

Lesson 3

Poetry

Poetry is a form of literature based on rhythmic language. Poets organize language in lines and stanzas to create rhythm, tension, and surprise. They sometimes use rhyming words to make their writing more musical. Sometimes they even invent new words! Poets use interesting language and sounds to express vivid imagery and strong feelings. Suppose you read a poem about the first day of summer vacation. The poem might tell a story or express images of summer beauty or feelings of joy and freedom. How might you begin a poem about the girl in this picture?

Skills Focus

The Glove and the Lions

Poetic Structure

Figurative Language

Ozymandias / A Sphinx

Visualize

Compare and Contrast Poetic Forms

Practice the Skill

First Read Poetic Structure

Poetic structure is the way a poem is built. The most common building block for poems is the stanza, which is a group of lines of similar style or length.

In a poem that tells a story, called a **narrative poem**, each stanza has a particular purpose. The stanza may develop the setting, plot, or theme of the poem's story. To determine what a stanza contributes to the poem, look at what the stanza describes. Is it giving details about time or place? If so, it is developing setting. Is it describing the main action? In that case, it is developing plot. Is it explaining a truth or insight about life? This means it is developing theme.

Try It Read the following stanza.


The sun shone bright in the cloudless blue sky,
The day was warm and our spirits were high.
The first day of summer had finally arrived
After a long, lonely winter that we had barely survived.

Discuss How many lines are in the stanza? Does this stanza focus on setting, plot, or theme? Explain your answer.

Read on to analyze the poetic structure of the next stanza.

Like knights' loyal horses, three bikes stood eager and tall
To start our adventures, and to heed every call.
So we set off to conquer on that beautiful day
The overgrown park on the hill by the bay.

Discuss What purpose does this stanza have? Does it focus on setting, plot, or theme? Underline the details that support your answer.

As you read, record your answers to questions about poetic structure on the Close Reading Worksheet on page 265. 

Practice the Skill

Second Read Figurative Language

Figurative language makes poetry, along with other kinds of writing, come alive. Figurative language creates word pictures by describing or comparing one thing in terms of something else. Figurative language often expresses something other than the words' literal definitions.

When a poet describes "the long arms of the tree reaching to the sky," he or she gives the tree arms, which are human qualities. Giving human qualities or characteristics to something that is not human is called **personification**.

Figurative language can also help you to imagine certain sounds. When you read about a campfire's "pop and sizzle," you can hear the fire in a way that feels very real. Using words that make the sound being described is called **onomatopoeia**. Words like *buzz*, *chirp*, *slurp*, and *hiss* are examples of onomatopoeia.

Try It Read the poem below.

The first BOOM of the fireworks lit up the night
And the crowd oohed and ahed its grateful delight.
The rockets squealed as they skipped and leapt in the sky
Then painted the heavens with colors that made the moon cry.

Discuss

Which words give human qualities to nonhuman things? Circle the examples of personification. Which words make the sounds they describe? Underline the examples of onomatopoeia.

As you read, complete the Figurative Language Chart on page 266.

Purpose for Reading

Read along with your teacher. Each time, read for a different purpose.

First Read

Focus on analyzing poetic structure.

Second Read

Focus on identifying figurative language.

Third Read

Focus on thinking critically about the poem.

The Glove and the Lions

By Leigh Hunt

Underline the rhyming words in this stanza. Does this stanza develop setting, plot, or theme? How do you know?



Why do you think the Count de Lorge is specifically mentioned?



King Francis was a hearty king, and loved a royal sport,
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The **nobles** filled the benches, with the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom
he sighed:

5 And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.



Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
 They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with
 their paws;
 With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled on one another,
 10 Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a thunderous smother;
 The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
 Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a **beauteous** lively **dame**
 With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always seemed
 the same:

15 She thought, the Count my lover is brave as brave can be;
 He surely would do **wondrous** things to show his love of me;
 King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is divine;
 I'll drop my glove, to prove his love; great glory will be mine.

Do these two stanzas
 focus on developing
 setting, theme, or plot?
 Explain your answer.



What figurative language
 appears in the poem
 so far? List words that
 show onomatopoeia and
 personification on the
Figurative Language
Chart, and then complete
 the chart.


Why does the woman
 decide to drop her glove?



What truth or insight about the woman's action does this stanza develop?



Interpret

How does King Francis feel about the woman's action? What do you think will happen next? 

20

She dropped her glove, to prove his love, then looked at him and smiled;

He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions wild:

His leap was quick, return was quick, he has regained his place,

Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face.

