Poetry and Paragraphs: A 16-Week Course of Integrated Literature, Research, and Paragraph Writing for Middle School and Early High School

By Diane Stepro
Table of Contents

Introduction
Week 1: Poetry’s Origins
Week 2: Imagine More Imagery
Week 3: Shall I Compare You?
Week 4: Take a Turn
Week 5: Formal Poetry and Free Verse Have Their Day in Court
Week 6: Putting Things Your Way
Week 7: Congratulations! You Are Poet of the Week!
Week 8: The Lives of the Poor and Famous
Week 9: The Poems of the Poor and Famous
Week 10: A Little Literary
Week 11: Stinky Feet
Week 12: Those Feet Sure Have Rhythm
Week 13: End Rhyme
Week 14: With a Sonnet Upon It
Week 15: What Do You See?
Week 16: Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow
Introduction

Course Content
This course will introduce some of the common conventions in poetry from ancient times to the present, with an emphasis on understanding poetry. The ultimate goal of the course is to help students to understand and appreciate poetry written in a wide array of styles. As with any introductory course, this course will not

Skills Needed Prior to the Course
This course assumes a knowledge of basic grammar. Students who do not yet know the parts of speech should master grammar basics before attempting this course. The material is appropriate for junior high students with good grammar skills; I have taught this material to young people in grades 5-9.

Organization of the Course
The first part of the course will cover conventions used in all poetry, such as imagery, comparison, and intentional line breaks. Students will memorize poems chosen by their families and complete exercises designed to help young people understand how poems work. Poems examined in this portion of the course will include Asian forms, contemporary free verse poems, and poems from various recent and ancient sources including the Bible.

In the second portion of the course, students will study rhyme scheme, rhythm, and other aspects of formal poetry. Students will continue to memorize poems and complete exercises. This portion of the course will focus on formal poetry.

Workload
I have designed the course with the assumption that students will work for FOUR days a week on this course: one day of confering with the teacher plus three days of homework, for a total of 3-5 hours of work per week, depending on the level of the student.

Notebook
Each student should maintain a 3-section notebook for this course. Arrange the sections as follows:
Copywork
Notes
Homework
Notes on Grading for Mastery Learning

For paragraph writing assignments, have students revise until each paragraph meets all of the point criteria and the paragraph earns 100%. This may seem opposite the way you learned in school. Many schools, unfortunately, use grades for “gatekeeping.” Gatekeeping grades show who learned skills instantly, or worse, who knew the material before the course ever started. Better grading systems reward intense effort and the pursuit of mastery. As homeschool parents, you have the opportunity to teach your students that, with hard work, they can reach academic perfection. Just as students can memorize poems (perhaps quickly, perhaps after many tries), students can master writing skills, given enough time and positive encouragement.

I recommend contract grading for this course. With contract grades, students receive grades based upon how much they complete. This method has been well-proven to achieve good results in English classes, and to allow teachers and students to focus on mastering the material rather than on computing grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Work Complete</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79%</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before awarding credit for paragraphs, do insist that students revise until their meet the grading criteria; however, give immediate credit for completion of exercises.

Recommended Materials

A good anthology of poetry suitable for children OR several books of poetry by a variety of authors OR access to the Internet and close parental supervision.
A good standard dictionary.
A Bible or other ancient, sacred text, as appropriate to your family’s beliefs
Drawing pencils and a small amount of nice drawing paper (to encourage really good renditions when I ask students to draw images from poems).

A Note on Sources

Poems quoted in these lessons come from books with expired copyrights, also known as books in the public domain. Please note that writers should
use signal phrases that include information about each source's author, as I have done below, even for sources in the public domain.
Week 1: Poetry’s Origins

Have you ever noticed that poems and songs often have similar rhythms?

The similarity stems from the common origins of poetry and music. Before writing grew common, our ancient ancestors chanted memorized poems to the rhythm of musical instruments. Poets composed new song/poems to help people remember the important stories of their cultures, or to praise God, or even to express feelings. Eventually, writing spread, and people began to write down the words to many poems that had passed from generation to generation. As the number of readers and writers grew, poets began to compose for audiences of readers rather than listeners. Even though poetry and music lyrics sometimes differ greatly today, both share certain aspects of their common ancestors.

Poetry differs from prose (everyday writing used in novels, stories, school books, letters to Grandma, and instruction manuals) because it uses more unusual literary elements like rhyme and rhythm. Poetry is meant to sound special.

Some of the ancient poems you may know include the Psalms, The Iliad, and The Song of Roland. (If you don’t know these poems yet, don’t worry! I don’t assume that you have read much poetry before you complete my class).

