Focus and Motivate

COMMON CORE FOCUS

RL 4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning.
RL 5 Analyze an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text. RL 10 Read and comprehend poems.

Teach

Part 1: Form

Have students read each poetry example silently as a volunteer reads aloud. Then help students analyze the examples.

Traditional Form
• Ask students how the rhyming pattern in Rossetti’s poem is coordinated with the two different speakers. **Possible answer:** The two questions rhyme, and the two answers rhyme.
• Ask students how the length of lines 1 and 3 and their rising inflection as questions enhance the images described. **Possible answer:** The length and rising inflection of these lines suggest a long, slow uphill journey.

Organic Form
• Have a volunteer write the de Hoyos poem on the board as two prose sentences, using standard conventions, no ampersand, and no line breaks. Ask students to compare the two versions and explain how the poet’s form reflects her message. **Possible answer:** It doesn’t waste precious time on inputting capitalization or punctuation, or even on spelling out the word and.
• Discuss how the shortness of the last two lines adds to the poem’s message. **Possible answer:** It emphasizes the words and suggests that ideas are simple and easily stated, unlike the traditional, formal, time-consuming presentation of ideas.

Teach

The Language of Poetry

Emily Dickinson once wrote, “If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.” A good poem can make readers look at the world in a new way. A simple fork becomes the foot of a strange and unearthly bird; death itself appears as the driver of a carriage. After reading a poem, you might find yourself repeating lines in your mind or remembering images that “spoke” to you from the page. What gives poetry such power? Read a poem closely, and you’ll see how it has been carefully crafted to affect you.

Part 1: Form

What you’ll most likely notice first about a poem is its form, or the distinctive way the words are arranged on the page. Included in a poem’s form are its **graphic elements**, such as the length and placement of lines and the way they are grouped into stanzas. Similar to a paragraph in narrative writing, each stanza conveys a unified idea and contributes to a poem’s overall meaning.

Poems can be traditional or organic in form. Regardless of its structure, though, a poem’s form is often deliberately chosen to echo its meaning.

### Traditional

**Characteristics**
- follows fixed rules, such as a specified number of lines
- has a regular pattern of rhythm and rhyme
- includes the following forms: sonnet, ode, haiku, limerick, ballad, and epic

### Organic

**Characteristics**
- does not have a regular pattern of rhythm and may not rhyme
- may use unconventional spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- includes the following forms: free verse and concrete poetry

**Example**

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes,  to the very end.
Will the day’s journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.
— from “Up-hill” by Christina Rossetti

**Analyze the Example**
- Identify the rhyming words at the ends of the lines to see the rhyme pattern of the stanza.
- Read the lines aloud to hear their regular rhythm.
- Notice how the singsong musical quality emphasizes the comforting message.

### Differentiated Instruction

**For Struggling Readers**

**Note Taking** For students who need help with note taking, hand out the note-taking copy master before discussing this page. As volunteers read aloud each section, discuss the main points and have students record them on the copy master.

**Define Organic Form** Explain that the scientific term for a living thing is **organism**, so in its broadest sense **organic** refers to something living and natural. Point out that organic poetry is informal and sounds the way real people speak or think.

**RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master**

Note Taking p. 9

**BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Copy Master**

Analysis Frame: Poetic Form and Structure pp. D21, D40
**MODEL 1: TRADITIONAL FORM**

The following two stanzas are from an ode, a complex lyric poem that addresses a serious theme, such as justice, truth, or the passage of time. While odes can follow just about any structure, “The Fire of Driftwood” is traditional in form because of its regular stanzas, rhythm, and rhyme. Here, the speaker—the voice that talks to the reader—sadly reflects on how he and his friends have grown apart.

*from THE FIRE of DRIFTWOOD*

Poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again.

**MODEL 2: ORGANIC FORM**

This poem is written in free verse, with no regular pattern of rhythm and rhyme. Notice how its form differs from that of Longfellow’s poem.

