

# Getting to the Core

English Language Arts

Grade 12 Unit of Study

**“The Art of Modern Poetry”**



Final Version: April 30, 2014

STUDENT RESOURCES

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## Process Journal: Lesson 1

Respond to the projected painting:

- Look at the picture for a few minutes.
- Write about the picture. Consider these questions:
  - What is going on in this picture?
  - What do you see that makes you think that?
  - What else can you find?

*Possible sentence starters:*

When I look at this picture, I can see...

I think that \_\_\_\_\_ because...

In looking further, I notice...

- After discussion: Write any new ideas you have.

- After watching the video and participating in discussion: Write any new or revised insights you have.

## Short Biography of Vincent van Gogh (pronounced “van Go”)

Posted on August 17, 2010 by thailandportraitpaintings (slight adaptations made by April Baxter on April 16, 2014)

- 1 A pastor’s son born in 1853 in the town of Groot – Zundert, the Netherlands, Vincent van
- 2 Gogh’s main tool of expression was color. The extremely emotional Vincent grew up in a
- 3 religious environment and during his entire life the gifted artist suffered from low self esteem.
  
- 4 Van Gogh decided to become a painter between 1860 and 1880 after he had experienced two
- 5 tragic romances and unsuccessful jobs as an art salesman, bookshop clerk and preacher.
  
- 6 After being dismissed as preacher in a Belgian mining region he decided to stay in the country to
- 7 study art, convinced that creating beauty was the key to happiness. Vincent’s early Dutch
- 8 period’s creations are sharply lit, somber-toned genre works of which “The Potato Eaters” (1885)
- 9 is the most renowned.



Vincent Van Gogh, *The Potato Eaters*

- 10 In 1885 Vincent moved to Antwerp. It was in this city where Vincent van Gogh discovered the
- 11 paintings of Peter Paul Rubens and purchased an extensive collection of Japanese prints. One
- 12 year later Vincent travelled to Paris where he joined Théo, his brother and manager of Goupil’s
- 13 (pronounced “Goo-pil’s”) gallery.
  
- 14 During his stay in Paris Vincent studied with Cormon and inevitably met Gauguin (pronounced
- 15 “Go-gan”), Monet (pronounced “Mo-nay”) and Pissarro. He started to lighten his extremely
- 16 dark palette and began painting using the impressionists’ short brushstrokes.

17 Van Gogh's nervousness and lack of confidence made him an extremely difficult companion and  
18 around-the-clock discussions combined with creating art during the day seriously damaged his  
19 health. Vincent decided to go to Arles (pronounced "Arl") in southern France hoping his  
20 companions would follow his footsteps and help him to establish an art school. Paul Gauguin did  
21 join Vincent but the result was disastrous.

22 During an epileptic<sup>1</sup> haze, Vincent pursued his companion armed with a razor blade. Gauguin  
23 managed to stop him but he ended up removing a part of his ear lobe with the sharp blade. Since  
24 this weird event Vincent's mental states began to alternate between lucidity<sup>2</sup> and madness. He  
25 was admitted to the Saint-Remy (pronounced "San-Remmy") asylum<sup>3</sup> for treatment.

26 In 1890 by May, Van Gogh's health seemed to have improved and under Dr. Gachet's  
27 (pronounced "Gă-shay's") supervision, he went to stay in Auvers-sur-Oise (pronounced "Owe-  
28 vair-soor-wahz"). Two months later Vincent van Gogh committed suicide by shooting himself.  
29 He had sold only one painting during his short career!

30 The inimitable<sup>4</sup> fusion<sup>5</sup> of content and form invented by Van Gogh is emotional, powerful,  
31 lyrically rhythmic<sup>6</sup>, dramatic and imaginative. The Dutch painter's works were heavily  
32 influenced by his effort explaining either the struggle against insanity or trying to comprehend  
33 man and nature's spiritual essence.

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<sup>1</sup> Epileptic (adjective): pertaining to or symptomatic of epilepsy, a disorder of the nervous system resulting in seizures

<sup>2</sup> Lucidity (noun): the ability to see things clearly; rationality; sanity

<sup>3</sup> Asylum (noun): an institution for the maintenance and care of the mentally ill, orphans, or other persons requiring specialized assistance

<sup>4</sup> Inimitable (adjective): incapable of being copied or imitated; matchless

<sup>5</sup> Fusion (noun): the state of being blended together

<sup>6</sup> Lyrically rhythmic (adverb + adjective): having the form, beat, and musical quality of a song or poem