Definition of Poetry

Some people believe that rhyme makes poetry poetry. Others argue for rhythm, or for adherence to certain rules. But the job of composing a really complete definition for poetry has troubled thinkers for many years. Some great poems rhyme, but some do not. Some great poems have regular rhythms, while others use more fluid, complex rhythm. Poems in different times and different cultures have followed different rules. That doesn’t mean that just anything makes a good poem, however.

For one thing, most good poetry places images in the reader’s mind through careful descriptions and comparisons. Good poems use colors, shapes, sizes, smells, and sounds to help the reader envision the context of the poem.

In addition, good poetry uses original language. By avoiding cliches (overused words and phrases), good poets create a new experience for their readers and revel in the amazing flexibility and range of human language. Wordplay is another aspect of many great poems. Good poets find ways to play with words, and even contribute to the creation of new words. Try an
Internet search of words and phrases coined by William Shakespeare. The number will astonish you!

Finally, the best poets focus on the big things in life: God, right and wrong, the nature of humans, the attributes of good governance, and the importance of language.

Despite the important subjects poetry treats, poems frequently employ humor, wonder, and mischievousness.

**Homework Day 1**
Use the library or Internet to find and read ONE poem or song by ONE of the following poets:
- Jack Prelutzky
- Lewis Carroll
- Valerie Bloom
- Shel Silverstein
- Christina Rossetti
- Laura Elizabeth Richards
- Julia Ward Howe
- Emily Dickinson
- Robert Louis Stevenson
- Katherine Lee Bates
- Phyllis Wheatley
- Paul Laurence Dunbar
- James Whitcomb Riley
- Hillaire Belloc

Copy your poem into the Copywork section of your notebook. In the homework section of your notebook, respond to the following prompts about the poem you selected:

- List 2 images (colors, shapes, sizes) mentioned in the poem or song.
- List 2 examples of interesting or surprisingly original language.
- Write down any made-up words or other word-play (rhyme, repeated consonants, striking word combinations).
- Note the main idea of the poem. Is the poem about language, God, the human condition, or some other “big” idea?
- Does the poem use humor? Try to describe what makes the poem funny.

**Homework Day 2**
Use the library, the Internet, or a family study Bible to find information about one ancient poem (written before 1000 a. d.). Write a short paragraph telling your family or class about your chosen poem. Consider including information about the writer, the style of writing, the content, plot, or
meaning of the poem, the time and place the poem was written, and how the poem influences culture today (songs, movies, television shows, churches, etc.).

Some Ancient Poems:
The Iliad
The Odyssey
Gilgamesh
Beowulf
The Song of the Nibenglungs (Niebelungenleid)
Any Viking Saga (pick one!)
Ovid’s Transformations (pick one with the help of an adult—some mature material)
The Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
The Psalms (pick one!)

**Homework Day 3**
PART 1: Revise your paragraph using the following criteria:

My paragraph has a title
My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner

My paragraph has a topic sentence
My paragraph contains at least 3 supporting details
My paragraph contains at least 4 sentence if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age
My paragraph is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
My paragraph contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
My paragraph contains no errors in grammar

Keep revising until all of the grading criteria are met.

PART 2: Copy these terms and definitions into the Notes section of your notebook:
**Images**—For purposes of poetry, words that evoke any of the five senses, including shapes, colors, textures, sounds, and smells.
**Cliché**—tired, overused words and phrases that writers should avoid.
Week 2: Imagine More Imagery

Poets may employ any of the five senses to help the reader understand their ideas. The senses include sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. We call words that communicate things that can be sensed with the five senses concrete. Those who object that some poems describe imaginary things (toys that come to life, make believe places) should remember that imaginary things meet the definition of concrete. If unicorns walked around your yard, you would know this because you would see the unicorns. You might even hear their whinnies and the pounding of their hooves or pat their soft, cool sides. Thus, unicorns (and other imaginary things) meet the definition of concrete.

On the other hand, abstract words refer to ideas that no one can easily point to or even detect with scientific instruments: love, hate, sorrow, happiness... A poem may be about an abstract idea, but poets usually avoid abstract words.

In-Class Exercise
Here’s a simple exercise to help you understand the difference between abstract and imaginary. Take out your pencils and drawing paper. On one side of the page, draw a winged rat. Winged rats meet the definitions of imaginary (because they haven’t ever really existed) and concrete (because we can describe them with colors, shapes, textures, etc.).

Now, next to the winged rat, draw love. Wait! What does love look like? You might have drawn a mother staring at her baby or a heart, both common symbols of love, but you can’t draw love. Love meets the definition of abstract because we can’t describe it with colors, shapes, textures, or other sensory details. We have to resort to providing examples or making symbols.

Now, read Psalms 1:3 and list the abstract and concrete nouns used in the poem.