*i am not done yet*

Poem by Lucille Clifton

as possible as yeast
as imminent as bread
a collection of safe habits
a collection of cares

less certain than i seem
more certain than i was
a changed changer
i continue to continue
where i have been

most of my lives is
where i’m going

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

**Analysis Support: Form** Have students take turns reading the poems aloud to each other. Point out that the Longfellow excerpt is all one sentence. For the Clifton poem, ask students to notice the repeated words (“as, “collection,” “continue,” “certain,” “where”), related ideas, and matching rhythms that connect pairs of lines. Point out that the last three lines form their own unit.

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**Language: Punctuation and Print Cues** Remind students that organic poems use unconventional spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Help students see this in the Clifton poem. For example, Clifton does not capitalize the first-person pronoun *I*. She also uses the plural noun *lives* where grammar rules would require the singular noun *life*.

**MODEL 1: TRADITIONAL FORM**

**Close Read**

1. **Possible answer:** Both stanzas have four lines of similar length, an abab rhyme scheme, and a weak-strong, weak-strong rhythm of beats.

2. **Possible answer:** First stanza: Two old friends share memories. Second stanza: Growing apart is painful.

**MODEL 2: ORGANIC FORM**

**Close Read**

1. **Possible answer:** The poem’s organic characteristics include lack of capitalization, punctuation, rhyme, and a regular rhythm.

2. **Possible answer:** In the first two lines, the writer may be describing her sense of her own hidden potential. Yeast is not visible in bread dough, yet it makes the dough rise. Imminent means “about to happen.”

*IF STUDENTS NEED HELP . . .* Read the poem line by line with students, working together to paraphrase its meaning.
Part 2: Poetic Elements

What gives one poem a brisk rhythm and another the sound of an everyday conversation? How can two poems on the same subject create dramatically different images in your mind? Prosody, the meter and rhyme of a poem, as well as other sound devices and imagery, give each poem its own character.

**Prosody and Sound Devices**

Much of the power of poetry depends on rhythm—the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in each line. Poets use rhythm to emphasize ideas and to create a mood that suits their subject. Some poems have a regular pattern of rhythm, which is called meter. Analyzing the effects of a poem’s rhythm begins with scanning, or marking, the meter. Unstressed syllables are marked with a (‘) and stressed syllables with a (‘), as in these lines from “A Dirge” by Percy Bysshe Shelley:

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Rough wind, / that moan / est loud
Grief / too sad / for song;
Wild wind / when sul / len cloud
Knells / all the night / long.
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A regular pattern of rhyme is called a rhyme scheme. Rhyme scheme is charted by assigning a letter of the alphabet to matching end rhymes, as shown in “A Dirge.”

Poets also use many other sound devices to create specific effects. In each of the following examples, notice how the device helps to establish a mood, create a rhythm, and suggest different sounds and sights of the sea.

### Repetition

A sound, word, phrase, or line that is repeated for emphasis and unity

- **BREAK**
  - Repetition: “Break . . . Break” (line 1); “Success . . . Circuit” (line 2); “Tell . . . tell” (line 1); “superb surprise” (line 4)

- **ASSONANCE**
  - Long i sound in “bright” and “delight” (line 3)

- **CONSONANCE**
  - The k sound in “Success . . . Circuit” (line 2); the r and p sounds in “Truth’s superb surprise” (line 4)

Describe the pattern of meter that repeats throughout the poem. An unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable. Scan the poem for students, inviting their input.

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REPETITION
a sound, word, phrase, or line that is repeated for emphasis and unity

Break, break, break.
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

ASSONANCE
the repetition of vowel sounds in words that do not end with the same consonant

The waves break fold on jewelled fold.
—Sara Teasdale

CONSONANCE
the repetition of consonant sounds within and at the ends of words

An unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed syllable.
—Sylvia Plath
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### Differentiated Instruction

**For Struggling Readers**

**Note Taking** For students who need help, hand out the note-taking copy master for this page. As they read and discuss the main points on pages 772–773, have students record them on the copy master.

