

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Poetry Journal Instructions

**Step 1: Read a ton of poems of your own choosing.** The following websites will be helpful to you.

Poetry Daily--<http://www.cstone.net/~poems/home.htm>

Academy of American Poets--<http://www.poets.org/>

Poetry 180: A Poem a Day for American High Schools Students--<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/>

Bartleby: Modern American Poetry--<http://www.bartleby.com/104/>

Poems on Poems (NCTE)--<http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/poetry.html>

Other good sources of poems are literature books, poetry anthologies, and the library. If there are poems we read as a class that you love, you may include no more than **TWO** of them. For this project, please use only published poems for your journal and not poems written by family, friends, or other students. Also, you need to broaden your horizons. **No more than two of your poems may be written by the same poet.**

- Anonymous poems are also not allowed for the poetry journal.
- You may not use poems written for children.
- You may not use song lyrics.
- Most poems from .com sites are not to be used for this assignment. When in doubt, check with me.

**Step 2: Keep a poetry journal.**

### **Part 1:**

The first section of your poetry journal is your own collection of favorite poems (for this class). It's your own anthology. In it, you will include a copy of **TEN** poems you read on your own for this unit, including the title and the poet. Your poem should be re-written, re-typed, or copy and pasted into a clean document. Web information on the bottom of the page is unacceptable!

Then, for **each** of the ten poems, you will write a journal entry. For each of these poems, write why you like the poem or what it means to you. Be specific with this. Give reasons and examples to support what you say. Also, point out something specific in the poem that connects to one of the five elements of poetry we discussed at the beginning of the unit. For example, if you found a metaphor in the poem, write it down and explain it. Or if there is a great image in the poem, show what it is. Please double space your entries and use a size 12 standard font. Refer to in-class examples for guidance

**Each entry should be 2-3 paragraphs long.**

If you're stuck, consider some of the following Reader Response Questions for poems/stories/novels (Some of these questions are from *You Gotta Be the Book* by Jeffrey Wilhelm).

1. What are you thinking about as you read the first paragraphs or stanzas?
2. What do you think the poet wants you to know?
3. What do you know that is helping you understand what you are reading? What might you need to know more about to help you understand?
4. How is the character like anyone you know or even like you?
5. What information did the poet leave out? What's happening behind the words or scenes? How did you fill them in?
6. What other works have you read that are similar in some way to this one? What sticks out as the most important connection between the two?
7. Will you tell your friends about this work? What do you want them to know?
8. What did you like most/least about this poem?
9. Was there anything you didn't understand? What was it?
10. What idea was the poet trying to explore in this work? How important is that idea?
11. Who was telling the story (or who was the speaker of the poem)? Does it make a difference? What if someone else were telling it?
12. How do you recognize when literary elements are being used? (symbol, metaphor, foreshadowing, etc.)
13. What do you feel is the most significant passage/word/event from the poem?

Here's an example of a response:

### **Poem #1**

"Introduction to Poetry" by Billy Collins (1988)

This poem reminds me, as a teacher, not to try to get my students to over-analyze a poem. I like the way the poem begins. Collins says, "I ask them to take a poem and hold it up to the light like a color slide." He's talking to students, of course, and he wants them to see poetry not as words on a page but instead as something that has qualities and values that we may not often associate with words, like light or color. He wants us to understand that poems have texture and even a landscape that we may walk around in, touching and knowing.

The metaphor in the poem, "tie the poem to a chair with rope and torture a confession out of it" is a violent image. He is comparing the analysis of poetry to trying to get a prisoner to talk, even through torture. I never want reading and talking about poetry to be a torturous experience for the reader (or even for the poem). And through years of school, students have learned to torture poetry; they get good at it. I don't want anyone torturing anything in my classes. I'd rather we dropped mice into our poems.

There's more, of course, to poems than their rhyme and meter. And in fact, I rarely enjoy a rhyming poem. But, saying that, I do believe there are certain qualities that poems must have to actually qualify as poems, and metaphor is one of those. In most of Collins's poems, I learn to see things in a new way. He gets me to think and feel and I like that.

## **Part 2:**

The second part of your poetry journal is a sample of five of your own poems. These poems need to be ones you wrote **during this poetry unit**, not ones you've written for other classes or on your own previous to the start of our study. There should be a variety of different types of poems represented (they all cannot be free verse, cinquain, haiku, etc.). Pick poems you've worked hard to improve and that you're proud of. By the time you put the poems in your journal, they should be through the revision process many times. At this point, there's no reason to be scared to share them.

Then, for each of these five poems, write a journal entry that explains what you wanted to accomplish when you were writing this poem. Please understand: I'm not looking for you to share the deepest secrets of your heart, nor do I want to pry into your social life. However, in order to better understand your poems, I need to know what you had in mind when you started. You might consider some of the following:

- What was my inspiration?
- What parts of the poem do I enjoy the most? Least?
- Was I trying to model my poem after a poet I admire or a poem I particularly enjoyed?
- What did I learn during the revision process? Remember what Ted Kooser has to say about revisions...
- What idea(s) was I trying to express? Was I successful?
- What poetry elements did I explore in my poem? Why did I choose them?

**Each entry should be 1-2 paragraphs long.**

Also, the 13 prompts for responding to other people's poems might be helpful as well.

### **Visual Presentation:**

How your poetry journal looks is as important as the poems you decide to include. This is an opportunity to let your personality and creative side come through—use color, artwork, whatever you wish to accomplish this task. You can even use one of those handy report covers to present your journal. ☺ **Please, no hard 3-ring binders, however; they're too bulky.**

Your entire poetry journal needs to have a cover page. Include a header with your first initial and last name in the upper right corner of each page.

Part I requires a title page that lists of all ten poems with authors, a typed or neatly handwritten copy of each poem, and a journal entry of 2-3 paragraphs for each poem. Number each poem and response (1-10). The poem and response should be on facing pages. Also, make a title page for your own collection of poems. Put each one your poems on its own page. Be sure you give it them titles. (Refer to the example if you are confused.)

Part II requires a title page that lists of all five poems, a typed or neatly handwritten copy of each poem, and a journal entry of 1-2 paragraphs for each poem. Number each poem and response (1-5).

The poem and response should be on facing pages. Put each one your poems on its own page. Be sure you give it them titles.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 200 points in the Papers/Projects grade category.

**Each journal entry will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

Explains why you like the poem and/or what it means to you. Connections are made to one of the five elements of poetry. Your statements must be supported with reasons and examples. Ideas should be fully developed. All entries have been edited for conventions and sentence fluency. Each entry is 2-3 paragraphs. (Graded on a 10 point scale x 10)

**Each of your poems will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

Demonstrates a variety of different types of poems written throughout the unit. Poems exhibit a real attempt to craft poetry and show the use of poetry elements discussed throughout the unit. All entries are typed or neatly handwritten in ink. All poems written will be accompanied by a response/explanation. All entries have been edited for conventions and sentence fluency. Each entry is 1-2 paragraphs. (Graded on a 10 point scale x 5)

**Visual Presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

Journal adheres to the criteria listed above for content. Color and layout are used to enhance the presentation on pages. Artwork is carefully selected to work with the poems selected. All entries are typed or neatly handwritten in ink. (Graded on a 10 point scale x 5)

- 10--Goes beyond expectations; attention to detail shows care and pride
- 9-8--Meets expectations, could be a little more precise or polished
- 7--Deviates from expectations, needs attention to accuracy, detail, quality
- 6-5--Deviates from expectations to a great degree
- 4-0--Is not done or so done so poorly as to be unscorable