

9th Grade Summer Assignment

Dear 9th Graders,

Welcome to CMIT Academy! Here is your summer work packet. You are expected to complete ALL THE READINGS in this packet. Then, choose the poem you enjoyed the most or found the most worth your attention to complete the comprehension and analysis questions. Here is an itemized list of the work you must do.

1. Read all poems in the packet
2. Choose one poem for which to complete the worksheet attached to that poem.
 - a. All questions must be answered in complete sentences when appropriate.
3. Define each word listed in the vocabulary section if one exists.
 - a. Define the words literally as in the dictionary
 - b. Identify the part of speech to which the word belongs
 - c. Compose an original sentence for each vocabulary word in which you use the word correctly.
4. Submit your work as a single Google Document with your name and heading on the top left-hand side of the document. Here is a sample:

Joe Student
Mr. Bevard
Summer Work
8/31/2020

Quarter 1: Close Reading and Composition

1. Shall I Compare Thee To a Summer's Day - William Shakespeare (2)
2. Dulce et Decorum Est - Wilfred Owen (4)
3. On Being Brought - Phyllis Wheatley (7)
4. The Sick Rose - William Blake (10)
5. One Perfect Rose - Dorothy Parker (12)
6. Because I Could Not Stop for Death - Emily Dickinson (15)
7. Richard Cory - Edwin Arlington Robinson (18)
8. Miniver Cheevy - Edwin Arlington Robinson (22)
9. To His Coy Mistress - Andrew Marvell (25)
10. Ae Fond Kiss - Robert Burns (29)
11. I, Too - Langston Hughes (32)
12. THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL -
Gwendolyn Brooks (34)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? 1

Thou art more lovely and more temperate:

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, 5

And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;

And every fair from fair sometime declines,

By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,

Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st; 10

Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Structure and Form

1. What do you notice right away about this poem? This deals with its structure (how it's arranged - the particular order of its elements - both on the page and in its concept) and its form (the category or kind of work it is). Identify at least three noteworthy details from the poem based just on your first reading.

2. Label the **rhyme scheme** in this poem by assigning matching letters to each distinct repeated sound. For example,

*In my steaming cup of tea
Swirls a small infinity*

takes the AA pattern because the end of the words "tea" and "infinity" reproduce the same sound. Write down this rhyme scheme. You should have fourteen letters with exactly seven different sounds repeated.

2a. Why do you think it's important to pay attention to such qualities as rhyme and rhythm in poetry? What quality does this feature add to your reading experience? What does it make you think of the writer who stays so closely within the boundaries of this form?

2b. There are predictable divisions within this fourteen-line poem. Every four lines makes up one unit called a **quatrain**. There are three quatrains followed by a **couplet**, a pairing of two rhyming lines. Study each quatrain and explain what specific idea it builds.

Content and Development

3. Why do you think the speaker begins with a question? Who is the speaker's implied audience? What influence does this seem intended to have on the reader?

4. What ideas immediately arise from the **imagery** "summer's day"? What ideas and feelings do you associate with this phrase?

4a. What other nature imagery is there in lines 1-12? Identify and explain these images.

4b. What does the speaker mean with the words, "summer's lease hath all too short a date"? What do you know about the length of summer days? How is this **ironic**?

5. In line 7, the speaker uses the word "fair" in unusual ways. What's the difference between the first "fair" and the second "fair"? (Hint: they're different parts of speech.) This **repetition** of the word in close succession is important, but what does it add to the poem's meaning?

5a. What are the "eternal lines" (12) and "this" (14)? What is the speaker referring to?

Theme

6. What does this poem, taken as a whole, suggest about love? What effect does it have on the speaker in this poem? What does the poem itself do to the **beloved**?

7. Who is more important in the context of this poem, the speaker or the beloved?

Vocabulary

Complexion

Lease

Darling

Possession

Eternal

Temperate

Dulce et Decorum Est

Wilfred Owen

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks, 1
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots, 5
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling, 10
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight, 15
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin; 20
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest 25
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*

*Pro patria mori.*¹

¹ Latin: "Sweet it is and proper to die for one's country."