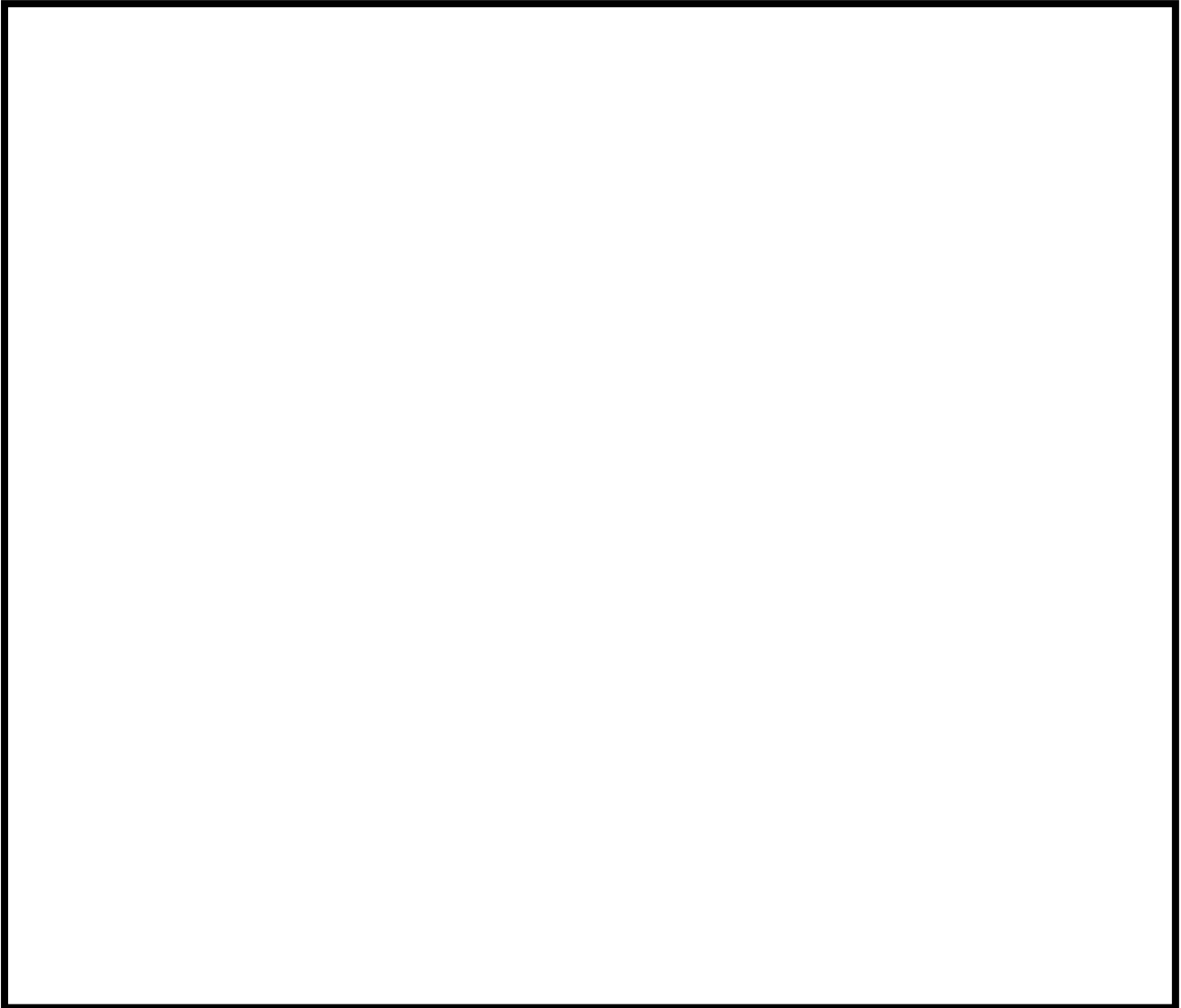
**ANNOTATION SYMBOLS CHART**

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Comment/Question/Response</b>	<b>Sample Language Support</b>
<b>?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions I have</li> <li>• Wonderings I have</li> <li>• Confusing parts for me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statement, “...” is confusing because...</li> <li>• I am unclear about the following sentence(s)...</li> <li>• I don’t understand what s/he means when s/he states...</li> </ul>
<b>+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas/statements I agree with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree with the author’s idea that...because...</li> <li>• Similar to the author, I also believe that...because...</li> <li>• I agree somewhat with the author when s/he argues that...because...</li> </ul>
<b>-</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas/statements I disagree with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I disagree with the author’s idea that...because...</li> <li>• Unlike the author, I do not believe that...because...</li> <li>• The author claims that...However, I disagree because...</li> </ul>
<b>★</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author’s main points</li> <li>• Key ideas expressed</li> <li>• Significant ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One significant idea in this text is...</li> <li>• The author is trying to convey...</li> <li>• One argument the author makes is that...</li> </ul>
<b>!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shocking statements or parts</li> <li>• Emotional response</li> <li>• Surprising details/claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was shocked to read that...(further explanation)</li> <li>• How can anyone claim that...</li> <li>• The part about...made me feel...</li> </ul>
<b>○</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas/sections you connect with</li> <li>• What this reminds you of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This section reminded me of...</li> <li>• I can connect with what the author said because...</li> <li>• This experience connects with my own experience in that...</li> </ul>



## **Thinking Map: Describing Vincent van Gogh**

Using a Thinking Map to organize your thoughts, work with a partner to describe Vincent van Gogh. Justify your description with evidence from the text.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, intended for students to draw a thinking map to describe Vincent van Gogh. The box is completely blank and occupies the central portion of the page.

## Vincent (Starry Starry Night) by Don McLean

Starry, starry night  
 Paint your palette<sup>1</sup> blue and gray  
 Look out on a summer's day  
 With eyes that know the darkness in my soul  
 Shadows on the hills  
 Sketch the trees and the daffodils  
 Catch the breeze and the winter chills  
 In colors on the snowy linen<sup>2</sup> land

Now I understand what you tried to say to me  
 And how you suffered for your sanity  
 And how you tried to set them free  
 They would not listen, they did not know how  
 Perhaps they'll listen now

Starry, starry night  
 Flaming flowers that brightly blaze  
 Swirling clouds in violet haze  
 Reflect in Vincent's eyes of China blue  
 Colors changing hue<sup>3</sup>  
 Morning fields of amber grain  
 Weathered faces lined in pain  
 Are soothed beneath the artist's loving hand

Now I understand what you tried to say to me  
 And how you suffered for your sanity  
 And how you tried to set them free  
 They would not listen, they did not know how

<sup>1</sup> Palette (noun): a thin and usually oval or oblong board or tablet with a thumb hole at one end, used by painters for holding and mixing colors.

<sup>2</sup> Linen (noun): fabric woven from flax yarns

<sup>3</sup> Hue (noun): a gradation or variety of a color; tint

Perhaps they'll listen now


For they could not love you  
 But still your love was true  
 And when no hope was left inside  
 On that starry, starry night  
 You took your life as lovers often do  
 But I could have told you, Vincent  
 This world was never meant  
 For one as beautiful as you

Starry, starry night  
 Portraits hung in empty halls  
 Frameless heads on nameless walls  
 With eyes that watch the world and can't forget  
 Like the strangers that you've met  
 The ragged men in ragged clothes  
 A silver thorn, a bloody rose  
 Lie crushed and broken on the virgin snow

Now I think I know what you tried to say to me  
 And how you suffered for your sanity  
 And how you tried to set them free  
 They would not listen, they're not listening still  
 Perhaps they never will



**VOCABULARY NOTEBOOK: The Art of Modern Poetry**

Word & Translation	Picture/Image	Definition	Original Sentence
<p><b>Example:</b> preacher  <i>(from Resource 1.3)</i></p> <p>predicador                      (Spanish)</p>			

<b>Word &amp; Translation</b>	<b>Picture/Image</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Original Sentence</b>
/			
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## Poetry Terms

**Alliteration:** the repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more neighboring words

*Example:* “I have **stood still** and **stopped** the sound of feet” (from “Acquainted with the Night” by Robert Frost)

**Metaphor:** a figure of speech in which a word or phrase meaning one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a similarity between them

*Example:*

“The fog comes on little cat feet. It sits looking over harbor and city on silent haunches and then moves on.” (From “The Fog” by Carl Sandburg)

**Personification:** the representation of a thing or idea as a person or by the human form *Example:*

“I like to see it lap the miles, And lick the valleys up, And stop to feed itself at tanks...” (From “The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson)

**Repetition:** the act or an instance of repeating *Example:*

“**Because I do not hope** to turn again **Because I do not hope** **Because I do not hope** to turn....” (From “Ash Wednesday” by T. S. Eliot)

**Rhyme:** close similarity in the final sounds of two or more words or lines of verse *Example:*

“Sometime too hot the eye of heaven **shines**, And often is his gold complexion **dimmed**; And every fair from fair sometime **declines**, By chance, or nature's changing course **untrimmed**.” (From “Shall I Compare Thee...” by William Shakespeare)

**Simile:** a figure of speech in which things different in kind or quality are compared by the use of the word *like* or *as*

*Example:*

“**O My Luve's like a red, red rose**, That's newly sprung in June; **O My Luve's like the melodie** That's sweetly played in tune.” (From “A Red, Red Rose” by Robert Burns)

*Definitions taken from Merriam Webster's Student Dictionary*

## TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

**Title of Poem:** “The Starry Night” by Anne Sexton

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**TITLE:** Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

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**PARAPHRASE:** Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be turned around) and look up unfamiliar words.