**For English Language Learners**

**Language: Skill Words** Write these sentences on the board. Ask students to identify the underlined sound devices:

- Trees shivered in the bitter wind. *assonance*
- Sing your sorrow, sing your joy! *repetition*
- He tugged and dragged the boat ashore. *consonance*
- The lion reared in rage and roared. *alliteration*
**MODEL 1: RHYTHM AND RHYME**
The speakers in this next poem could be understood to be the collective voice of the pool players mentioned underneath the title. Read the poem aloud to hear its unique rhyme scheme and rhythm. In what ways do these elements reflect the fast-lane lifestyle that the speakers describe?

**We Real Cool**
The Pool Players, Seven at The Golden Shovel.

Poem by Gwendolyn Brooks

We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.

**MODEL 2: OTHER SOUND DEVICES**
This poem immerses you in the edge-of-your-seat excitement of a close baseball game. What sound devices has the poet used to create this effect?

**The Base Stealer**

Poised between going on and back, pulled
Both ways _soft like a tightrope-walker_,
Fingertips pointing the opposites,
Now bouncing tiptoe like a dropped ball
5 Or a kid skipping rope, come on, come on,
Running a scattering of steps sidewise,
How he teeters, skitters, tingles, teases,
Taunts them, hovers like an ecstatic bird,
He’s only flirting, crowd him, crowd him,
10 Delicate, delicate, delicate, delicate—now!

Close Read
1. Read the **boxed** text aloud. The use of alliteration emphasizes the tension that the base stealer feels. Find another example of alliteration and explain its effect.
2. Identify two other sound devices that the poet uses and describe their effects.

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**
Analysis Support: Sound Devices  Have pairs of students read “We Real Cool” aloud to each other and find the sound devices. Provide these line numbers as clues:
- Repetition (throughout poem)
- Assonance (lines 1, 5)
- Alliteration (lines 3, 4, 5, 6–7)
- Consonance (lines 1—2, 3–4)

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**
Vocabulary: Idioms and Onomatopoeia  For students who don’t know what it means to steal a base, ask a volunteer to explain the term and demonstrate the movements of the base stealer in the poem. Then review the meaning of words such as _teeters, skitters, and tingles_. Explain that the sound of these words helps the poet to convey meaning.

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**Close Read**
1. Even though the rhyming words in this poem fall in the middle of the lines, they sound like end rhymes. If you treat these words as end rhymes, what is the rhyme scheme?
2. One way to read this poem is to stress every syllable. How would you describe the rhythm? Explain how it echoes the speakers’ attitude toward life.

**Close Read**
1. The rhyme scheme is aa bb cc dd.
2. Possible answer: The rhythm is very regular and monotonous, the lines short and abrupt. Readers can almost hear the bravado of the speakers as they brag about their fast-lane lifestyle and shrug their shoulders at the consequences.

**Close Read**
1. Possible answer: In addition to the boxed text, examples of alliteration include “bouncing . . . ball” (line 4); “scattering . . . steps sidewise” (line 6); “teeters . . . tinges, teases, / Taunts” (lines 7–8).
2. Possible answers: Other sound devices in the poem: Repetition: “come on, come on” (line 5); “crowd him, crowd him” (line 9); “Delicate, delicate, delicate, delicate” (line 10); Assonance: the aw sound in “taut . . . walker” (line 2); the short i sound in “kid skipping” (line 5); the long e and short i sounds in “teeters, skitters, tingles, teases” (line 7); Consonance: the t and p sounds within “tiptoe . . . dropped / . . . skipping rope . . . / teeters, skitters” (lines 4–7). Repetition helps to capture the suspense of the situation. Assonance and consonance help to create a sense of the base stealer’s movements.
**Imagery and Figurative Language**

I can remember wind-swept streets of cities on cold and blustery nights, on rainy days; heads under shabby felts and parasols and shoulders hunched against a sharp concern.

