



Understanding Shakespeare – Sonnet 73 Grade Nine

Skill Focus

Levels of Thinking			
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze
Close Reading	Grammar	Composition	
<p>Reading Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining Author's Purpose Inference Paraphrase <p>Literary Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> connotation denotation idiom vocabulary Imagery Theme <p>Figures of Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metaphor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extended/controlling <p>Literary Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argumentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparison/contrast Characterization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> indirect <p>Literary Forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verse 	<p>Syntax Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parallelism Repetition Reversal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inverted order (inversion) <p>Analysis of a Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaning and Effect related to syntax 		

Materials and Resources

- “Sonnet 73” by William Shakespeare

Lesson Introduction

As students become more experienced with language analysis, they will need less instruction and more practice. Engagement with complex texts such as Shakespearean sonnets will sharpen students’ perception of the way diction and imagery create theme. Sonnets are a perfect length for this kind of practice. Short enough to be analyzed in a class period or less, yet complex enough to require extended and intense effort, sonnets allow students access to elevated themes and rich language in a classroom-friendly setting. Students often enjoy analyzing poems like these in a pair or small group format rather than as a whole-group activity.



Understanding Shakespeare – Sonnet 73 Grade Nine

Read the poem aloud, then work through the questions that follow.

Sonnet 73

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
 As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
 Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

(5)

(10)

Close Reading

Sonnet 73 Analysis

That time of year thou¹ may'st in me behold²
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

¹thou – you
²behold – see

1. What season of the year is being described?

- The quatrain contains an extended metaphor that compares _____ to _____.
- Explain why this is an effective comparison.
- What are the “bare ruined choirs”?



5. Fill in the chart with images from the quatrain that appeal to the senses.

Sight	Hearing	Touch

Close Reading

6. How does the imagery reinforce the metaphor?

7. Rewrite the quatrain in your own words.

8. What observations can you make about the word order Shakespeare chose?

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth³ take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

³*doth* – do; does

9. What time of day is being described?

10. What precedes night? _____

11. Why is the choice of the word “twilight” important to the meaning of the quatrain?

12. What does “black night” take away?

13. “Death’s second self” is _____.

14. The quatrain contains an extended metaphor that compares _____
 to _____.

15. How does this quatrain reinforce the concept presented in the first quatrain?

16. Decide if each of the following ideas is making a positive or negative statement about death. Justify your answer.

a. _____ Death “seals up” life

b. _____ Death gives rest

17. How is the first line in this quatrain similar to/different from the first line in quatrain one?

18. How are the metaphors in the first two quatrains linked?



19. Rewrite the quatrain in your own words.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the deathbed whereon it must expire⁴,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

20. The speaker compares dying to _____

⁴*expire – to exhale; to breathe out the last breath; to die*

21. How does the meaning of the word “expire” contribute to the metaphor?

22. By comparing dying to _____ the speaker illustrates _____.

23. a. What nourishes a fire?

b. Explain how fire is consumed by what nourishes it.

c. The speaker’s youth is consumed in/by _____.

24. What is the “fire” within man?

25. How does this quatrain reinforce the concept presented in the first two quatrains?

26. Rewrite the quatrain in your own words.

This thou perceiv'st⁵, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere⁶ long.

⁵*perceiv'st – perceive; understand; become aware of*
⁶*ere – before*

27. Describe the speaker.
28. Whom is the speaker addressing?
29. a. What does the speaker say that “you” perceive or understand?
- b. What “must [you] leave ere long”?
- c. Why?
- d. How does this understanding make “thy love more strong”?
30. Rewrite the couplet in your own words.
31. What purpose does the couplet serve?
32. What is the theme of the poem?