

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripen should by time decrease
His seedness time himself shall instantly destroy
And thou to thy sweet turn shalt come to show
How lovely change is.


TEACHER RESOURCE

FREE POETRY RESOURCE | MAY 2025

By Glenda Pearce, adapted and developed from the text *Speak Up* by Sister Leonie

LYRIC TALK

INTRODUCTION

1. Interpretation of what the poet's feelings and ideas are
2. Usually about a person, place or situation (can be an abstract idea, e.g. life)
3. Poems are often concise, precise, and concentrated use of language – and you might have to determine the subtext between the lines
4. Style, form, and language should all contribute to express how the poet feels about something
5. Has a musical base, since the first lyrics were sung
6. Danger of lyrics being seen in a global way, when in fact the tone will have subtle changes in its interpretation
7. Written in thought units, so you need to watch the use of suspensive pause (held off until the thought ends – dwell on the last syllable, inflect up  and go to the line on the same pitch) = enjambed lines
8. Types of lyric poetry: sonnet, ode, elegy spoken word, dramatic monologue, straight lyric: comic, descriptive, protest (war), satire, persuasive.
9. Can be in quatrains, or any stanza length, or free verse (no rhyme, no rhythm).
10. Often iambic (- x stress) rhythm and rhymed.
11. Not all lyrics are nice eg war, or “A Question of Murder” (Vernon Scannell). Many poets express their feelings about unpleasant situations they want to change eg. Wilfred Owen, Maya Angelou, Pat Moon, Lauris Edmond

DELIVERY

1. **Subtle use of Modulation (vocal toolkit that enables you to make vocal changes)** – Inflection, resonance, tone, pitch, pace, pause, lengthening, accent, stress, volume, builds **to engage and hold your audience**
 - **Inflection** is effective for shades of meaning, most subtle method of emphasis, use in suspensive pause
 - **Resonance**
 - **Pause, pace, pitch and tone** – be in control of the poem; don't let it run away from you
2. **Watch the rhythm and rhyme** of the poem – use pitch and pace to create variation
3. Note where **punctuation** is falling
4. **Last word before punctuation louder**
5. **Be enthusiastic and vital, sincere and spontaneous sounding**
6. **Poise and posture** – you're the mouthpiece of the poet – be a presence
7. **The poem should tell itself** – don't overdo it
8. **Gesture** – Not generally used except in light verse or junior grades, where it is naturally supporting the emotions and feelings of the poem

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripener should by time decrease,
His seedness time himself shall bring to thee,
And thou shalt grow.

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GIVE EXAMPLES FROM YOUR POEM AND OTHERS

SONNET

1. Disciplined style and form of 14 lines
2. Language is concise and concentrated
3. Spontaneity and sincerity when spoken
4. Usually spoken at a slow to medium pace
5. Formal, subjective delivery with a subtly controlled voice, meaningfully, clear understanding of the message evident
6. Definitely not dramatic
7. Two main patterns
 - a) Italian (Petrarchian), which has ABBA, ABBA, CD, CD, CD or CDE, CDE with a division into 8 octaves and 6 sestet

One theme in 8 lines, then a change, development of that theme in the sestet
Look for key lines to emphasise
 - b) English (Milton, Spenser, Shakespeare) ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG

It develops one theme but three aspects of it are possible with a summary in the couplet
8. Sonnets – important expression of thoughts and feelings – in 16th century love of a woman was common, but later 17th became love of God, death, life, afterlife – in 18th century love of nature.
9. More flexibility in form in 19th and 20th centuries
10. E.g. Wilfred Owen wrote a lot of sonnets about war, Shakespeare

OTHER STYLES WORTH NOTING

ODE

1. Addressed to something inanimate as though it has life e.g. “Ode to the West Wind”
2. Language is dignified, and the subject is “important”
3. Original Greek odes had three sections, 9 stanzas, and a definite strong climax
4. Poets used their own length of stanzas e.g. Keats 10 or 11 lined stanzas
5. Mostly iambic pentameter

ELEGY


1. Subjective poem addressed to someone who has died
2. Deeply personal, sensitive
3. Usually formal, usually iambic, constant stanza pattern

SPOKEN WORD

1. Modern prose poem style in thought units
2. Personal
3. Embodies the courage necessary to share one's self with the rest of the world.
4. Usually free verse
5. Written for performance – can use gesture, facial expression
6. Look for key lines to shape the delivery
7. Usually uses vivid images, sounds, actions

LYRIC TALK

GRADE 5 - 7 REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

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1. What is the key message of your lyric?
 2. What do you like about it?
 3. What is its form – and how does that assist its message?
 4. Where might you pause?
 5. How might you use inflection?
 6. What is this poet's attitude to life?
 7. Is there any symbolism, metaphor?
 8. How are sound devices used?
 9. What's its rhyme scheme and metre?
 10. Where/how does the poet fit in poetry periods?
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