—from “Memory” by Margaret Walker

Do these lines make you want to stay indoors, nestled under layers of blankets? If so, the reason is **imagery**, or words and phrases that re-create sensory experiences for readers. Through the highlighted images, the poet helps readers visualize the bleak scene—the way it looks, sounds, and even feels—in striking detail.

One way poets create strong imagery is through the use of **figurative language**, which conveys meanings beyond the literal meanings of words. Figurative language pops up all the time in everyday speech. For example, if you say “My heart sank when I heard the disappointing news,” your friends will understand that your heart did not literally sink. Through this figurative expression, you are conveying the emotional depth of your disappointment.

In the following examples, notice what each technique helps to emphasize about the subject described.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figurative Language</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Simile</strong></td>
<td>I remember how you sang in your stone shoes light-voiced as dusk or feathers. —from “Elegy for My Father” by Robert Winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metaphor</strong></td>
<td>The door of winter is frozen shut. —from “Wind Chill” by Linda Pastan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personification</strong></td>
<td>Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so. —from “Sonnet 10” by John Donne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hyperbole</strong></td>
<td>Here once the embattled farmers stood And fired the shot heard round the world. —from “The Concord Hymn” by Ralph Waldo Emerson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Differentiated Instruction**

**For Struggling Readers**

**Note Taking** As students read and discuss the main points on pages 774–775, have them record the main ideas on their note-taking copy masters.

**Resource Manager—Copy Master** Note Taking p. 9–10

**For English Language Learners**

**Language: Skill Words** Ask students to give examples of everyday figurative expressions in their home language. Have them give the literal and figurative translation of their examples and identify them as a simile, metaphor, personification, or hyperbole.
**Midsummer, Tobago**

Poem by Derek Walcott

Broad sun-stoned beaches.
White heat.
A green river.
A bridge.

3 scorched yellow palms

from the summer-sleeping house

drowsing through August.

Days I have held,

days I have lost,
10 days that outgrow, like daughters,

my harbouring arms.

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**Horses**

Poem by Pablo Neruda, translated by Alastair Reid

I was in Berlin, in winter. The light

was without light, the sky skyless.

The air white like a moistened loaf.

From my window, I could see a deserted arena,

a circle bitten out by the teeth of winter.

All at once, led out by a man,
ten horses were stepping into the snow.

Emerging, they had scarcely rippled into existence
like flame, than they filled the whole world of my eyes,

empty till now. Faultless, flaming,

they stepped like ten gods on broad, clean hooves.

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**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

**Comprehension Support: Figurative Language** To help students connect the literal meanings and figurative uses of words, ask these questions and help students to answer them:

- Why does Walcott describe the heat as “white”? (line 2)
- What characteristics do we associate with the sky? How could the sky in Neruda’s poem seem “skyless”? (line 2)
- What characteristics do we associate with flame? Why might Neruda see the horses as “flaming”? (line 10)
Part 3: Analyze the Text

Apply what you have just learned about the forms, techniques, and effects of poetry by comparing the next two poems. The first describes the dead-end life of Flick Webb, a former high school basketball star. Read the poem a first time, looking for details that help you to understand the character of Flick. Then read the poem aloud to get the full impact.

EX-Basketball Player
Poem by John Updike

Pearl Avenue runs past the high-school lot,
Bends with the trolley tracks, and stops, cut off
Before it has a chance to go two blocks,
At Colonel McComsky Plaza. Berth's Garage

Flick stands tall among the idiot pumps—
Five on a side, the old bubble-head style,
Their rubber elbows hanging loose and low.

One's nostrils are two S's, and his eyes
An E and O. And one is squat, without
A head at all—more of a football type.

Once Flick played for the high-school team, the Wizards.
He was good: in fact, the best. In '46
He bucketed three hundred ninety points,
A county record still. The ball loved Flick.