Structure and Form

1. What do you think of the apparently random division between the *stanzas*, the individual “paragraphs” within the poem? Why are some lengthy and some short?
2. Pay close attention to lines 7-8, 17-18, 21-27, especially to the way these lines end. The *lines* end, but the *sentences* (more accurately, the clauses) carry on into the following lines. This is called *enjambment* - when the idea of a sentence gets “broken” into two lines. What does the use of enjambment in this poem do to help you think more deeply about the content of the poem?
3. Analyze the rhyme scheme of this poem like we did with Shakespeare’s work above using alternating letters to identify the pattern. You should have exactly 13 different letters repeated alternately representing the 13 end sounds.
4. Consider especially the ending of lines 14 and 16, which end with the same word. This is noteworthy because it’s the only rhyme using exactly the same word. (Technically, this is called *epiphora*, repetition of the same word or words at the *end* of a sentence.) Why would the author make a special point to keep the rhyme scheme by using the same words *just this once* in the poem? What does this use of epiphora do to help you think more deeply about the content of the poem?
5. Compared to Shakespeare’s “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?” this poem is notably different in that it has a *narrative structure*: in very broad terms, it tells a very short story. What specific event does this poem narrate? In what way does this narrative structure hint at the poem’s main theme, its “moral”?

Content and Development

6. One of the important details that stands out in this poem is its emphasis on visual imagery. This is a result of the careful word selection. But not all the words present a clear image that appeals to one of our five senses. What other words stand out to you as being especially *evocative* without appealing to a specific sense?
7. *Figurative language* is any use of language to express meaning that is *additional* to the literal. One example is the sentence, “Men marched asleep” (5); another is “Drunk with fatigue” (7). In a broad sense, this includes any of the literary devices we’ve studied so far. Identify any example of figurative language in the poem and explain it using plain, literal English in order that we might make sense of the poem’s literal and figurative (that is, implied) content.
8. Stanza two begins with an exclamation represented in repetition and special formatting. What’s different about the two uses of the word “gas” in line 9? What does that difference represent? Consider also that this segment appears directed towards someone else - not the reader. To whom is the speaker speaking here, and why does the speaker share this address with us?
9. Eventually, the speaker talks to us (this is called a *direct address*) with the word “you” (17, 21, 25). Additionally, the speaker calls us “My friend” (25). What effect does this have on us as readers? Why do you think the author has chosen this phrase? What does it make us think or feel about the speaker, about the soldiers, about the “old Lie”? (27)

10. Examine the following lines and discuss their literal *and* figurative meanings:

*His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—*

Theme

11. Read the footnote to the Latin lines in the poem. What is “the old Lie” (27) and what does the speaker think should be done with this old lie?

11a. Why do you think the final line, “*Pro patria mori*,” remains offset from the rest of the poem, as its own stanza. What do you think the author is trying to express by having this one line cut off and alone from the rest of the poem?

12. What position does this poem and poet take on the idea of young people and war? What does it imply about how those young people have been convinced to go to war in the first place?

Vocabulary

Cud	Flares	Glory	Jolt	Plunge	Sludge	Vile
Desperate	Flounder	Incurable	Lame	Shells	Smother	Writhe
Fatigue	Gargle	Innocent	Obscene	Shod	Trudged	Zest

On Being Brought

Phyllis Wheatley

Twas mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land, 1

Taught my benighted soul to understand

That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye, 5

"Their colour is a diabolic die."

Remember, *Christians, Negros*, black as *Cain*,

May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

Structure and Form

1. Titles are “privileged” places in literature; they give us important clues about the content and meaning of the work. What does the title “On Being Brought” immediately make you think of before you’ve even started reading this poem?
 - Which specific words and phrases from the poem itself seem to add meaning and clarity to the title? What new insights do you get by pairing these words and phrases with the title?
2. Read each line carefully and out loud to get a sense of the poem’s *rhythm*. What observations can you make - what qualities strike you as apparent - after reading this poem aloud? Pay particular attention to the number of syllables and stresses in each line.
3. You will often hear writers (particularly poets) refer to *economy of language*. This refers to a writer’s ability to “freight” a work with multiple meanings at one time while being concise. In other words, a writer will express many meanings in a short space of time. Choose one line from the poem and “unpack it” by explaining its figurative language and extending its implied meanings. This will help you illustrate Wheatley’s economy of language.
3. The writer encloses the entire line in quotation marks. Why? To whom does this attribute the words of line 6? What worldview does this external attribution imbue the poem with?
4. Examine the grammar of line 7. There are a number of commas and italics there which risk confusing an inattentive reader. Explain the shift in address with reference to the *imperative and subjunctive grammatical mood*² of lines 7-8.
5. There is limited *alliteration* in this poem, but it works to draw our attention to an important idea for the poem’s overall meaning. Locate each example of alliteration and explain what idea the alliterated lines emphasize.