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**CONNOTATION:** Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

**ATTITUDE/TONE:** Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

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**SHIFTS:** Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

---

**TITLE:** Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

---

**THEME:** Briefly state in your own words what the poem is about (subject), then what the poet is saying about the subject (theme).

# The Starry Night

By Anne Sexton

- 1 The town does not exist
- 2 except where one black-haired tree slips
- 3 up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
- 4 The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.
- 5 Oh starry starry night! This is how
- 6 I want to die.
  
- 7 It moves. They are all alive.
- 8 Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
- 9 to push children, like a god, from its eye.
- 10 The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
- 11 Oh starry starry night! This is how
- 12 I want to die:
  
- 13 into that rushing beast of the night,
- 14 sucked up by that great dragon, to split
- 15 from my life with no flag,
- 16 no belly,
- 17 no cry.





### **Ticket Out the Door**

How do art and poetry reflect the artist’s or poet’s inner experience? (Without knowing about the poets’ backgrounds, you will need to make some inferences based on the text.)

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## Observation Worksheet

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List the first words that come to mind when you look at this artwork.

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**Plot:** What is happening in this artwork? What story is being told?

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**Character:** Who or what is the subject of the painting? How would you describe them?

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**Setting:** What is the mood of the artwork? What sounds, smells, feelings, tastes could you associate with it?

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(Continued next page)

How does this artwork connect with you personally? Does it relate in any way to your own prior knowledge?

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**Theme:** Now that you have closely observed the artwork, how would you summarize its main idea?

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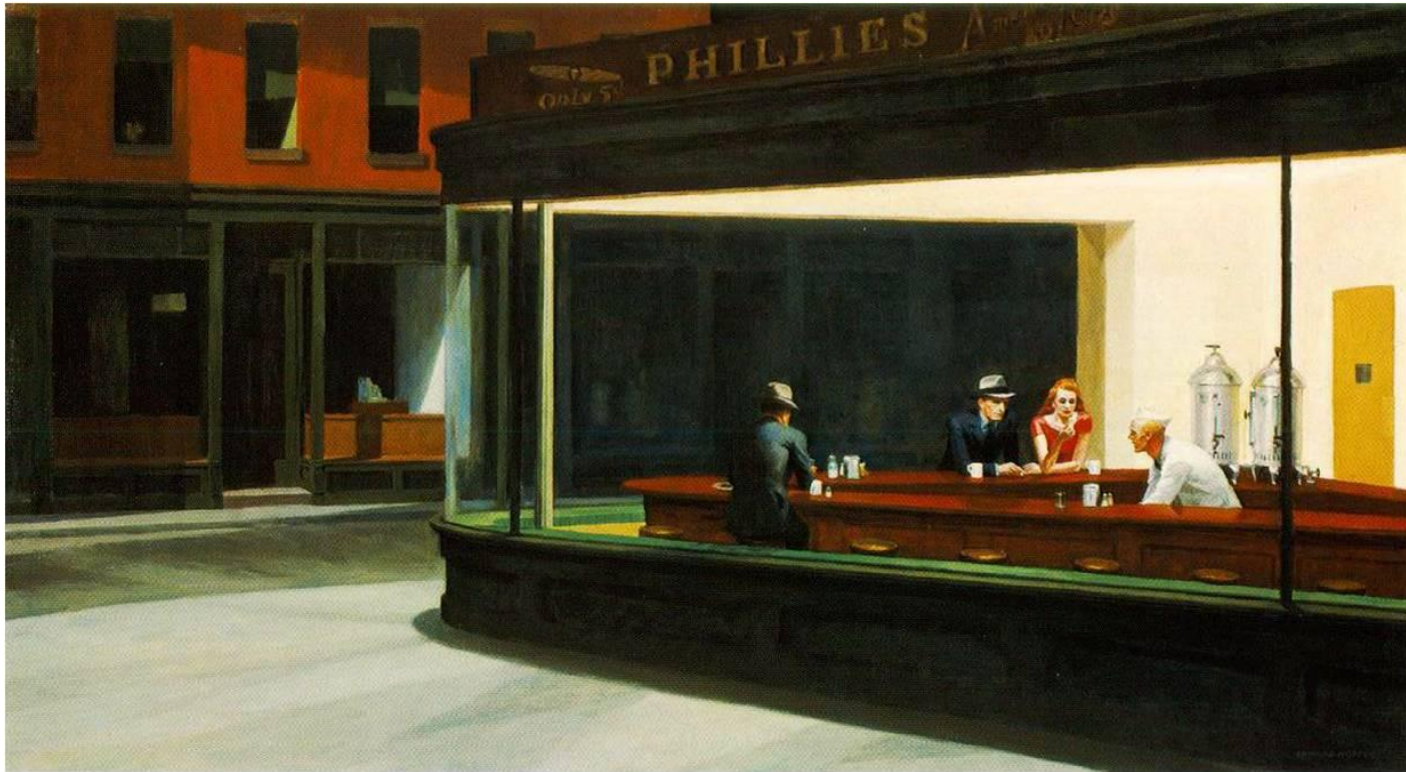
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Lun-Yi Tsai, *Disbelief*. 2002. Oil on linen.



Johannes Vermeer, *Young Woman with a Water Pitcher*. 1660-1662. Oil on canvas.



Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks*. 1942. Oil on canvas.





Kitagawa Utamaro, *Girl Powdering Her Neck* (detail of *Beauty and Child*). 1785. Ink on paper.

### Academic Conversation Placemat

**ELABORATE**

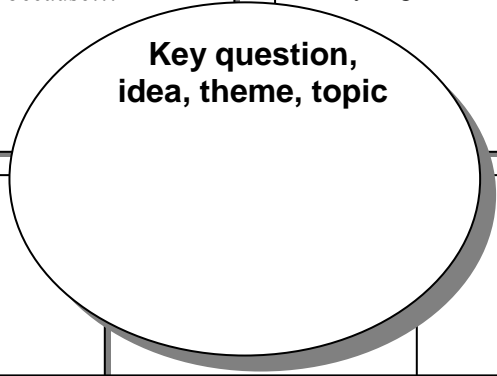
*Prompt starters:*  
 Can you elaborate on...?  
 What does that mean?  
 What do you mean by...?  
 Can you clarify the part about...?  
 Tell me more about...  
 How is that important? How does it support your point that...  
 I understand the part about..., but I want to know...  
 Can you be more specific?

