

Native American Poetry

Teacher Background Information

Free verse is one type of poetry. It has no formal rhyme, meter, form or meter. It is usually written in non-rhyming lineaments that vary in length. They may or may not be structured in sentences. Free verse may or may not be broken into stanzas. Punctuation is sometimes used to create special emphasis/ effect.

Example:

Coyotes howled howling... wind blows children there as
stars blink out and the earth shakes the
bones like rain, as
Chicago is born the silence of that laughter still. ...

Notice the allusion to the first line emphasizing the howling, the motion of
rain/snow and phrases, and the capitalization placement.

The vocabulary of a poem used by learners is often to understand the meaning. For
example, in the above poem, the meanings of "howled" and "Chicago" need to
developed in order to understand the poem.

Concrete language is language that appeals to the senses, i.e. touch, sight, hearing,
smell, taste. It is the use of language that engages one or more of your senses.
From the above poem, "howled howling" and "wind blows children there"
involve the sense of hearing and touch.

Figurative language is an excellent way to understand what is being said by the poet.
Figurative language is writing the poem in your own words. For example: From the
above poem, "Coyotes howled howling" could be read this to say, "Coyotes
howled" Likewise, "wind blows the hair..." could be read this to say, "the
ground rumbles up the side," or "the air rumbles the earth."

Abstract practice is the the above poem can be heard, understood, or have
abstracted upon by students. Have the students identify the vocabulary. Then
have them identify the concepts which the poem appeals. Lastly, they are to
paraphrase the poem. They may also work on the symbolism, if symbolism
has been previously taught and understood.