

English I

April 8th, 2020

Objectives:

- The learner will understand the difference between theme and topic.
- The learner will be able to identify theme in a poem and provide evidence of themes in a poem.

Do now:

Write for 3-5 minutes to answer this question: What is poetry? Try to stay away from Googling a dictionary definition, and write your own thinking.

Ex: There's this quote by Charles Bukowski, "an intellectual says a simple thing in a hard way. An artist says a hard thing in a simple way." I think this intersects with how I think of poetry. Poetry is an idea expressed in vivid, colorful, complex language. I think it is also words set to a rhythm. I think poets try to communicate hard ideas in complex ways, so when we think about Bukowski's quote, poets are one part intellectual and one part artist. I think poets try to find ways to imply the thing they want to say, rather than come out and say it directly. And they try to use figurative language and imagery to do that.

Theme vs. Main Idea

- Theme: In a piece of literature, theme refers to an underlying message or big idea that the author is trying to cause the reader to consider.
- Topic: In a piece of literature, this is what the piece is about.
- How does theme differ from topic?
 - The writer uses the topic, and all the other tools of fiction at their disposal, to cause the reader to engage with the theme or themes of their piece.
 - Examples
 - Topic: Zombie apocalypse
 - Theme: How far human beings will go to survive.
 - Topic: A child living through an abusive homelife
 - Theme: The importance of personal resilience.

Activity: Poems, Theme Analysis, Identification

- Follow this link to read [Oranges](#) by Gary Soto.
 - The poem has a second page--you'll need to use the grey arrow to the right of the poem to advance.
- Now, follow this link to read [New Clothes](#) by Julia Alvarez.
 - The poem has a second page--you'll need to use the grey arrow to the right of the poem to advance.
- After reading both poems once, use [this handout](#) to help you work with the themes of these poems.
 - In order to edit the document, you'll need to go File Make a Copy. Replace the part that says *Your Name* in the title with your name.
 - The work for *Oranges* is done for you. As you work to complete the same work for *New Clothes*, try to think about moments in the text where the writer is implying something larger.
 - Try your best! Don't worry about *right* answers. With poetry, as long as you can logically explain you're thinking, you're good to go.

Video/Writing Extension

Now that you've completed the lesson, watch this video, [What Makes a Poem... a Poem?](#).

After watching the video, revisit your free write from earlier. Did the video change your ideas about what makes a poem a poem? If so, how? Record your response below your original free-write.

Example: When I was writing earlier, I had not considered the possibility of song lyrics being poetry. After watching the video, I can see that poems and song lyrics are essentially one and the same.