

Core Curriculum Standards

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details

- RL.7.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Reading Literature: Craft, and Structure

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama

Reading Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details

- RI.7.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.7.2** Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure

- RI.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing

- W.7.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

DAY FIVE | Theme

Lesson Goals

Outcomes

Students will be able to recognize themes in poetry.

Themes, Issues, and Concepts

achieving your dreams, being the best that you can be, courage, peace, war, bullying, surprise, idealism

Literary Terms

theme

Materials

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling

Poetry on Their Own Terms (2013 edition)

“A Perfect World” by Allison Bettlach (page 74)

Poetry on Our Terms (2014 edition)

“In the Moment” by Shatavia Franklin (page 47)

Poetry on Our Terms (2015 edition)

“Sara’s Story” by Sara Steffens (page 19)

“Discrimination” by Tenzin Gendun (page 38)

“Until Next Year” by Gabriela Del Risco (page 116)

“Dear Dad” by Brandon Chatmon (page 127)

Writer’s notebooks

DAY FIVE | Theme

Lesson Plan

PAGE 1

DO NOW (5 minutes)

Ask the students to do the following: jot down some dreams you have, whether they are big or small. Explain why these dreams are important to you.

WHOLE GROUP (20 minutes)

After reading “If—” to themselves, ask a student to read the poem aloud. Then, ask the students to answer the following questions:

1. What is the tone (see **Lesson Two**) of the poem? (The tone is instructive.)
2. Review the term personification (see **Lesson Four**). How are “triumph and disaster” being personified in the poem? (They are referred to as “imposters.”)
3. Are there any words you don’t understand? (Have students help each other to define the words.)
2. What is the main idea/lesson/moral of the story that you see in this poem? What clues did you find in the poem that led you to that answer?

Now that the students have found the main idea behind the poem, explain that there is a term for that in the literary arts, it is called **theme**. Have your students consider what theme they might choose for their poem and remind them to be thinking about *The 7GP Contest*.

PARTNER/SMALL GROUPS (15 minutes)

Have students read “A Perfect World” by Allison Bettlach, “In the Moment” by Shatavia Franklin, “Sara’s Story” by Sara Steffens, “Discrimination” by Tenzin Gendun, “Until Next Year,” by Gabriela Del Risco, and “Dear Dad,” by Brandon Chatmon.

EXTRA — Video of “A Perfect World” and “In the Moment”

Allison reading her poem: <http://www.7gp.org/allison-a-perfect-world>

Shatavia reading her poem: <http://www.7gp.org/shatavia-in-the-moment>

With partners or in small groups, students will discuss what theme(s) they find in the poems. Ask them to underline the lines that hint towards the theme(s) of the poems. Afterward, have students share their discoveries with the class. Poet Robert Frost once said, “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader.” Ask to students to discuss how this quote relates to theme and the poems just discussed. 7GP 2013 winner, Porscha Hayes, wrote an excellent poem titled, “So Alone.” This is a great example to discuss the element of surprise. ([7gp.org](http://www.7gp.org)).

INDEPENDENT (10 minutes)

Ask students to respond to the following questions: Looking back at the warm-up, what theme emerged from the dreams you wrote about? Underline any key words or lines in regards to theme.

DAY FIVE | Theme

Lesson Plan

PAGE 2

REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Have students share the following:

1. What happened in their dream?
2. What is the theme?
3. What key words or lines provided hints to the theme?

HOMEWORK

Have students write a brief reflection over the poetry they read and listened to today. Ask them to include any ideas that popped into their head, lines that really stuck out to them, and/or techniques they may want to try when they write poetry. If they were going to turn their dream free write into a poem, what would they change?



Remind students this is their chance to write a poem for the contest. They are the author and they can choose any topic and any style. Winning poems are due and must be submitted to 7GP no later than January 29, 2016.

If—

by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man my son!

A Perfect World

by Allison Bettlach (7GP Winner, 2013)

Wouldn't it be nice to live in a perfect world?
If war was just a card game?
If color only had to do with crayons,
And being in debt meant losing Monopoly?
Wouldn't it be nice if we trusted each other?
If guns were just big muscles,
and knives were only used in kitchens?
Wouldn't it be nice if we loved each other?
If churches were filled rather than arenas?
If best friends were actually true,
And no one was afraid to be themselves?
Wouldn't it be nice if we cared?
If smoke came from bonfires rather than cigarettes?
If peace meant more than just quiet,
And everyone had a place to call home?
Wouldn't it be nice if this were more than a poem,
But our reality?
If it didn't seem impossible?
If we lived in a perfect world?

In the Moment

by Shatavia Franklin (7GP Winner, 2014)

As I stand here, I feel the breeze
Slither down my spine
My hair flowing with the wind
Birds chirping, bees buzz
It's almost as if time has stopped

A single moment frozen
A dog's mouth open ready to catch a Frisbee
A boy's ice cream drip, drip, dripping
But the drip hangs suspended in mid air
Leaves hang swirling on the breeze
And, for a moment the breath of the world is held

What happens next?
What happened right before?
I don't care.
I'm in the moment.

Sara's Story

by Sara Marie Steffens (7GP Winner, 2015)

You read the cover
and turn the page
You stop reading
Then, you judge me
You read the cover, not my story

I know my flaws
more than you will ever know
Yet you think you know it all
You read the cover, not my story

I'm not going to tell you what it says
You're the one who has to read the book
It's not my fault you got me wrong
It's your responsibility to get to know me
Your choice

Chapter after chapter, my story is not over
Maybe if you read it
You'll understand
You read the cover, not my story

Discrimination

by Tenzin Gendun (7GP Winner, 2015)

A trash bag isn't a trash bag
till you put trash in it
until then, it's just a bag

Until Next Year

by Gabriela Del Risco (7GP Winner, 2015)

I sit there,
Crying a river,
Listening carefully,
As the facts hit me each time,
Like needles to skin,
The sound of my mother's voice,
"He was drunk, driving, and made the worst mistake of his life."
How my father was leaving my life,
Into a life full of criminals, guards and bars.

I think things over,
Repeating them each time in my head,
Over and over and over again,
Imagining the horrible accident,
How my dad hit the back of that SUV,
Taking three children away from a father,
And even a father away from me,
I'll see him once a year,
Limited time,
A blue jumpsuit,
His beautiful hair shaved down,
Oh no...

The worst part—Leaving.
Leaving the visiting room,
I hear the guard tell us,
It's time to go,
I get up and hug him harder than ever before,
Trying to find that sweet cologne I loved of his,
Not there.

Dear Dad

by Brandon Chatmon (7GP Winner, 2015)

Dad, I remember
The memories fresh in my mind
The pain imprinted on my heart

Dad, our mother you hurt
A good woman, she did her time
She never set us apart

My brother and I
When we did well
We were just like our old man

My brother and I
When we did badly
We were just like our mom

We were hurt like our mother
Who wiped our eyes
Who assuaged our fears

Here I am becoming a man myself
Will it please you
If someday I hurt a woman too?

Will it please you
If someday my own children
Never call me "Dad"?