

Poet Craft: Word Choice & The Sonnet

Our culture is very preoccupied with names and labels. We want to know who or what something (or someone) is and will place a name on the object or person through a variety of means. Sometimes the name or label fits, and other times it doesn't. In the space below, list ways or steps that we take when we label people or things:

Questions:

- Do you think people are uncomfortable when something doesn't have a label or its identity is hard to describe or distinguish?

- How hard is it to break away from a label or name you've been given (whether you wanted it or not?)

One of the most famous lines in English drama is from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. You have probably heard this before:

Excerpt from Act II, scene ii

Juliet:

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Romeo:

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

Juliet:

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

Romeo:

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Question: What is the conflict in this scene? (It should be *really* obvious, but just for the sake of shared background).

As we all know, the repercussions of names in *Romeo and Juliet* were pretty drastic. Overall, names and identities attached to those labels are very significant.

Shakespeare, a poet and playwright who wrote copious numbers of sonnets, utilized name and word choice in an interesting way to describe love conventionally and unconventionally. Let's look at two of his famous sonnets and see how they are alike and different.

As you read, please follow our 5 Steps of Annotating. ☺

Sonnet #18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
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,
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 owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

Comparisons Listed in the poem:

What does the speaker say in the couplet at the end? (Conclusion about Subject)

Is this poem a "typical" love poem? If so, how?

Switch to the next page and read Sonnet #130. After you're done reading, fill in the list of 10th Grade Student Words. Answer the questions that follow.

What comparisons would people your age use today when describing someone they like or love?

Question: Is this a typical love poem? If so, how? If not, why not?

The Unappreciated Sonnet Assignment

Most often, we think of sonnets = love. Still, we can write sonnets that give attention to the less flattered creatures and objects in life. Who says sonnets always have to be about beautiful maidens?

Sonnet Structure:

A sonnet has 14 lines, and contains this rhyme scheme:

_____A
_____B
_____A
_____B

_____C
_____D
_____C
_____D

_____E
_____F
_____E
_____F

_____G
_____G

Components

- First quatrain: An exposition (introduction) of the main theme and main metaphor.
- Second quatrain: Theme and metaphor extended or complicated; often, some imaginative example is given.
- Third quatrain: Peripeteia (a twist or conflict)
- Couplet: Summarizes and leaves the reader with a new, concluding image.
- 10 syllables per line = 140 syllables total



Your Task: Now that we've read *how* to write a sonnet, you will write a poem about an assigned object or creature that often gets overlooked or is unappreciated in life. Keeping in mind that the inspiration from poetry can come from anywhere and that our job as poets is to create fresh, original work filled with powerful language, we are taking a closer look at items in the world that aren't given much attention, especially in the form of a conventional sonnet, and giving them a chance to be recognized.

This is your opportunity to be creative and think back to the videos we have watched and the poems we have read that feature amazing word choice, vivid imagery and fresh ideas. In addition to being assessed for its sonnet form, your poem will be assessed using the rubric that we created together. (*Attached at the end of this document*).

Topics

1-Roadkill	11-Cactus	21-Calculator
2-Bacteria	12-Coat Hangers	22-Copy Machine
3-Dryer Lint	13-Screwdriver	23-Clorox Bleach
4-Grocery Cart	14-Smoke Detectors	24-Floppy Disk
5-Vulture	15-Surge Protectors	25-Staple Puller
6-Copy Machine	16-White-Out	26-Maggots
7-Clorox Bleach	17-Window Blinds	27-VCR
8-Floppy Disk	18-Leeches	28-Garbage Truck
9- Hand Sanitizer	19- Contact Lenses	
10- Lawnmower	20- Airplane Dinner	29-Bandaid

Advice: When brainstorming ideas surrounding your subject, think about the following. You may use the space provided for idea generation.:

- Is your subject respected by humans or other creatures?

- What role does the subject serve in the community or environment?

- Who/what benefits from this subject's existence?

- What would the environment/community be like without this subject?

Please cut off the rubric below and submit it with your sonnet. :)

This project is due _____.

Poetry Rubric

Your poems will be graded on the following criteria, in addition to any form-specific requirements. (In this case, it is the sonnet form).

- _____/5 **Theme:** Is the theme or message of your poem universal so that everyone can relate to it, but also specific enough to be interesting and provide a new perspective?
- _____/5 **Craft/Voice:** Accurate, meaningful & descriptive word choice. Are your words in the best order? Is your “voice” as a writer expressed?
- _____/5 **Figurative Language:** Is your imagery unique/fresh/original? Do you use literary tools in an interesting way?
- _____/5 **Structure:** Does the structure of the poem help convey your message? Are ideas coherently developed throughout?
- _____/5 **Emotion:** Are your emotions adequately balanced? (i.e. you’re not ranting, self-pitying, overly dramatic)
- _____/5 **Poem is in the appropriate sonnet form as listed in directions.**