Content and Development

6. Line 1 *alludes* to a specific historical practice through the words “mercy” and “Pagan land.” What do you think that practice is? How is the author’s use of words like “mercy,” “understand,” and “redemption *ironic* - how does it deliver something different from what we expect when we understand the *allusion* of line 1?
7. There is further allusion in lines 7-8, which refer to Biblical characters or concepts. Who was Cain in the Bible? Why was he associated with the color black? What does this knowledge of Biblical allusion help us understand about the *assumptions* about her race to which the author is reacting? What are those assumptions?

² Grammatical mood refers to the kind of statement being made in any particular sentence. For instance, the interrogative is the “mood” or “type” of statement for questions. The imperative mood is for commands or instructions, while the subjunctive mood is the type of statement we use to speculate about hypothetical future possibilities. For instance, the statement “She might have already done it,” doesn’t describe an *actual* fact - it’s more like a case that might be true under certain conditions. The subjunctive mood especially raises questions about what conditions are necessary for this statement to be true. Consider the poem above: under what conditions would a predominantly white audience in the 1700s consider “negros” to become “pure”? What would the “negros” have to do, look like, act like, sound like in order for this poet’s audience to think of them as “white”? Do you think that’s entirely fair? Why or why not?

8. The author makes efficient use of *color symbolism* to develop an important idea about judgment of others. Explain how her use of the color black implies specific ideas and at the same time invokes the opposite of those ideas. (Hint: what color and associated idea is also implied with words like “soul,” “refin’d,” and “angelic”?)

Theme

9. How does the author use the various literary devices enumerated in questions 1-8 above to develop the idea of inclusion and equality?

Vocabulary

Angelic	Mercy	Refine	Scornful	Train
Benighted	Pagan	Sable	Seek	
Diabolic	Redemption	Saviour	Soul	

The Sick Rose

William Blake

O Rose thou art sick. 1
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:
Has found out thy bed 5
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

Structure and Form

1. Consider the privileged place of the title and its content. Now simply look at the poem on the page and discuss what stands out compared to all the preceding poem's you've read so far? What's the single notable feature of this poem compared to the rest?
2. Literally, the speaker here is addressing his remarks to a flower. But whom is he *really* addressing? What makes you think so?
3. What do you know about flowers in general and roses specifically that can help you make sense of this poem's brevity? In other words, why does it "make sense" to use a as the **structuring metaphor** for such a short poem?
4. This poem is written in **free verse**, a form of poetry that notably avoids specific, regular rhythm. How does the avoidance of structure in these 8 short lines **parallel** its meaning? (How does the poem's structure support or "overlap" its concepts?)

Content and Development

5. What do we often use roses to represent? Explain this metaphor in detail: If this speaker is addressing a "sick" rose, then what is the rose representing figuratively? What's its sickness?
6. A cankerworm is a kind of caterpillar-like pest that consumes plants, especially the buds. By eating the buds of a plant, a cankerworm can effectively destroy a plant before it reaches full maturity. Use this knowledge to explain what the figurative cankerworm in this poem is and its relationship to the speaker and the beloved (the "rose").
7. This poem exploits the power of **connotation** to great effect. Connotation is the non-literal meaning of a word that it achieves through its context. For instance, in the phrase, *the dark, cool shade*, has a positive connotation; it implies that the darkness is a good thing (perhaps it's hot out and the speaker appreciates the respite from the harsh sun and heat!). In another context, the same word takes on different meaning: *The teacher frowned darkly at the student who'd neglected his studies*. Here, "dark" implies anger or hostility.
 - Using your knowledge of **connotative meaning**, explain the following terms and phrases by discussing what the poet is using them to represent:
 - "Howling storm" - "Thy bed/Of crimson joy"
 - "His dark secret love" - "Thy life destroy"

Theme

8. What comment does this poem make about the importance of love and ensuring that we give our love only to those who are worthy of it?

Vocabulary

Crimson	Howling	Thou/thy
Destroy	Invisible	

One Perfect Rose

Dorothy Parker

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met. 1
All tenderly his messenger he chose;
Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet--
One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret; 5
"My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart enclose."
Love long has taken for his amulet
One perfect rose.

Why is it no one ever sent me yet
One perfect limousine, do you suppose? 10
Ah no, it's always just my luck to get
One perfect rose.