"By god!" cried Francis, "rightly done!" and he rose from where he sat:

"No love," **quoth** he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."



Vocabulary: Using a Dictionary

Some poems use unusual words or older forms of words that you might not recognize. When you are uncertain about the meaning of a word, a dictionary will help you determine the word's exact definition. A dictionary can also help you see how the same word can have different uses and meanings. Remember to look at all of the meanings of a word listed in a dictionary. Then, reread the poem to decide which meaning of the word the poet intends.

Try It Read this line from "The Glove and the Lions."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a **beauteous** lively **dame**

You might wonder if *beauteous* means the same thing as *beautiful* because they look similar. A dictionary confirms the meaning with this definition of *beauteous*: "a poetic word for *beautiful*."

Discuss

Using the word's context in the poem, brainstorm definitions of the word *dame*. Then use a dictionary to confirm the meaning.

The following words are found in "The Glove and the Lions." First, write down what you think each word means. Then, look up its dictionary definition and confirm or correct your definition.

1. **noble**, p. 58 _____

2. **wondrous**, p. 59 _____

3. **quoeth**, p. 60 _____

Practice the Skill

First Read Visualize

To **visualize** means to make and see images in your mind as you read. When you visualize, you become like a movie director or an artist by creating your own pictures and scenes. This process can help you understand the events or images in a poem. Poets use figurative language and language that appeals to the senses to allow you to visualize.

Imagine you are reading a poem about horses galloping across a field in the early-morning mist. Now picture the horses with their manes and tails flying as they speed over the green grass. You might also see the trailing white mists and the sun burning on the horizon. You are visualizing both the action and the subtle sensory details of the poem.

Try It Read the following poem.

Fall

A rainbow shower of leaves flutters down
Crowning me with their red and yellow glory
As I climb the sunlit forest path.

The crunch of leaves beneath my boots
Reminds me that the brilliant glory
Of my rainbow crown
Will not last.

I feel a sudden chill
And zip my jacket,
Quicken my steps
And head for the glowing campfire,
The sizzling dinner, and my laughing friends
That will greet me at trail's end.

Discuss

What pictures did you create in your mind as you read the poem?
What images stand out? Underline the details you visualized.

As you read, complete the **Visualization Chart** on page 267.

Practice the Skill

Second Read Compare and Contrast Poetic Forms

Poems come in many forms that are defined by either content or structure. For example, an **ode** is a lyric or musical poem that expresses strong feeling toward its subject. An **epic poem** is a long poem that tells the story of a great hero or cultural event.


Some poetic forms follow specific rules regarding their structure. **Sonnets**, for example, have fourteen lines of similar length and words ordered into a particular rhythm and rhyme scheme. **Free verse** poetry does not fit a specific form. In free verse, some lines may be short and some may be long. A free verse poem may have stanzas of different lengths or no stanzas at all. If a free verse poem contains rhyming words, they are often in unpredictable places and patterns.

Try It Reread “Fall” on the previous page. Then read the following poem.

The amber harvest moon has risen high
To welcome fall and bid August away.
A nip in the air, cranes across the sky
Bring sadness that the warmth's not here to stay.
Changes that chilling autumn always brings
Will gladden some hearts as the heat's released.
But thinking back on summer's glorious things
Makes my heart weaken, my soul feel displeased.
Yet soft on my skin is the gentle night wind
And fragrant the fire that welcomes me home.
Golden and warm are the gifts that fall sends
So to summer my mind no longer must roam.
The joys of dear autumn I suddenly know
So into her beauty I'm now ready to go.

Discuss

What are the poetic forms of the two poems? What features, such as line length, stanza, rhythm, and rhyme, can you identify?

As you read, record your answers to questions about poetic forms on the **Close Reading Worksheet** on page 268. 

Purpose for Reading

Read along with your teacher. Each time, read for a different purpose.

First Read

Focus on visualizing details in the poems.

Second Read

Focus on comparing and contrasting poetic forms.

Third Read

Focus on thinking critically about the poems.



Ozymandias

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

What images can you visualize from the poem? Draw what you visualize and write the poetic phrase that inspired you in the **Visualization Chart**.

