



The Study of Theme and Figurative Language in Poetry and/or Prose — Grade Nine

Ohio Standards Connections

Reading Applications: Literary Text

Benchmark D

Identify similar recurring themes across different works. (Grades 8 - 10)

Indicator 5

Identify and explain universal themes across different works by the same author and by different authors. (Grade 8)

Benchmark F

Identify and analyze how an author uses figurative language, sound devices and literary techniques to shape plot, set meaning and develop tone. (Grades 8 - 10)

Indicator 9

Analyze ways in which the author conveys mood and tone through word choice, figurative language and syntax. (Grade 9)

Benchmark G

Explain techniques used by authors to develop style. (Grades 8 - 10)

Indicator 10

Explain how authors use symbols to create broader meanings. (Grade 9)

Lesson Summary:

Students will learn how to identify and analyze the use of figurative language used in selected poems, short stories or other pieces of prose chosen by the teacher. These pieces of literature will represent at least two pieces by one writer and at least two pieces by different writers. Students will also learn to identify similar recurring themes across the different works and analyze the universality of the themes. Students will demonstrate, through their writing, their ability to document textual evidence which justifies their interpretation of the literary selections.

Estimated Duration: Two to three hours

Commentary:

Readers use a variety of techniques to develop an interpretation of literary text. This lesson addresses how readers identify and analyze theme and figurative language devices that are used in poetry and prose.

In the Ohio's English Language Arts Academic Content Standards, identifying the theme of a text is introduced as an indicator in the second grade. Students build on this skill, so that by the third grade they are able to describe methods authors use to influence readers' feelings and attitudes (e.g., appeal of characters in a picture book, use of figurative language). These techniques are explained, examined, identified and critiqued at every grade level leading to the ninth grade. By the time teachers and students follow this model lesson, students should be able to do more than just identify or explain literary techniques. Students should be able to analyze the techniques authors choose to use in their literature. The post-assessment in this lesson takes the form of an expository essay used as a vehicle by which strategic readers analyze and evaluate theme, figurative language, mood, tone, etc. The essay also enables students to demonstrate their understanding of literary techniques used in the Reading Applications: Literary Text Standard.

By the fourth grade, most students have developed the ability to use a variety of reading comprehension techniques, such as comparing and contrasting, inferring theme and meaning and analyzing an author's use of language.

Pre-Assessment:

Give students a copy of a poem (not one selected for the lesson), and ask them to write an interpretation of the poem. They are asked to identify the theme and any figurative language used in the poem and to describe their importance to the interpretation of the poem. Students should also relate the theme to any other literary works with which they are familiar.

Scoring Guidelines:

3 = Student can identify the theme of the poem correctly, analyze the use of all figurative language devices and relate the theme to at least one other literary work.