Structure and Form

1. What does the title “One Perfect Rose” lead you to expect this poem will be about? Use your thinking about “The Sick Rose” as a starting point.
2. This poem has a distinct rhythm and rhyme scheme, but it makes notable departures from what we might call a “symmetrical” meter. Describe the relationship between the 4th line in each stanza and the preceding 3 lines. In what sense does it “fit” the rhyme scheme? In what sense does it “break” the rhythm and meter?

Content and Development

3. Here, the rose is a literal object, but it still carries *symbolic value*. Based on the first stanza alone, what is a rose *supposed* to represent symbolically? (Hint: the answer is not given in question 4; think deeply about this question.)
 - The phrase “deep-hearted” literally refers to a part of the rose - its dark, richly-fragrant center. What figurative meaning does this phrase acquire in context?
4. Why does the speaker take time to point out one of the flower’s symbolic values? Isn’t that supposed to be our job? Why “state the obvious” for a reader when poetry is supposed to be deep, figurative, and layered with many meanings?
5. In line 8, the speaker engages in *personification*, the act of representing abstract things as actual people. What or whom does the speaker personify?
 - Does this idea personified appear to be entirely aware of what women want? Why or why not?
6. Describe the dramatic shift in *tone* that emerges in stanza 3. Remember, tone is nothing more than the author’s attitude towards his or her subject. What words, phrases, or grammatical elements signal this shift in tone?
 - What is the speaker’s tone about love in stanzas 1-2? How has it changed - and to what - in stanza 3?
7. What ideas does the word “limousine” conjure up in your mind? Why does the speaker wonder why she never receives one of these from a lover?
8. One of the distinctions separating stanza 3 from 1-2 is its *informal diction* and *syntax*, its choice of words and their arrangement. Stanzas 1-2 contain words like, “flow’r,” “tenderly,” “scented,” “fragile,” “enclose.” Stanza 3 contains such *informal* words like “Ah,” “yet,” “just,” and “it’s.” Additionally the *inverted syntax* appears in lines 3 and 6: “with scented dew still wet--” and “his heart enclose.” A conventional arrangement of these lines would be “still wet with scented dew” and “enclose his heart.”
 - What additional inferences can you make about the speaker’s attitude towards the way men show their love? Build on your response to question 6 above by considering what this speaker thinks - not just about gestures of love - but of the entire tradition of showing love to women in this way.

Theme

9. What does this poem suggest about the “space” or “distance” between expressing one’s love and actually proving one’s love?

Vocabulary

Amulet

Floweret

Pure

Dew

Fragile

Scented

Enclose

Messenger

Tender

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death – 1
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste 5
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring – 10
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –
We passed the Setting Sun –

Or rather – He passed us –
The Dews drew quivering and chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown – 15
My Tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible –
The Cornice – in the Ground – 20

Since then – ‘tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses’ Heads
Were toward Eternity –

Structure and Form

1. Consider the grammar of the title, “Because I Could Not Stop for Death.” What grammatical unit is it? How does its grammatical structure - incomplete though it is - prepare you to approach the poem?
2. Read the poem - steadily and slowly - aloud with attention to the rhythm and meter. How would you describe the flow of sounds as you read the work? (Hint: what age group comes to mind when you hear the words spoken rhythmically?) Contrast this audible quality with the ideas the poem presents (“His Civility,” “Immortality,” “The Cornice - in the Ground”) in each stanza. Why is there such a sharp contrast between the auditory quality and the conceptual weight of these ideas?
3. Examine each stanza closely for its *conceit*, the main idea of the poetic unit. Where is the notable shift - where do the conceits of each poem change, and how?
4. Discuss the *irony* of the poem’s ending with the word “eternity.” In addition to fitting the rhyme scheme with *slant rhyme* (when a sound isn’t quite exactly the same as the preceding rhyme, but the vowel is approximate), why might the poet have arranged the poem’s *end* around a word that - literally - means “without end”?
5. What’s going on with all these dashes all over the place? Use what you know about the rules of grammar and mechanics surrounding the dash mark to develop an idea about what the dash is attempting to convey in this poem.