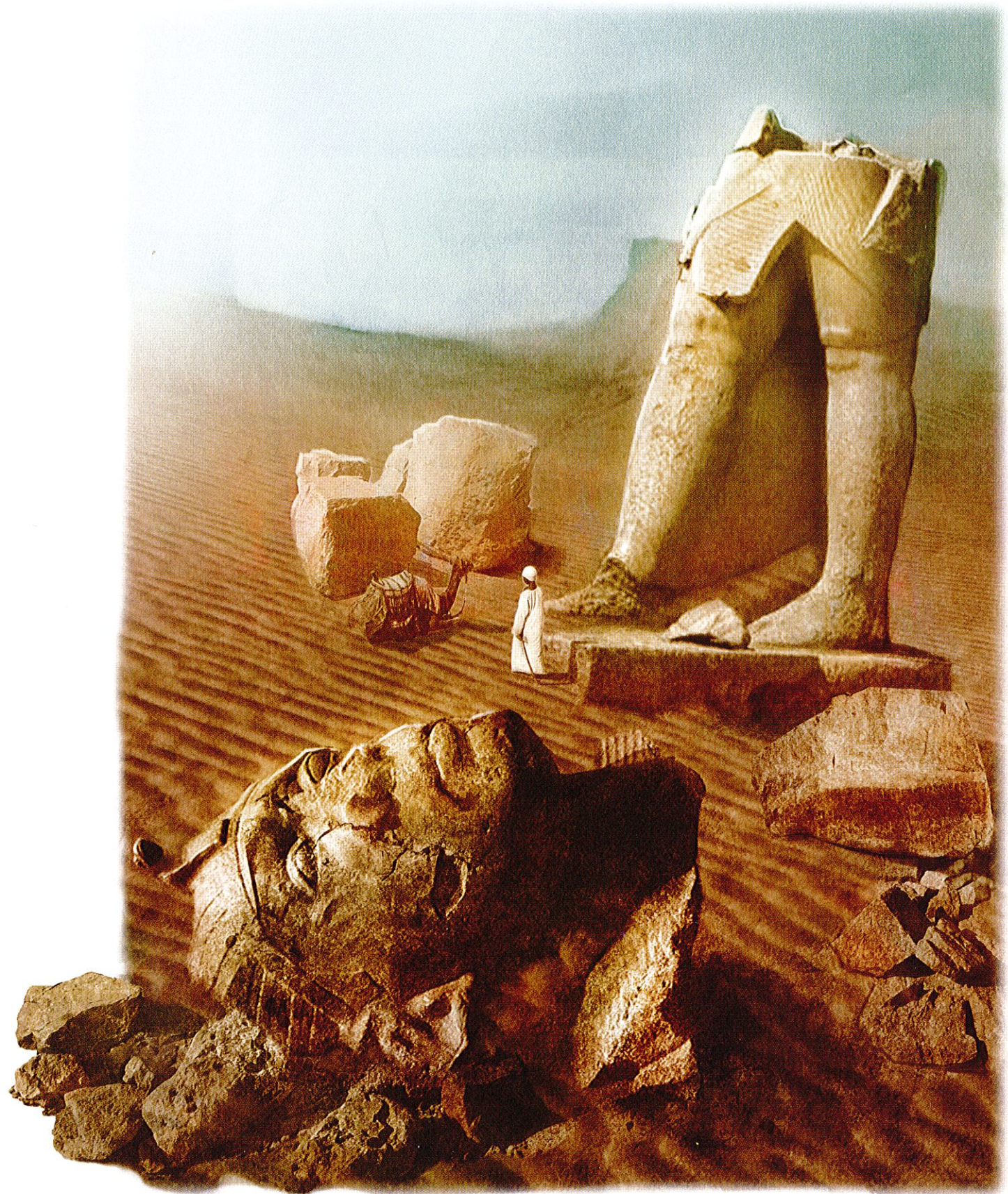
Is this poem a sonnet or free verse? How do you know? Circle words that rhyme. Does this poem have a rhyme scheme?




How does the traveler feel about Ozymandias? How do you know?




I met a traveller from an **antique** land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered **visage** lies, whose frown
5 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet **survive**, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
10 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that **colossal** wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."