*Response starters:*  
 I think it means...  
 In other words,  
 More specifically, it is ... because...  
 Let's see, an analogy might be...  
 It is important because...

*Prompt starters:*  
 Can you give an example from the text?  
 Where does it say that?  
 What are examples from other texts?  
 What is a real world example? Are there any cases of that in real life?  
 Can you give an example from your life?

**Support Ideas with Examples**

*Response starters:*  
 For example,  
 In the text it said that...  
 Remember in the other story we read that...  
 An example from my life is  
 One case that illustrates this is...



*Prompt starters:*  
 Is that clear?  
 Can I hear what you heard?  
 Does that make sense?  
 Do you know what I mean?  
 What do you think?  
 I'm not sure of all that I said.

**PARAPHRASE**

*Response starters:*  
 Let me see if I heard you right...  
 To paraphrase what you just said, you...  
 In other words, you are saying that...  
 What I understood was...  
 It sounds like you think that...

*Prompt starters:*  
 How can we summarize what we discussed?  
 How can we bring these ideas together?  
 What is our conclusion?

**SYNTHESIZE**

*Response starters:*  
 We can say that...  
 It boils down to...  
 We can agree that...  
 Even though some might think that..., we conclude that...

*Prompt starters:*  
 How can we add to this idea of...  
 What other ideas or examples relate to this idea?  
 What else could support this idea?  
 Do you agree?  
 What contradicts this?  
 What are other points of view?

**Build on/Challenge Another's Idea**

*Response starters:*  
 I would add that...  
 Building on your idea that..., I think...  
 That idea connects to...  
 I see it a different way. On the other hand...  
 Let's stay focused on the idea of... Let's get back to the idea of...  
 That makes me think of...



<b>Artwork</b>	<b>Corresponding Poem</b>
“Disbelief” ( <b>Resource 2.2A</b> )	“Tuesday, 9/11/01” by Lucille Clifton ( <b>Resource 2.4A</b> )
“Young Woman with a Water Pitcher” ( <b>Resource 2.2B</b> )	“Vermeer” by Stephen Mitchell ( <b>Resource 2.4B</b> )
“Nighthawks” ( <b>Resource 2.2C</b> )	“Nighthawks” by Samuel Yellen ( <b>Resource 2.4C</b> )
“Girl Powdering Her Neck” ( <b>Resource 2.2D</b> )	“Girl Powdering Her Neck” by Cathy Song ( <b>Resource 2.4D</b> )

## September's Song, a Poem in Seven Days by Lucille Clifton

TUESDAY 9/11/01

- 1 thunder and lightning and our world
- 2 is another place no day
- 3 will ever be the same no blood
- 4 untouched
  
- 5 they know this storm in otherwheres
- 6 israel ireland palestine
- 7 but God has blessed America
- 8 we sing
  
- 9 and God has blessed America
- 10 to learn that no one is exempt
- 11 the world is one all fear
- 12 is one all life all death
- 13 all one



**Vermeer** by Stephen Mitchell

1            *Quia respexit humilitatem*  
 2            *ancillae suae.* Luke I:48<sup>1</sup>

3 She stands by the table, poised<sup>2</sup>  
 4 at the center of your vision,  
 5 with her left hand  
 6 just barely on  
 7 the pitcher's<sup>3</sup> handle, and her right  
 8 lightly touching the windowframe.  
 9 Sere<sup>4</sup> as a clear sky, luminous<sup>5</sup>  
 10 in her blue dress and many-toned  
 11 white cotton wimple<sup>6</sup>, she is looking  
 12 nowhere. Upon her lips  
 13 is the subtlest and most lovely  
 14 of smiles, caught  
 15 for an instant  
 16 like a snowflake in a warm hand.  
 17 How weightless her body feels  
 18 as she stands, absorbed, within this  
 19 fulfillment that has brought more  
 20 than any harbinger<sup>7</sup> could.  
 21 She looks down with an infinite

22 tenderness in her eyes,  
 23 as though the light at the window  
 24 were a newborn child  
 25 and her arms open enough  
 26 to hold it on her breast, forever.

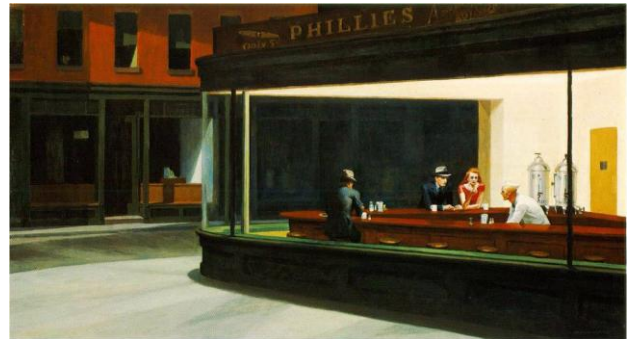



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<sup>1</sup> Latin, from the Bible's New Testament: "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden ...."  
<sup>2</sup> Poised (verb): to be balanced  
<sup>3</sup> Pitcher (noun): a container, usually with a handle and spout or lip, for holding and pouring liquids  
<sup>4</sup> Sere (adjective): dry  
<sup>5</sup> Luminous (adjective): radiating or reflecting light  
<sup>6</sup> Wimple (noun): a woman's headcloth drawn in folds about the chin  
<sup>7</sup> Harbinger (noun): anything that foreshadows a future event

## Nighthawks by Samuel Yellen

- 1 The place is the corner of Empty and Bleak<sup>1</sup>,  
 2 The time is night's most desolate<sup>2</sup> hour,  
 3 The scene is Al's Coffee Cup or the Hamburger Tower,  
 4 The persons in this drama do not speak.
- 5 We who peer through that curve of plate glass  
 6 Count three nighthawks seated there – patrons<sup>3</sup> of life.  
 7 The counterman will be with you in a jiff<sup>4</sup>.  
 8 The thick white mugs were never meant for demitasse<sup>5</sup>.
- 9 The single man whose hunched back we see  
 10 Once put a gun to his head in Russian Bank,  
 11 Whirled the chamber, pulled the trigger, drew a blank,  
 12 And now lives out his x years guarantee.
- 13 And facing us, the two central characters  
 14 Have finished their coffee, and have lit  
 15 A contemplative<sup>6</sup> cigarette,  
 16 His hand lies close but not touching hers.
- 17 Not long ago together in a darkened room,  
 18 Mouth burned mouth, flesh beat and ground



(Poem continues on next page)

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<sup>1</sup> Bleak (adjective): without hope or encouragement

<sup>2</sup> Desolate (adjective): having the feeling of being abandoned by friends or by hope

<sup>3</sup> Patrons (noun): customers

<sup>4</sup> Jiff, jiffy (noun): a very short time; moment

<sup>5</sup> Demitasse (noun): a small cup of strong coffee usually served after dinner

<sup>6</sup> Contemplative (adjective): thoughtful; reflective; meditative

- 19 On ravaged flesh, and yet they found  
20 No local habitation<sup>7</sup> and no name.
- 21 Oh, are we not lucky to be none of these!  
22 We can look on with complacent<sup>8</sup> eye:  
23 Our satisfactions satisfy,  
24 Our pleasures, our pleasures please.