Content and Development

6. Discuss the irony of the first and second lines, “Because I could not stop for Death.” What does this imply about the speaker? What characteristics does the speaker actively attribute to Death?
7. Why do you think Death personified “knew no haste”? Why shouldn’t Death be in a hurry compared to us humans?
8. Stanza 3 includes three noteworthy images: children at play, growing plants, and the setting sun. In what sense are these images working as *metaphors*? If you combine these three images and their ideas together, what *extended metaphor* does stanza 3 develop?
 - Dwell carefully on the images of gossamer, tippet, and tulle and compare them with the image of cold in stanza 3. How do these images reveal the beginning of a shift in the speaker’s attitude towards Death?
9. Who is the “He” of line 13? Examine the grammar of this line closely and explain why this is NOT death.
 - Why is it important to note that the speaker has ceased to move?
10. Stanza 5 includes heavily figurative language, but it’s describing something quite specific. What is the “House that seemed/ A Swelling of the Ground” figurative language for?

Theme

11. This poem is often criticized for its *ambivalent* stance on the topic of death. In what sense does its failure to take a strong stance on death and the experience of death a “positive” way of neutralizing fear of mortality?

12. After careful consideration, are you a person who reads this poem skeptically or optimistically? Does the speaker help you overcome the fear of death, or does the speaker’s position make the thought of death more creepy? Why and how?

Vocabulary

Civility	Gaze	Immortality	Quiver	Swell	Visible
Cornice	Gossamer	Labor	Strive	Tippet	
Eternity	Haste	Leisure	Surmise	Tulle	

Richard Cory

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Whenever Richard Cory went down town, 1
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed, 5
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace: 10
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, 15
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Structure and Form

1. Build on your work attending to the rhythm and *meter* of poetry from our work on “One Perfect Rose.” The act of formally analyzing a poem for its meter is called *scansion*, and it looks like this:

U / U / U / U / U /
(When ev)(er Rich)(ard Co)(ry went) (down town,)
U / U / U / U / U /
(We peo)(ple on) (the pave)(ment looked) (at him:)

Notice the u-shaped icons indicate unstressed syllables while the slash marks represent stressed. It sounds like this looks: whenEVERRICHardCORYWENTdownTOWN. This is called *iambic pentameter*. An *iamb* is a metrical foot consisting of two or more syllables. *Penta-* means “five” while *meter* refers to the units of sound called “feet.”

- Use the printed copy (**on the separate sheet provided**) of the poem to scan the text formally by charting the meter as I have demonstrated above. Additionally, be sure to identify the rhyme scheme as well.

He was a gentleman from sole to crown,

Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,

And he was always human when he talked;

But still he fluttered pulses when he said,

"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—

And admirably schooled in every grace:

In fine, we thought that he was everything

To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,

And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;

And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,

Went home and put a bullet through his head.

2. Consider the narrative structure of each stanza as if it were an act in a play or a chapter in a story. What important *character traits* do we learn about Richard Cory from stanzas 1-3?
3. Stanza 4 is the second mention of the audience. Why has the poet chosen the third person plural? How does that affect us as readers? What does it make us think about Richard Cory and our relationship to him? To the speaker? In what sense can we say that this pronoun “invites” us into the poem?
4. You may have noticed the repetition of the word “and” throughout this poem. What strikes you as interesting or unique about this repetition - what pattern in it can you observe? This pattern is called *polysyndeton*, the repeated use of conjunctions. What is its effect on your understanding of Richard Cory and his relationship (or lack thereof) to the audience?

Content and Development

5. A significant but subtle device at play in this poem is *hyperbole*, the exaggeration of one or more qualities for a particular effect. In what manner does the speaker exaggerate Richard Cory’s stature relative to the audience of the poem? To what does this hyperbole compare Richard Cory, and to what does it compare the audience by implication?
6. Analyze the grammar of stanza 1 and its *absolute statements*. In what way does this *generalization* about Richard Cory correspond to the fallacy contained in the idiom, “the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence”? What other words within the poem go without *qualification*, and how do they set us up for the surprise ending?
7. Choose any single stanza and unpack the figurative language contained within that stanza. What particular features does it reveal about Richard Cory’s character or personality? In particular, examine and explain the following words or phrases in context:
 - A gentleman from sole to crown
 - Clean favored
 - Quietly arrayed
 - Human when he talked
 - Fluttered pulses
 - Glittered when he walked
 - Admirably schooled in every grace
 - Waited for the light
 - Cursed the bread

Theme

8. Richard Cory appears to have had everything. Why then does he end his life in such stark and gruesome fashion? What statement does the poem make about wealth and status?
9. In what sense does this poem stand as a cautionary statement about the danger of making assumptions about others?

10. Choose any of the vocabulary words from this text and engage in a *linguistic analysis* through which you examine how the literal and contextual meanings of this word connects to and supports either of the conclusions you have developed from questions 8-9.