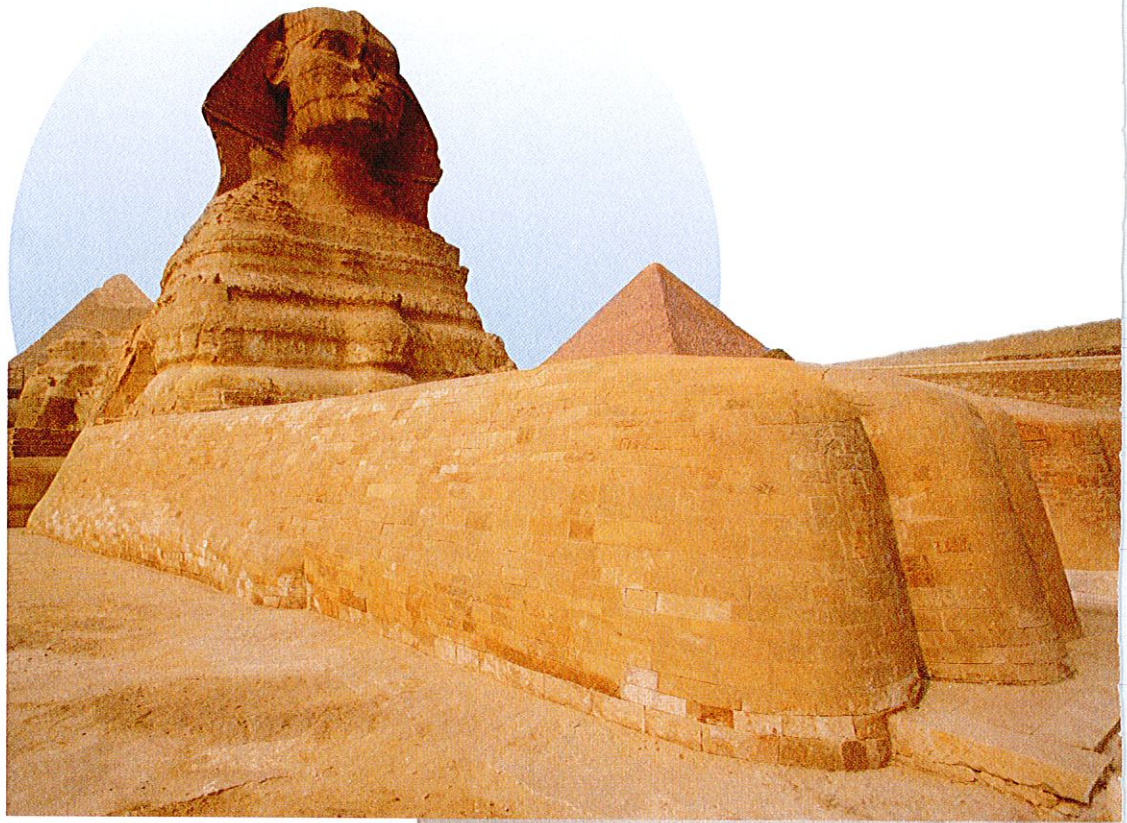
Besides the statue itself, what images can you visualize from the poem? Draw what you visualize and write the poetic phrase or phrases that inspired you in the **Visualization Chart**.

What poetic form does this poem have: sonnet or free verse? What features support your answer? In what way are the two poems similar in structure? 

Why do you think people are fascinated by the Sphinx? List a few ideas. 

Contrast

What is different about the two statues mentioned in the poems? 



A Sphinx

by Carl Sandburg

Close-mouthed you sat five thousand years and never let
out a whisper.
Processions came by, marchers, asking questions you answered
with grey eyes never blinking, shut lips never talking.
Not one croak of anything you know has come from your cat
crouch of ages.
I am one of those who know all you know and I keep my questions:
I know the answers you hold.

Vocabulary: Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary refers to words that are commonly used in discussing and writing about school subjects. Academic vocabulary can include challenging language. As you study and read, you will come across words you don't know. At times, you will need to use a dictionary to determine a new word's meaning.

Try It Read this sentence from "Ozymandias."

I met a traveller from an **antique** land

Antique means "very old" or "not modern." It can be used as an adjective to describe things, like *land* in the poem. It can also be used as a noun to refer to old objects. A dictionary can help you understand the different forms of a new word.

Discuss

Brainstorm some things that might be described as *antique*. Now use the word as a noun in a sentence to refer to an old object.

The following words appear in "Ozymandias." Write a definition for each and then answer the question to show that you understand the word.

1. **visage**, p. 64 Definition: _____

Name three things that have a visage: _____

2. **survive**, p. 64 Definition: _____

What are two events a person would be happy to survive? _____

3. **colossal**, p. 64 Definition: _____

What is a synonym for *colossal*? _____

Respond to Text: Compare and Contrast Reading and Listening to Poetry

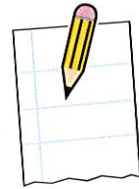
"Ozymandias" describes the ruins of a large statue in the desert. You have read the poem, and now you will listen to an audio version of it.

Try It Think about what you saw and heard as you read the poem to yourself. Then think about hearing the audio version of the poem.

Discuss

What images from the poem could you easily visualize? What sounds could you imagine as you read it? List specific details from the poem that struck you as you read it. What new understanding did you gain about the poem from listening to it being read? How was the experience of reading the poem similar to and/or different from hearing it?