Homework Day 1

Think about your last family holiday. In the Homework section of your notebook, write concrete descriptions of a scene from the holiday. Try for 20 concrete images. In the other column, write abstract descriptions. I’ve given some examples.
Examples:

Concrete
Uncle Dan’s nose hairs, dark and long
Smoke from dinner burning in oven fills room
Christmas tree lights shining through smoke
Baby screaming
Puppy stealing turkey leg
Cousin Betty’s red 1965 Mustang
Uncle Dean’s rubbery fried alligator meat
Your chihuahua’s constant begging
Your new shiny red bicycle
Your mother’s bouquet of roses
Your grandmother’s tight hug

Abstract
scary
frightening
eerie
irritating
amusing
beautiful
disgusting
embarrassing
exciting
beautiful
loving

Following the example above, create your own list of concrete and abstract descriptions. Place your list in the Homework section of your notebook. You might describe characters from a book or game, pets, members of your family, neighbors, a favorite place... choose a subject you like and have some fun. Poetry should excite the imagination!

Homework Day 2

Have a parent help you locate an appropriate poem to analyze. In the Homework section of your notebook, record concrete words and abstract words from your poem, using the format shown in the above example. **Keep a copy of your poem in the Copywork section of your notebook.** In addition, answer the questions below.

Did the poem you analyzed have more concrete words or abstract words?
Why do you think the poem chose this proportion of concrete to abstract words?

**Homework Day 3**
Return to the ancient poem you wrote about last week. List examples of concrete imagery in your poem.

1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________________________
Week 3: Shall I Compare You?

Many poets approach their craft as a kind of painting with words. They describe colors, shapes, textures, and events to give their reader a mental picture of the scene or feeling they want to convey. The first verse of “America the Beautiful” by Katherine Lee Bates uses the poetic technique of visual description:

**America the Beautiful**

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

Note the colors mentioned: amber and purple. Also note the very accurate image of a grainfield: wavy. When wind passes over, wheat fields undulate much like water.

**Metaphor, Simile, and Conceit**

These common poetic devices allow poets to communicate their ideas more clearly through comparison, but they sometimes confuse people who expect poetry to work like ordinary speech. For example, if a poet compared a desert landscape to a human ear, you might find this odd until you looked closely at a photo of a desert and a human ear. Both have a lot of soft, rolling bumps and lumps, and many human ears are sand-colored. A poet hopes that comparisons surprise and delight us with their accuracy.

Read each definition below, and then look at the corresponding example.

**Metaphor** means a comparison of unlike things not using like or as.

Example: My arm is a branch, my fingers tiny stems.

This is an example of metaphor because arm and fingers are compared to the unlike things branch and stems without using like or as.

**Simile** means a comparison of unlike things using like or as.

Example: My hand opens like a leaf bud.

This is an example of simile because hand is compared to the unlike thing leaf bud using like.
**Conceit** means a comparison of unlike things that extends several lines.

Example: The wind trotted over the hills, snorting and whinnying, leaping the small bushes, knocking down clumps of snow from the branches it brushed past, and racing along the open strands of sea shore.

This is an example of a conceit because the wind is compared to a horse in a metaphor that extends several lines.

**In-Class Skill Builder**
List three metaphors or similes you have heard in poems, songs, or everyday conversations. Share your list with your classmates or family.

**Homework Day 1**
In the examples below, find the metaphors and similes. Identify similes and metaphors as I did above: “This is metaphor because X is compared to the unlike thing Y without using like or as” OR “This is a simile because X is compared to the unlike thing Y using like (or as) OR “This is a conceit because X is compared to Y using a metaphor that extends over several lines. Just one comparison below can be described as a conceit.

**Song of Solomon 2:1**
I am a rose of Sharon,
A lily of the valley.

Metaphors, similes, and conceits:

**The Tightrope Walker**
Balancing carefully, she shifts her burdens
To and fro. She dares not breathe
Or speak. She moves forward, her performance just begun,
Down the long aisle of ladies and lords
To accept her crown and become queen.

Metaphors, similes, and conceits:

**Moon Dog**
He is like the moon, growing larger bit by bit
My hungry pup, little Zip.
Metaphors, similes, and conceits:

**Homework Day 2**

Find a copy of Elizabeth Bishop’s “The Fish.” Based on your reading of the poem, carefully draw the fish and, perhaps, its surroundings. You are welcome to use color crayons, markers, or paint on your drawing, if you find that doing so helps and makes the work more enjoyable. For the really ambitious, a pop-up fish would certainly add some dimension to your notebook.