Vocabulary

Admirable	Favor	Gentleman	Pavement	Slim
Array	Fine	Grace	Pulse	Sole
Crown	Flutter	Imperial	School	

Miniver Cheevy

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn, 1
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old 5
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his labors; 10
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town, 15
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one. 20

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought, 25
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking; 30
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

Structure and Form

1. Remember, titles are privileged. The title of this piece is a proper noun, but what does its *sound* quality remind you of - what words or ideas does it call up in your mind? (Pay particular attention to what other words the words of “Miniver Cheevy” look like.)
2. Evaluate the rhyme scheme and meter of the poem. What do you notice about each stanza’s rhyme compared to its meter? Why do you think the author has made such distinctions between each rhyming line and its associated meter?
3. Condense each stanza into its most essential idea. What eight insights or ideas do we learn about Miniver Cheevy from each stanza?

Content and Development

4. Miniver appears to be a *nostalgic* person, one who thinks fondly of bygone days. What does his nostalgia for the past reveal about his attitude towards the present?
5. Why does Miniver “mourn Romance”? What does the phrase, “on the town” imply about this personified quality, and why would that cause Miniver to grieve over it?
6. How does the phrase, “Art, a vagrant,” help us position this poem in a particular time period? What must Art as a personified concept do to become a “wandering beggar”?
7. The poetic language evident throughout this poem is ripe with implied meanings. Unpack each of the following phrases to determine what particular meaning the author implies by each phrase:
 - Child of scorn
 - Grew lean while he assailed the seasons
 - Sighed for what was not
 - He dreamed...and dreamed...
 - a name so fragrant
 - on the town
 - iron clothing
 - scorn the gold
8. There are a number of allusions throughout the poem. Select a keyword from any of the following allusions to perform *independent research* on that topic. When you have gathered as much data on that topic as you can, report back to the group with that data. Be prepared to tell us how this new information adds insight to our understanding of Miniver’s attitude.
 - Chivalry
 - Thebes
 - Camelot
 - Priam
 - Medici
 - Romance
9. Miniver feels a powerful sense of loss, but what are the things that he (and society as a whole) has lost? Use your research from question 8 above to develop your answer to this question.

Theme

10. What does the poem’s final line suggest about the value or consequences of nostalgia? Is it an admirable trait, or does it have negative repercussions for our evaluation of Miniver?

11. Theme is “the author’s message.” Attitude does the author take towards ancient times compared to his attitude towards modernity?

Vocabulary

Albeit	Commonplace	Loathing	Prance	Vagrant
Annoyed	Incessant	Mediaeval	Scorn	
Assail	Lean	Miniver	Steed	

To His Coy Mistress

Andrew Marvell

Had we but world enough and time, 1
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side 5
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews. 10
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast, 15
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate. 20
 But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found; 25
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust; 30
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
 Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires 35
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour

Than languish in his slow-chapped power. 40
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun 45
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Structure and Form

1. Analyze the poem's rhyme scheme to determine its pattern of alternating rhyming sounds. In what ways is this poem's scheme different to most of the previous poems we've studied? Why do you suppose the author has adopted this "simpler" rhyme scheme?
2. Consider the grammatical structure of the first two lines. It begins with something called the **subjunctive mood**.³ Convert these two lines into modern English and then explain what the speaker is speculating about early in the poem.
3. While not broken into discrete stanzas, this poem has three discernible parts. This resembles a **syllogism**,⁴ the structure of a logical argument. Consider the poem carefully to determine its major and minor premises, and identify the conclusion the speaker asks his audience to accept.

Content and Development

4. What are some of the things the narrator and his beloved should do if they had the time? Identify at least three examples of how they would spend their time and discuss how these activities relate to a romantic relationship.
5. Think of all the examples of *time* you can find in the first section of the poem. What does this imply about the relationship of time and love? In other words, why is time so important in a relationship?
6. What do you think about the way the speaker "catalogues" his beloved (identifies certain traits about her and evaluates them)? Do you think this reflects "true love" (be sure to define this phrase in your response), or is it something else? If it's about something else, define that and evaluate it.
7. Compare and contrast the **imagery** in sections one and two and explain how the shift in imagery creates a shift in **tone**. Specifically, discuss imagery related to time and physicality. What new insights does this contrast enable you to make into the author's attitude towards his topic? (Be sure to identify that attitude and topic in your response.)
8. Interpret two of the following allusions in the poem: "before the flood," "Time's winged chariot," "Indian Ganges," and "honour turn to dust." Then explain how these allusions add emphasis to one or more ideas which the author attempts to develop in this text.
 - Example: *The phrase "Till the conversion of the Jews" (10) illustrates the ideal nature of love as an emotion that grows with time. The conversion of the Jews was a medieval Christian idea that deals with Christ's rejection by the Hebrews. The Christian tradition held that the Pharisees refused to believe Christ was the son of God, and this was part of the reason they turned him over to Pilate for crucifixion. The tradition holds that all the Jews will eventually recognize Christ was the son of God at the end of*

³ See the explanation on page 9 above for a refresher on grammatical mood.