On Your Own Write your own paragraph comparing and contrasting the experiences of reading and listening to the poem. Describe how the different experiences affected your understanding of the poem. Include details from the poem that support your points. Use the next page to help you plan your response. Then write your paragraph on a separate sheet of paper.



Checklist for a Good Response

A good paragraph

- ✓ describes the experiences of reading and listening to the poem.
- ✓ compares and contrasts the experiences using specific examples.
- ✓ includes specific details from the poem.
- ✓ shows your understanding of the poem.
- ✓ includes a topic sentence, supporting ideas, and a concluding statement.

Comparing and Contrasting Reading and Listening to a Poem

1. **Topic Sentence** Include this information in your first sentence: When I read

“Ozymandias,” I was able to _____

_____, and when I listened to the poem, I was able to _____

_____.

2. **Detail Sentences** The sentences of your paragraph should provide details that compare and contrast reading and listening to the poem. Use this chart to organize your ideas.

	Reading	Listening
What did I visualize and hear easily from the poem?		
What parts of the poem did I enjoy most?		
What did I understand about the poem?		

3. **Concluding Sentence** Your final sentence should restate how reading and listening to the poem affected your understanding.

On a separate sheet of paper, write your paragraph.

Read on Your Own

Read the poems independently three times, using the skills you have learned. Then answer the Comprehension Check questions.

First Read

Practice the first-read skills you learned in this lesson.

Second Read

Practice the second-read skills you learned in this lesson.

Third Read

Think critically about the poems.

The Children's Hour

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Poetic Structure What details help establish the setting? Underline the details. The first one is done for you.

Figurative Language What example of onomatopoeia is in the second stanza? Circle the word.

Between the dark and the daylight,

When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

5 I hear in the **chamber** above me

The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,

10 Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:

Yet I know by their merry eyes

15 They are plotting and planning together

To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,

A sudden raid from the hall!

By three doors left unguarded

20 They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret¹

O'er the arms and back of my chair;

If I try to escape, they surround me;

They seem to be everywhere.

25 They almost devour me with kisses,

Their arms about me entwine,

Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen

In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!²

¹**turret** a small tower, usually attached to the corner of a larger building

²**Bishop . . . Rhine** an evil ruler swarmed and eaten by mice in a tower after acting cruelly toward his people and calling them mice

Poetic Structure Think about whether these stanzas develop plot, setting, or theme.



Visualize Think about how the speaker comparing his study to a fortress helps you visualize the scene.

Critical Thinking Think about whether the action in the poem seems unique or more like a family ritual.

30 Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,³
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

35 I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

40 And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away!

³**banditti** bandits

Rain Music

by Joseph S. Cotter, Jr.

On the dusty earth-drum
Beats the falling rain;
Now a whispered murmur,
Now a louder strain.

5 Slender, silvery drumsticks,
On an ancient drum,
Beat the mellow music
Bidding life to come.

Chords of earth awakened,
10 Notes of greening spring,
Rise and fall triumphant
Over every thing.

Slender, silvery drumsticks
Beat the long tattoo⁴ —
15 God, the Great Musician,
Calling life anew.

⁴tattoo a fast and rhythmic tapping

Figurative Language

Circle an example of personification in the first stanza of "Rain Dance."



Dust of Snow

by Robert Frost

Visualize Think about which lines help you visualize the scene.

Compare and Contrast Poetic Forms Think about how the rhyme schemes of "Rain Music" and "Dust of Snow" are different.

Critical Thinking Think about how you would compare the poets' attitudes about nature.

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

5 Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had **rued**.



Comprehension Check

1. What details in the third stanza of "The Children's Hour" help to develop the setting?

2. What details in the eighth stanza of "The Children's Hour" describe the daughters' and father's appearance?

3. Why do you think the speaker tolerates these attacks by his daughters?

4. Read this stanza from "The Children's Hour."

**I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.**

The word *chamber* is an old-fashioned word that probably means what?

5. Read these lines from "Rain Music."

**Beats the falling rain;
Now a whispered murmur**

What is an example of onomatopoeia, and what is an example of personification?

6. What similarities in poetic structure do all three poems share?

7. What kind of music does the speaker in "Rain Music" think the rain sounds most like? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

8. Read this entry from a dictionary.

rue (rōō) **verb.** **1:** to feel remorse or regret; **2:** to wish a thing away;
noun. **3:** strong-scented shrub; **4:** family of herbs

Which meaning of *rue* is used in the poem "Dust of Snow"? Explain how context helped you to know.