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<sup>7</sup> Habitation (noun): a place of residence

<sup>8</sup> Complacent (adjective): pleased, especially with one's self or situation, often without awareness

**Girl Powdering Her Neck** by Cathy Song

1 The light is the inside  
 2 sheen<sup>1</sup> of an oyster shell,  
 3 sponged with talc<sup>2</sup> and vapor,  
 4 moisture from a bath.

5 A pair of slippers  
 6 are placed outside  
 7 the rice-paper doors.  
 8 She kneels at a low table  
 9 in the room,  
 10 her legs folded beneath her  
 11 as she sits on a buckwheat pillow.

12 Her hair is black  
 13 with hints of red,  
 14 the color of seaweed  
 15 spread over rocks.

16 Morning begins the ritual  
 17 wheel of the body,  
 18 the application of translucent<sup>3</sup> skins.  
 19 She practices pleasure:  
 20 the pressure of three fingertips  
 21 applying powder.  
 22 Fingerprints of pollen  
 23 some other hand will trace.

24 The peach-dyed kimono<sup>4</sup>  
 25 patterned with maple leaves  
 26 drifting across the silk,  
 27 falls from right to left  
 28 in a diagonal, revealing  
 29 the nape of her neck  
 30 and the curve of a shoulder  
 31 like the slope of a hill  
 32 set deep in snow in a country  
 33 of huge white solemn<sup>5</sup> birds.  
 34 Her face appears in the mirror,  
 35 a reflection in a winter pond,  
 36 rising to meet itself.

37 She dips a corner of her sleeve  
 38 like a brush into water  
 39 to wipe the mirror;  
 40 she is about to paint herself.  
 41 The eyes narrow  
 42 in a moment of self-scrutiny.  
 43 The mouth parts  
 44 as if desiring to disturb  
 45 the placid<sup>6</sup> plum face;  
 46 break the symmetry<sup>7</sup> of silence.  
 47 But the berry-stained lips,  
 48 stenciled into the mask of beauty,  
 49 do not speak.



(Continues next page)

<sup>1</sup> Sheen (noun): luster; brightness; radiance  
<sup>2</sup> Talc (noun): a soft mineral used to make talcum powder  
<sup>3</sup> Translucent (adjective): permitting partial light to pass through

<sup>4</sup> Kimono (noun): a loose, wide-sleeved robe, characteristic of Japanese costume  
<sup>5</sup> Solemn (adjective): serious; formal  
<sup>6</sup> Placid (adjective): pleasantly calm or peaceful  
<sup>7</sup> Symmetry (noun): corresponding proportions

- 50 Two chrysanthemums<sup>8</sup>  
51 touch in the middle of the lake  
52 and drift apart.



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<sup>8</sup> Chrysanthemums (noun): a type of flower native to China

## TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

**Title of Poem:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TITLE:** Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PARAPHRASE:** Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be turned around) and look up unfamiliar words.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CONNOTATION:** Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.



**ATTITUDE/TONE:** Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

---

**SHIFTS:** Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

---

**TITLE:** Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

---

**THEME:** Briefly state in your own words what the poem is about (subject), then what the poet is saying about the subject (theme).

## Reading in Four Voices

**Directions:** In your group of four, you will take turns reading the lines of this poem aloud. Each of you will read different lines based on the font types, as shown below:

**Student 1**

Student 2

**Student 3**

Student 4

Read the poem in four voices once to practice, and a second time to listen closely to the meaning.

### September’s Song, a Poem in Seven Days by Lucille Clifton

TUESDAY 9/11/01

- 1 **thunder and lightning** and our world
- 2 is another place **no day**
- 3 **will ever be the same** *no blood*
- 4 *untouched*
- 5 **they know this storm in otherwheres**
- 6 *israel ireland palestine*
- 7 **but God has blessed America**
- 8 *we sing*
- 9 **and God has blessed America**
- 10 *to learn that no one is exempt*
- 11 **the world is one** *all fear*
- 12 *is one* **all life** *all death*
- 13 **all one**



## Group Poster Assignment

**Directions:** Your groups will create a poster that presents your findings on both the painting and the poem that you analyzed. You must include the following elements:

### **Painting** (worth up to 25 points)

- Title and artist—5 points
- Picture (cut out from **Resource 2.2A-D** and attach to poster)—5 points
- Brief descriptions of the plot, character(s), setting, and theme—15 points

### **Poem** (worth up to 25 points)

- Title and author—5 points
- Poem text (may be handwritten, typed, or cut out from **Resource 2.4A-D**) —5 points
- Examples from the text of figurative language, imagery, sound elements, etc. that add connotative meaning—15 points
- The theme—10 points

### **Comparison/Contrast** (worth up to 15 points)

- Include a paragraph that compares and contrasts the painting and the poem. What do they have in common? How are they different?

### **Scoring** (total poster worth up to 85 points)

Your group will be scored on content (are all the elements present and thoroughly addressed? —see points possible above), neatness/legibility (worth up to 10 points), and creativity (both in thought and presentation —worth up to 10 points).

Look at the example of a poster based on Vincent van Gogh’s painting, “Starry Night” and Anne Sexton’s poem, “The Starry Night” on the back of this page.

**Group Poster  
Assignment  
Example**



“Starry Night” by Vincent van Gogh

**Description of the Artwork:**

This painting depicts a small European town at night. No one is outside – they might all be asleep inside their homes. The stars, sky, moon, and tree are alive and moving with some great force. This scene seems to represent the theme that human beings are small and insignificant compared to the vastness of the universe.

**The Starry Night**

By Anne Sexton

1 The town does not exist  
 2 except where one black-haired tree slips  
 3 up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.  
 4 The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars.  
 5 Oh starry starry night! This is how  
 6 I want to die.

7 It moves. They are all alive.  
 8 Even the moon bulges in its orange irons  
 9 to push children, like a god, from its eye.  
 10 The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.  
 11 Oh starry starry night! This is how  
 12 I want to die:

13 into that rushing beast of the night,  
 14 sucked up by that great dragon, to split  
 15 from my life with no flag,  
 16 no belly,  
 17 no cry.