Flick seldom says a word to Mae, just nods
Beyond her face toward bright applauding tiers
Of Necco Wafers, Nibs, and Juju Beads.

Grease-gray and kind of coiled, he plays pinball,
Smokes those thin cigars, nurses lemon phosphates.

PARTS OF SPEECH: Noun

Hints and Toots

Close Read

1. In the second stanza, Flick stands next to gas pumps, which are personified as athletes. Citing details in the stanza, describe this image as you see it in your mind’s eye.

2. Identify the simile in the third stanza. What does it tell you about Flick’s athletic ability in high school?

3. Now that you know more about the character of Flick, reread lines 1–3. How does the image of Pearl Avenue remind you of him?

4. The poet uses alliteration in the last stanza. One example is boxed. Find two more examples.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Analysis Support: Form

• Stanza  Remind students that a stanza in poetry is like a paragraph in prose. Help them identify the main topic of each stanza in Updike’s poem. 1, the setting; 2, the pumps; 3, Flick’s talent; 4, his present work; 5, how he spends his leisure time

• Traditional vs. Organic  Review the characteristics of traditional and organic poetry on page 770. Using a Two-Column Chart on the board, help students distinguish the traditional and organic elements in Updike’s poem.  Possible answers:  Traditional: six-line stanzas; nearly all lines have five stressed syllables; conventional grammar and punctuation; Organic: meter varies somewhat; no rhyme

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency
Two-Column Chart p. A25
The description of basketball players in this poem provides a sharp contrast to the sad portrait of Flick Webb in “Ex-Basketball Player.”

Poem by Yusef Komunyakaa

Fast breaks. Lay ups. With Mercury’s Insignia on our sneakers, We outmaneuvered to footwork Of bad angels. Nothing but a hot Swish of strings like silk Ten feet out. In the roundhouse Labyrinth our bodies Created, we could almost Last forever, poised in midair Like storybook sea monsters. A high note hung there A long second. Off The rim. We’d corkscrew Up & dunk balls that exploded The skullcap of hope & good Intention. Lanky, all hands & feet . . . sprung rhythm. We were metaphorical when girls Cheered on the sidelines. Tangled up in a falling. Muscles were a bright motor Double-flashing to the metal hoop Nailed to our oak. When Sonny Boy’s mama died He played nonstop all day, so hard Our backboard splintered. Glistening with sweat, We rolled the ball off Our fingertips. Trouble Was there slapping a blackjack Against an open palm. Dribble, drive to the inside, & glide like a sparrow hawk. Lay ups. Fast breaks. We had moves we didn’t know We had. Our bodies spun On swivels of bone & faith, Through a lyric slipknot Of joy, & we knew we were Beautiful & dangerous.

Close Read
1. Is the form of this poem traditional or organic? Support your answer with specific examples.

2. Read the boxed lines aloud and identify two sound devices that are used. What does the rhythm in these lines remind you of?

3. The speaker describes the players as “Beautiful & dangerous” in line 40. Find two examples of figurative language that suggest either of these qualities. Explain your choices.

4. Contrast the two poems, citing three differences. Think about each poet’s treatment of the subject, as well as his use of poetic techniques.

Assess and Reteach

Assess
Ask students to contrast traditional and organic poetry and to describe the poetic elements from any model on pages 773–775.

Reteach
For students who are unable to apply the workshop skills, use this reteaching activity:

1. Have pairs of students quiz each other on the meanings of the terms.
2. Have partners make a chart showing each term and an example from one of the models in the workshop.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary Support

Explain these terms from “Slam, Dunk, & Hook”:

- **fast break** (line 1), a rush to the basket
- **lay up** (line 1), a usually single-handed shot made close to the basket
- **Mercury’s insignia** (lines 1–2), wings, which are the logo on the basketball shoes and also the symbol of the Roman messenger god Mercury
- **labyrinth** (line 7), a maze

**blackjack** (line 30), a blunt stick with a short, flexible strap, used as a weapon