial and forgettable. |