The speaker personifies the tree in lines 2-3—“one black-haired tree slips / up like a drowned woman into the hot sky”—to represent herself as someone who is perched on the edge of life and death. This idea is supported by the juxtaposition of “The town is silent” followed by “The night boils with eleven stars” (line 4) and “It moves. They are all alive” (line 7). There are religious similes and metaphors as well, such as “the moon bulges in its orange irons / to push children, like a god, from its eye” (lines 9-10), which suggests that life is being rejected; and references are made to the devil—“The old unseen serpent” (line 10) and “that great dragon” (line 14)—that further signal the imminence of death. Metaphors continue with the lines “to split / from my life with no flag, / no belly, / no cry” (lines 14-17) that symbolize the quickness of death with no time to slow down or surrender (white flag, perhaps?), take a meal (or show weakness?), or even to mourn the loss of life.

**Theme:**

The poem is about facing death. The poet is saying that even though death may seem cruel and sudden, it is better to accept it bravely, and even embrace it as a force as strong as life.

**Comparison/Contrast:**

There are many similarities between van Gogh’s painting and Sexton’s poem. For example, the movement of the large black tree and elements of the sky is evident both visually and textually. In the painting, the brushstrokes are short and swirled, which suggest movement; in the poem, Sexton writes “It moves. They are all alive” (line 7). On the other hand, while the painting may represent specific emotions of the artist himself, the poem expresses emotions inspired by the painting. The speaker draws meaning from the visual elements and interprets them from her own perspective.

## Process Journal: Lesson 2

During the Gallery Walk, respond to each of the paintings that you have not yet analyzed, and use the following guiding questions to make notes:

- Look at the picture for a few minutes.
- Write about the picture. Consider these questions:
  - What is going on in this picture?
  - What do you see that makes you think that?
  - What else can you find?

Painting 1:

Painting 2:

Painting 3:

**After the Gallery Walk discussion, respond to the following essential question:**

How do art and poetry help us recognize themes in our own lives?

## **Three Step Interview**

**Essential Question:** How do art and poetry help us recognize themes in our own lives?

### **Three Step Interview**

1. **Step One** – Student A asks Student B the essential question. Student B responds. Student A must listen carefully because s/he will have to repeat it to the table group. (Student C is also interviewing Student D in the same manner.)
  
2. **Step Two** – Student B now asks Student A the essential question. Student A responds. Student B must listen carefully because s/he will have to repeat it to the table group. (Student D is also interviewing Student C in the same manner.)
  
3. **Step Three** – Each person shares his/her partner’s answer to the essential question with their group members. (All four students – A, B, C, D – are sharing together.)

### **Sentence starter for Three Step Interview share out:**

- My partner explained that art and poetry help us recognize themes in our own lives by...

***Excerpts from Notes on Ekphrasis (2008) by Alfred Corn***

1 Ekphrasis (also spelled "ecphrasis") is a direct transcription from the Greek *ek*, "out of," and  
2 *phrasis*, "speech" or "expression." It's often been translated simply as "description," and seems  
3 originally to have been used as a rhetorical<sup>1</sup> term designating a passage in prose<sup>2</sup> or poetry that  
4 describes something. More narrowly, it could designate a passage providing a short speech  
5 attributed to a mute work of visual art. In recent decades, the use of the term has been limited,  
6 first, to *visual* description and then even more specifically to the description of a real or imagined  
7 work of visual art.

8 Some ekphrastic poems describe photographs, and these may be art photographs or else ordinary  
9 snapshots, the latter<sup>3</sup> often depicting members of the poet's family. A disadvantage of using  
10 family snapshots is that the original image may not embody<sup>4</sup> sufficient artistry to provide the  
11 stuff of interesting commentary<sup>5</sup>; nor is that image available to the reader for comparison with  
12 the text. Enormous skill is needed in order to convey visual information of this kind, along with  
13 the passions and emotional nuances<sup>6</sup> that pictures from childhood arouse in the author. So there  
14 is a risk that only a small part of the authors' feelings will actually be accessible to the reader  
15 through the intermediary of words alone. Still, some poets have had success writing this kind of  
16 poem, for example, Adrienne Rich in "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law" and Greg Williamson's  
17 "Double Exposures."

18 Perhaps the most effective contemporary poems dealing with visual art are those where the  
19 authors include themselves in the poem, recounting the background circumstances that led to a  
20 viewing of the painting or sculpture in question; or what memories or associations or emotions it  
21 stirs in them; or how they might wish the work to be different from what it is. The center of  
22 attention in this kind of poem isn't solely the pre-existing work but instead is *dual*, sharing the

---

<sup>1</sup> Rhetorical (adjective): concerned with the art or science of all specialized literary uses of language in prose or verse

<sup>2</sup> Prose (noun): the ordinary form of spoken or written language, without metrical structure, as distinguished from poetry or verse

<sup>3</sup> Latter (adjective): being the second mentioned of two (distinguished from former)

<sup>4</sup> Embody (verb): express, or exemplify in concrete form

<sup>5</sup> Commentary (noun): a series of comments, explanations, or annotations

<sup>6</sup> Nuance (noun): a very slight difference in expression, meaning, response, etc.

23 autobiographical focus found in the majority of contemporary lyric poems<sup>7</sup> written in English.  
24 Poems like these unite ekphrasis with the autobiographical tradition, which is equally ancient and  
25 probably more important than ekphrasis alone. After all, the autobiographical tradition can cite  
26 figures such as Ovid, Dante, Ben Jonson, Donne, George Herbert, Pope, Wordsworth, Coleridge,  
27 Byron, Keats, Whitman, Dickinson, Eliot, Akhmatova, Williams, Crane, Lowell, Roethke,  
28 Bishop, Berryman, Larkin, Walcott, Merrill, Adrienne Rich, and Seamus Heaney. Of course you  
29 can argue that an ekphrastic poem providing no information at all about the author may still  
30 convey autobiographical content indirectly, in the form of "voice," tone, level of diction, and the  
31 kind and frequency of judgments made in the course of presentation. In "Archaic Torso of  
32 Apollo," Rilke gives us no precise autobiographical facts about himself; nevertheless, we get a  
33 strong sense of the author's character and prospects from his presentation of the subject, in  
34 particular, when he imagines the torso saying to him, "You must change your life."

35 Meanwhile, more directly autobiographical ekphrastic poems, like Lowell's "For the Union  
36 Dead," Bishop's "Poem," John Ashbery's "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror," Charles Wright's  
37 "Homage to Claude Lorraine," or the present author's "Seeing All the Vermeers," locate the act  
38 of viewing visual art in a particular place and time, giving it a personal and perhaps even an  
39 historical context. The result is then not merely a verbal "photocopy" of the original painting,  
40 sculpture, or photograph, but instead a grounded *instance* of seeing, shaped by forces outside the  
41 artwork. In such poems, description of the original work remains partial, but authors add to it  
42 aspects drawn from their own experience—the facts, reflections, and feelings that arise at the  
43 confluence of a work of visual art and the life of the poet.