⁴ A proper syllogism is comprised of a Major Premise, a Minor Premise, and a Conclusion. The syllogism is a way of practicing formal reason and it allows others to evaluate one's reasoning. In order for a syllogism to "work" properly the premises have to be relevant to one another, and the conclusion must follow. For instance, the argument "all men are humans, Mr Bevard is a man, therefore Mr Bevard is human" is a proper argument and a valid one. It is possible to have a proper argument with an incorrect conclusion. For example, "all men are humans, Mrs. Bevard is human, therefore Mrs. Bevard is a man" is a proper argument whose conclusion is obviously incorrect.

the world. Therefore, the narrator implies he would like it if he could pursue the beloved on an exaggerated scale of time; however, he turns away from this in the second part of the poem. In essence, the narrator is trying to have it both ways: he wants credit for desiring to pursue his beloved on an extended timescale, but he also wants satisfaction of his desires immediately.

Theme

9. What do you think the narrator means when he says “Nor would I love you at a lower rate” (20)? What does this imply about the “higher rate” of love he understands? Do you agree with this scale of love which the speaker proposes?
10. This is a poem in the *carpe diem*⁵ tradition. What is he suggesting he and the beloved seize?
11. What definition of love does this poem develop over the course of its three sections? Is it entirely physical, emotional, or a blend? Discuss with special attention to your reasoning.
12. Discuss how the final two lines of the poem serve as a summary of the poem’s major themes. Specifically, explain the phrase “yet we will make him run” (46) with reference to the *carpe diem* notion discussed in question 10.

Vocabulary

Adore	Conversion	Dew	Languish	Preserve	State	Vault
Amorous	Coyness	Embrace	Lust	Prey	Strife	Yonder
Chap	Deserts	Eternity	Marble	Quaint	Transpire	Youthful
Complain	Devour	Hue	Pore	Refuse	Vast	

⁵ *Carpe Diem*: Latin for “seize the day.” This tradition emerged in the 17th century and did much to influence the tradition of love poetry in English.

Ae Fond Kiss

ROBERT BURNS

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever; 1
Ae fareweel, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him, 5
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy; 10
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted— 15
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure! 20
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

Structure and Form

1. What noticeable feature of the poetry strikes you immediately as you read? What do you think the author is attempting to represent or replicate with such curious features?
2. In one or two sentences, summarize each stanza in modern English to identify its main idea. How do the ideas change across stanzas or build to a specific conclusions? What is that conclusion?
3. Notice the speaker's use of third-person-singular pronouns, "he" and "she" in lines 5-6. Specifically, whom do you think the "she" and "he" refers to in those lines? How does it contrast against use of the first person singular and plural throughout the rest of the poem?

Content and Development

4. Notice the repetition of lines 1-4 in lines 21-24. What is the effect of this repetition at the beginning and the end of the poem? How does the repetition in lines 12-24 take on added meaning after stanzas 2 and 3? What is that additional meaning?
5. Consider line 7, "Me nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me." What attitude does it reflect in the speaker?
6. Why do you think the speaker neglects entirely to specify what separates him from his beloved? What impact does this lack of knowledge have on your reading?
7. What is the purpose of the rhetorical question in lines 5-6 in the first stanza? How does it contrast with the preceding and succeeding images.
8. Carefully re-read lines 9-12. Then, discuss the quality of the speaker's affection for "Nancy." Why does the speaker claim he'll "never blame my partial fancy"? What does the language (pay attention to the vocabulary here) imply about the quality of his feelings for the beloved?

Theme

9. After reading the entire poem, think carefully about the speaker's attitude towards love. What do you think his feelings are and why?
10. Explain lines 13-16 carefully. Then compare these to lines 21-24 and discuss whether or not you think the speaker regrets his relationship with the beloved. Why or why not?
11. What does this poem teach us about love? Based on this speaker's experience, should we try to avoid love entirely, or is he trying to equip us for some fundamental feature of love in a person's life?

