

The Lesson of the Moth

By Don Marquis



Study the poem, "The Lesson of the Moth."

1. The author does not use any punctuation throughout the poem. Explain why *you think* he did this.
2. What type of figurative language is used mainly throughout the poem? Give examples from the poem.
3. The word choice is important in this poem because it impacts the mood and then the reader. Find examples where you think the word choice is important to the mood and how it impacts the reader.
4. Are human beings too civilized to enjoy themselves? Explain.
5. Do you agree with the moth's point of view or the narrator's?

Mother to Son

By Langston Hughes



1. What poetic device is being used mainly throughout this poem?
2. Line length seems to play an important role here. Why do you think the author used line length the way he did?
3. The author's sensory language gives you a "picture" of what the mother is describing. Find examples of sensory language and explain how they create mood or meaning in the poem.
4. How do the writer's words impact the reader?
5. The writer used slang throughout the course of the poem. Find examples of slang and then explain why he used it.
6. What do the following lines mean to you?
"Don't you set down on the steps"
"Don't you fall now"
"And life for me ain't been no crystal stair"

The Lesson of the Moth

By Don Marquis



Study the poem, "The Lesson of the Moth."

1. The author does not use any punctuation throughout the poem. Explain why *you think* he did this. Students should indicate that the constant attention the reader must pay to the poem and the non stop flow of the poem are much like a moth skitters across the light bulb.
2. What type of figurative language is used mainly throughout the poem? Give examples from the poem. Personification. Examples will vary.
3. The word choice is important in this poem because it impacts the mood and then the reader. Find examples where you think the word choice is important to the mood and how it impacts the reader. Examples will vary, but students may explain that the words chosen for the moth are short and concise and help show how the reader that the moth is moving quickly and making quick decisions.
4. Are human beings too civilized to enjoy themselves? Explain. Answers will vary.
5. Do you agree with the moth's point of view or the narrator's? Answers will vary.

Mother to Son

By Langston Hughes



1. What poetic device is being used mainly throughout this poem? Metaphor
2. Line length seems to play an important role here. Why do you think the author used line length the way he did? The line length was used to punctuate the importance of some of the words used. Also, it could be indicating how sometimes stairs can be short, long, easy to climb and not so easy to climb. But, answers will vary. This is a very subjective question.
3. The author's sensory language gives you a "picture" of what the mother is describing. Find examples of sensory language and explain how they create mood or meaning in the poem. Student examples will vary but should indicate that the mother's mood is serious because life hasn't been easy. The meaning of the poem is to keep trying no matter what.
4. How do the writer's words impact the reader? The words the writer chooses are serious and descriptive and impact the reader because the reader knows how hard things may be and with the final lines, the reader also feels that they shouldn't give up because things have been hard. Again, explanations will vary.
5. The writer used slang throughout the course of the poem. Find examples of slang and then explain why he used it. Examples will vary but students should indicate the use of slang makes the mother sound more conversational, working class and slightly uneducated. He did this to make her journey seem more difficult and relatable by the son and the reader.
6. What do the following lines mean to you?
"Don't you set down on the steps" (Don't quit, give up because it's hard.)
"Don't you fall now" (Don't you quit!)
"And life for me ain't been no crystal stair" (Life is hard.)

I Just Want To Say...

Today, we studied examples of conversational poetry. Conversational poetry can be powerful because through poetry, you can say things to people you might never talk to because of your place in history, fear of rejection, fear of embarrassment, or many other reasons.

Think of someone you would like to have a conversation with. It doesn't have to be someone you are secretly in love with. There are emotions that are just as powerful as love. Your conversation can be with someone who has

- Embarrassed you
- Bullied you
- Left you
- Hurt your feelings
- Loved you
- Been important to you
- Taught you an important lesson
- Made you jealous

Now, think of all the things you would like to say to them. Your only reader will be the teacher; so, don't be intimidated to write what you really feel! Remember to use powerful and descriptive words to make your feelings real to the reader.

Now, think of how you could include metaphors or similes to make your message more powerful. Remember that writers include many poetic devices in their poems. Make it simple for right now. You can come back to it later.

Recap: I Just Want To Say

1. Of all the poems we've studied thus far (you can use your copies of the poems to refresh your memory) which poem brings out the greatest emotion in you? Explain.
2. "Good" poetry is subjective. What does this mean?
3. In your opinion, what makes good poetry?
4. Do line length, punctuation, or rhythm play an important role in a poem?

Recap Answer Key

1. Of all the poems we've studied thus far (you can use your copies of the poems to refresh your memory) which poem brings out the greatest emotion in you? Explain.

Students' poem selections will vary, but they should indicate that word choice plays an important role.

2. "Good" poetry is subjective. What does this mean? How do poets try to combat this?

Students should indicate that everyone has different opinions about poetry, but poets try to combat subjectivity by including aspects of poetry that are commonly known as good writing techniques.

3. In your opinion, what makes good poetry?

Answers will vary.

4. Do line length, punctuation, or rhythm play an important role in a poem? Why?

Students should explain that it does play an important role because it can add to the mood or meaning to the poem, it can emphasize certain words, it can make certain words stand out.