- See more at: <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID>

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<sup>7</sup> Lyric poem (adjective + noun): a short poem that has a songlike quality



***Excerpts from Notes on Ekphrasis (2008) by Alfred Corn***

**Directions:** Read the following passage. When you see a bolded word, refer to the English Language Roots Reference following the text to determine the word’s roots. Write the roots in the box below the line where the bolded word appears, and then determine the definition of the word based on the roots. Write your definition in the box.

1 Ekphrasis (also spelled "ecphrasis") is a direct transcription from the Greek *ek*, "out of," and  
 2 *phrasis*, "speech" or "expression." It's often been translated simply as "description," and seems  
 3 originally to have been used as a rhetorical<sup>1</sup> term **designating** a passage in prose<sup>2</sup> or poetry that

<i>designating</i> : roots:	my definition:
-----------------------------	----------------

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 5 **attributed** to a mute work of visual art. In recent decades, the use of the term has been limited,

<i>attribute</i> : roots:	my definition:
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<i>depicting</i> : roots:	my definition:
---------------------------	----------------

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<i>contemporary</i> : roots:	my definition:
------------------------------	----------------

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 20 viewing of the painting or sculpture in question; or what memories or associations or emotions it  
 21 stirs in them; or how they might wish the work to be different from what it is. The center of  
 22 attention in this kind of poem isn't solely the pre-existing work but instead is *dual*, sharing the  
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<i>autobiographical</i> : roots:	my definition:
----------------------------------	----------------

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 42 aspects drawn from their own experience—the facts, reflections, and feelings that arise at the  
 43 **confluence** of a work of visual art and the life of the poet.

<i>confluence</i> : roots:	my definition:
----------------------------	----------------

<b>English Language Roots Reference</b> (from PrefixSuffix.com)		
Root, Prefix or Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-al, -ial, -ical	Adjective: quality, relation	structural, territorial, categorical
-ar, -ary	Adjective: resembling, related to	spectacular, unitary
-ate	Verb: cause to be	graduate, ameliorate, amputate, colligate
aut, auto	self	automobile, automatic, automotive, autograph, autonomous, autoimmune
bio, bi	life	biography, biology, biometrics, biome, biosphere
co, cog, col, coll, con, com, cor	with, together	cohesiveness, cognate, collaborate, convene, commitment, compress, contemporary, converge, compact, confluence, convenient, concatenate, conjoin, combine, correct

<b>de-</b>	<b>from, down, away, to do the opposite, reverse, against</b>	<b>detach, deploy, derange, decrease, deodorize, devoid, deflate, degenerate</b>
<b>-ence, -ency</b>	<b>Noun: action or process, quality or state</b>	<b>reference, emergency, dependence, eminence, latency</b>
<b>flu, fluc, fluv, flux</b>	<b>flow</b>	<b>influence, fluid, flue, flush, fluently, fluctuate, reflux, influx</b>
<b>graph, gram, graf</b>	<b>write, written, draw</b>	<b>graph, graphic, autograph, photography, graphite, telegram, polygraph, grammar, biography, lithograph, graphic</b>
<b>-ic</b>	<b>Adjective: quality, relation</b>	<b>generic</b>
<b>inter</b>	<b>between, among</b>	<b>international, intercept, interject, intermission, internal, intermittent,</b>
<b>medi</b>	<b>half, middle, between, halfway</b>	<b>mediate, medieval, Mediterranean, mediocre, medium</b>
<b>pict</b>	<b>paint, show, draw</b>	<b>picture, depict</b>
<b>sign, signi</b>	<b>sign, mark, seal</b>	<b>signal, signature, design, insignia, significant</b>
<b>tem, tempo</b>	<b>time</b>	<b>tempo, temporary, extemporaneously, contemporary, pro tem, temporal</b>
<b>trib</b>	<b>pay, bestow</b>	<b>tribute, contribute, attribute, retribution, tributary</b>
<b>tribute</b>	<b>give</b>	<b>contribute, distribute, tributary</b>



5. Consider Anne Sexton’s poem, “The Starry Night” (**Resource 1.9** from Lesson 1). Using examples from Alfred Corn’s text to support your reasons, explain how the poem could be an example of autobiographical ekphrasis.

### Ekphrastic Poetry Rubric

	<b>Outstanding (5)</b>	<b>Proficient (4)</b>	<b>Average (3)</b>	<b>Below Average (2)</b>	<b>Insufficient (1)</b>	<b>Not Present (0)</b>
Creativity	Unique and original ideas and perspective.	Original ideas and perspective.	Some originality. Some evidence of the creative process.	Lacks originality. Little evidence of the creative process.	Little to no evidence of original and creative ideas.	Not present
Attention to Detail	Effective incorporation of many image details.	Image details incorporated well.	Some image details incorporated.	Few image details incorporated.	Little to no evidence of image details incorporated.	Not present
Degree of Empathy and Thought	Excellent depth of thought and insight.	Shows thought and insight.	Shows some thought, but little insight.	Shows little thought.	Not thoughtful.	Not present
Poetic Structure (line breaks, punctuation, stanzas, etc.)	Thoughtful use of structure adds to effectiveness of poem's ideas.	Use of structure contributes to poem's ideas.	Shows some thought put into structural elements.	Little thought put into structural elements.	Poetic structure ineffective.	Not present
Diction and Poetic Devices*: Figurative Language, Imagery, Sound Elements  *Highlight or underline on final draft. If not done, highest grade will be a "3" or "average"	Effective use of diction and all three poetic devices consistently throughout the poem.	Consistent attention paid to diction and all three poetic devices.	Some attention to diction or poetic devices, but used ineffectively.	Little attention to diction or poetic devices.	Little to no thought put into using diction or poetic devices.	Not present

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_\_/25 (x3)

Creative Poem Title? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Your Name? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

-5 for each "no"

Picture Attached? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**FINAL GRADE:**

## Perspectives in Writing Ekphrastic Poetry

As you begin to write your ekphrastic poems, consider the following approaches:

- Write about the scene or subject being depicted in the artwork.
- Write in the voice of a person or object shown in the work of art.
- Write about your experience of looking at the art.
- Relate the work of art to something else it reminds you of.
- Imagine what was happening while the artist was creating the piece.
- Write in the voice of the artist.
- Write a dialogue among characters in a work of art.
- Speak directly to the artist or the subject(s) of the piece.
- Write in the voice of an object or person portrayed in the artwork.
- Imagine a story behind what you see depicted in the piece.
- Speculate about why the artist created this work.