Vocabulary

Benight	Fond	Pledge	Sigh
Despair	Groan	Resist	Twinkle
Fancy	Partial	Sever	Wrung

I, Too

LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America. 1

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh, 5
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow, I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare 10
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am 15
And be ashamed -

I, too, am America.

Structure and Form

1. Consider the grammar and mechanics of the first line. What does it mean to “sing America”? Unpack the grammar of this line to discuss how the structure of this sentence alone primes us to receive the poem’s content and its theme. What part of speech is “America”? What sentence element is it?
2. We see five distinct stanzas of varying lengths. Which one is the odd one out both in terms of its structural differences and its conceptual content?
3. Reflect on some of the common features of the previous poems we’ve read in this unit and observe some of the differences between those pieces and Hughes’s poem. What patterns or traditions does “I, Too” deliberately avoid?
4. The first and the last lines of this poem follow a similar structure but express dramatically different ideas. The contrast lies in the verb. Compare the two lines based on their position in the poem. How do they serve as “bookends” to contain and support the main idea of the piece?

Content and Development

5. “I, too, sing America” is an *allusion* to a famous line of poetry by a man named Walt Whitman. Review this [article](#) and compare Hughes’s poem to Whitman’s [own](#) poem of similar title. How does Hughes respond to or extend the work of Whitman’s poem? What is that work in both pieces?
6. In one sense, this poem reveals a dark period in American history without engaging its more graphic violence. What do you know about our history prior to the Civil Rights movement about how white Americans often treated Black Americans? What situation is Hughes describing in the second stanza?
7. Examine stanzas two through four. What are the predictions the speaker makes about the future? In what sense does this poem respond to racial segregation with optimism or hope? At the time you’re reading this, do you think any of those predictions have come true? Why or why not?

Theme

8. How does the imagined progress of stanzas two, three, and four suggest a plan for social progress? What is necessary for our society to progress according to the terms implied in these stanzas? What is the ultimate goal of the implied progress?
9. Why do you think Hughes chose the word “brother” in line two? What sort of relationship does this suggest *ought* to exist between the citizens of this or of any country? What especially hurtful ideas does this word associate with those who are “sent to the kitchen,” metaphorically speaking?
10. What are the conditions on which racism exists or is allowed to exist based on this poem? What does a racist culture do to its minorities, literally or figuratively, or both?

THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

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.

Structure and Form

1. Think of the poem's title. What important information does it provide you with as you establish a context and setting for this poem? What do you think the setting is for the poem and who are its subjects?
2. Consider structure of each pairing of lines and the *enjambment*. How might we say that each line is "broken" off from the preceding one? What do you think this sense of brokenness add to the poem?
3. Think about the quality of this poem when spoken aloud by referring to this [sample](#) of Gwendolyn Brooks herself and then Morgan Freeman narrating this poem. How does Brooks's rhythmic narration of the poem contrast against the poem's final line? What do you suppose is the purpose of this contrast?
4. The poem begins with the line "We real cool" and ends with "We/ Die soon." What does this *antithesis* suggest about the values which the narrator(s) have compared with the author's? What are some of the things she might be criticizing about the players?

Content and Development

5. Refer to your work on context and setting from question one above. What associations do pool halls have in American history? Where are you most likely to find a pool table today, and what sort of connotations do those places have in our culture?
6. Skip ahead to the vocabulary portion of this guide and complete the assigned tasks for that element. Then, re-read this poem and consider the *connotative* meanings - the associations each of the words below holds in the context of this poem. Do you think the players themselves hold these connotations, or are they thinking literally about the things they're doing throughout the poem?
7. Describe the "narrative arch" of this poem. What sequence of events is implied from stanza to stanza until the speakers' ultimate death? What are the causes implied for each "event" in the narrative arch. (Why did the speakers "leave school," for example?)

Theme

8. Think about stereotypes in your consideration of this poem. In what ways does this poem appear to perpetuate negative stereotypes and about whom? Do you think the poem does, in fact, perpetuate those negative ideas, or does it do other, cautionary work by warning people in some way? What warning or warnings does this poem imply for the subjects?
9. The narrator is a first-person plural subject "we," and that means it is intended to represent a large group. What does this first-person narrator suggest about the audience for whom this poem is intended or about? Is this intended as a form of group confession of wrongdoing, or is it an acknowledgement of the need to adopt different priorities?

Vocabulary

gin jazz lurk sin