# Prewriting Chart

Title of Artwork	Artist	Reactions to Artwork	Possible Perspectives	Possible Poetic Devices

### PEER REVIEW FORM: POEM

Work with a partner to take turns reviewing each other’s poems using the scoring guide and questions below:

**Scoring Guide**

- 0 = not present
- 1 = insufficient
- 2 = below average
- 3 = average
- 4 = proficient
- 5 = outstanding

1. Does the poem reflect unique and original ideas and perspective?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Does the poem effectively incorporate image details?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Does the poem reflect excellent depth of thought and insight?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is poetic structure (line breaks, punctuation, stanzas, etc.) used thoughtfully?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Does the poem consistently use precise, descriptive words (diction)?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Is figurative language used effectively throughout the poem?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Is imagery used effectively throughout the poem?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Are sound elements used effectively throughout the poem?	Self	0	1	2	3	4	5
	Partner	0	1	2	3	4	5

Using the feedback received from your partner, now revise your poem to include any elements that may have been missed and any corrections needed to improve your writing.

## Comparison Essay

You will use your unit materials as a reference to draft an essay that compares your chosen work of art to the poem you wrote about it. Remember that throughout the unit we have been examining three essential questions. Your essay should address these questions:

- How do art and poetry reflect the artist's and poet's inner experience?
  - What do art and poetry have in common? How are they different?
  - How do art and poetry help us recognize themes in our own lives?
- 
- While planning your essay, think about how you will make the transition to writing about what you observed in the work of art, citing evidence from the piece. What does the visual art emphasize?
  - How will you transition to writing about the creation of the poem? How will you describe how you used the visual art to shape your poem? Whose point of view is portrayed in the poem? What poetic devices are used?
  - As you conclude your essay, you should write about how you transformed your understanding of the work of art into a poem. What did you learn about how to analyze art and poetry? What did you learn about how the two artistic forms express universal themes?

Your essay will be scored using the SAUSD High School Writing Assessment Scoring Guide (see **Resource 3.10**). Be sure to refer to this guide while planning your essay.

**SANTA ANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL WRITING ASSESSMENT SCORING GUIDE**

	<b>6</b> This essay demonstrates <b>advanced writing ability.</b>	<b>5</b> This essay demonstrates <b>highly proficient ability.</b>	<b>4</b> This essay demonstrates <b>proficient writing ability.</b>	<b>3</b> This essay demonstrates <b>basic writing ability.</b>	<b>2</b> This essay demonstrates <b>below basic writing ability.</b>	<b>1</b> This essay demonstrates <b>far below basic writing ability.</b>
<b>Writing Task</b>	<b>Insightfully</b> addresses all parts of the writing task.	<b>Thoroughly</b> addresses all parts of the writing task.	<b>Adequately</b> addresses the elements of the writing task.	Addresses <b>only parts</b> of the writing task.	Addresses <b>only one part</b> of the writing task.	Does <b>not address</b> the writing task.
<b>Thesis and Support</b>	Contains a <b>meaningful thesis</b> or controlling idea which is <b>thoroughly supported</b> with <b>specific and relevant examples</b> and textual evidence (if applicable).	Contains a <b>thesis or controlling idea</b> which is <b>well supported</b> with details and examples.	Contains a <b>central idea</b> or <b>thesis</b> which is <b>adequately</b> supported with details.	Contains a <b>central idea</b> which is supported with <b>limited</b> details.	<b>May lack a central idea</b> and uses <b>limited</b> details.	<b>May lack a central idea</b> or does <b>not include</b> supporting details.
<b>Organization and Focus</b>	Maintains a <b>logical and seamless organizational structure</b> , includes <b>coherent paragraphs</b> , and <b>effective transitions</b> between ideas.	Maintains a <b>logical organizational structure</b> , includes <b>paragraphs</b> , and <b>transitions</b> between ideas.	Maintains a <b>mostly logical structure</b> , <b>includes paragraphs</b> and <b>some transitions</b> between ideas.	Offers an <b>inconsistent organizational structure</b> and <b>may not include paragraphs</b> or transitions (or transitions are awkward).	<b>Lacks an apparent organizational structure</b> and <b>transitions</b> , but reader may still follow overall argument.	<b>Lacks an organizational structure</b> which greatly <b>hinders understanding.</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Consistently</b> demonstrates a <b>clear</b> sense of audience.	Demonstrates a <b>clear</b> sense of audience.	Demonstrates a <b>general</b> sense of audience.	Demonstrates <b>some</b> sense of audience.	Demonstrates <b>little</b> sense of audience.	May demonstrate <b>no understanding</b> of audience.
<b>Sentence Structure and Language</b>	<b>Consistently</b> provides a variety of <b>complex</b> sentence types and uses <b>sophisticated</b> and <b>descriptive</b> language	<b>Consistently</b> provides a variety of sentence types and uses <b>precise</b> and <b>descriptive</b> language.	Provides a <b>variety of sentence types</b> and uses some descriptive language.	Includes <b>little variety of sentence types</b> but demonstrates <b>some</b> understanding of sentence structure. Uses <b>basic</b> or <b>predictable</b> language.	Demonstrates <b>little understanding of sentence structure</b> but meaning is evident Often uses <b>limited</b> or <b>confusing</b> vocabulary.	<b>Demonstrates no understanding of basic sentence structure</b> and uses vocabulary which <b>lacks ability to convey meaning.</b>
<b>Written Conventions</b>	Contains <b>very few or no errors</b> in conventions and demonstrates an <b>excellent command</b> of the language.	Contains <b>few</b> errors in conventions and demonstrates a <b>good command</b> of the language	Contains <b>some</b> errors but these do <b>not interfere</b> with overall understanding.	Contains <b>many</b> errors in conventions but <b>overall meaning is evident.</b>	Contains <b>many</b> errors in language which often <b>interfere with understanding.</b>	Contains <b>many serious errors</b> in conventions which <b>consistently interfere with understanding.</b>

### PEER REVIEW FORM: ESSAY

Work with a partner to take turns reviewing each other’s essays using the scoring guide and questions below:

**Scoring Guide**

- 1 = far below basic
- 2 = below basic
- 3 = basic
- 4 = proficient
- 5 = highly proficient
- 6 = advanced

1. The essay insightfully addresses all parts of the writing task.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. The essay contains a meaningful thesis or controlling idea which is thoroughly supported with specific and relevant examples and textual evidence.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. The essay maintains a logical and seamless organizational structure, includes coherent paragraphs, and effective transitions between ideas.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. The essay consistently demonstrates a clear sense of audience.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. The essay consistently provides a variety of complex sentence types and uses sophisticated and descriptive language.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. The essay contains very few or no errors in conventions and demonstrates excellent command of the language.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. The essay insightfully answers the unit’s three essential questions.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. The essay clearly relates the writer’s experience with the artwork chosen, the creation of the poem, and the learning outcomes.	Self	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6

Using the feedback received from your partner, now revise your essay to include any elements that may have been missed and any corrections needed to improve your writing.

### **Process Journal: Lesson 3**

Gallery Walk: Look closely at the artwork and read the poetry and essays on display, then record your impressions.

- What do you notice about the art pieces chosen?
- How do the Ekphrastic poems relate to the art that inspired them?
- What new insights do you get from reading the essays?
- Can you relate to the themes represented? How?