Consider these questions as you draw:
How large did the fish appear in relationship to its surroundings?
Where was the fish hook?
How did the fish’s skin appear?
Did the fish have visible gills? What did the gills look like?
How does the speaker of the poem describe the fish’s eyes?
What other significant features did the fish possess?

Show the completed drawing to your family or class, then place the drawing in the Homework section of your notebook (fold the drawing or place it in a protective sleeve, if need be).

**Homework Day 3**

In the Homework section of your notebook, record the author and title of “The Fish”. List some of the metaphors and similes you found in the poem (at least 4 total, any combination). Record metaphor and simile following the format shown in the examples above. Read your homework for today to your family or classmates.
Week 4: Take a Turn

At the end of many poems lurks something called a turn. A turn is a change in the direction of the poem. Quite often, the turn draws a conclusion from the ideas expressed in the earlier parts of the poem. Note the surprising ending of the poem below, “Puzzled,” by Carolyn Wells from *The Jingle Book*,

Puzzled

There lived in ancient Scribbletown a wise old writer-man,

Whose name was Homer Cicero Demosthenes McCann.

He’d written treatises and themes till, “For a change,” he said,

“I think I’ll write a children’s book before I go to bed.”

He pulled down all his musty tomes in Latin and in Greek;

Consulted cyclopædias and manuscripts antique,

Essays in Anthropology, studies in counterpoise—

“For these,” he said, “are useful lore for little girls and boys.”

He scribbled hard, and scribbled fast, he burned the midnight oil,

And when he reached “The End” he felt rewarded for his toil;

He said, “This charming Children’s Book is greatly to my credit.”

And now he’s sorely puzzled that no child has ever read it.

How would you like to read the boring “Children’s Book” described in the first 10 lines of the poem above? I feel sorry for the character called the “wise old writer-man.” He takes great pains to cram knowledge from many sources into his book, but he seems to believe that he can write stories for children very quickly—before his bedtime (as Carolyn Wells knows from her
own experience, writing books for children takes a lot of work). The last two lines of the poem contain the turn, in this case a humorous conclusion to the not-so-wise writer’s misguided efforts.

Find each of the poems listed below and identify the turn. Write the line (or lines) that contain the turn in the appropriate blank. After writing the words in the turn, use the blank provided to write a paraphrase of the meaning of the lines you’ve copied.

A paraphrase consists of a retelling of about the same length. So for a poem, you would tell the meaning of the poem, in your own words. You would use everyday language, and would not need to use poetic devices like rhyme or stanzas. A summary differs from a paraphrase in that summaries retell the meaning of a work in the summary writer’s words, but while a paraphrase uses about the same numbers of words as the original, a summary uses fewer words.

“I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make” by Jack Prelutzy

Copy the turn here:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Write your paraphrase of the lines here:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

“The Fish” by Elizabeth Bishop

Copy the turn here:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Write your paraphrase of the lines here:

Terms (So Far)
Title a notebook page in the Notes section “Literary Elements.” Please copy these terms and their definitions into your notebook and memorize them!

Concrete:
Abstract:
Imagery:
Metaphor:
Simile:
Conceit:
Turn:

Title another page in the Notes section “Writing about Literature.” Copy the following term and its definition on this page.

Paraphrase:
Summary:

**Poetry Writing Assignment #1 (Completed as homework over three days this week)**

**Homework Day 1**
Remember the list of concrete and abstract words you made to describe a family holiday?
Now, you will use that list to compose a poem. Start by deciding upon a dominant impression from the abstract list. Do you want to describe the holiday as funny, sad, exciting...?

Dominant impression:

Next, put an X through your **abstract** list. Poems *usually* contain more concrete imagery than abstraction, so try to avoid using items from the
abstract list Then, cut any details from the concrete list that don’t fit your dominant impression.

Arrange the images from your concrete list. A good rule of thumb is to progress from one side of the scene to the other as you describe.

Order of images
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
#7
#8
#9

Think of at least one metaphor and one simile to add to your descriptions. The metaphor and the simile may take the place of more straightforward descriptions you’ve thought of earlier.
Metaphor(s):

Simile(s):

Your poem should have a turn. For now, it is enough for your turn to summarize the main feeling of the poem. Make your turn in the last two lines of the poem. You may use an abstraction in the turn.

Put your poem aside and rest your mind for a day before proceeding with the next day’s work. You’ll write better after a rest.

**Homework Day 2**
Now, add enough details and connecting words to write a “sloppy copy” poem that meets the following criteria:

3-10 syllables per line
6-15 lines
rhymed or unrhymed (Warning: short rhymed lines will sound humorous in English. Humor is encouraged but not required)
one metaphor
one simile
no more than 2 abstract words
appeals to at least 2 senses (sight and smell, for instance)
contains a “turn” in the last two lines
no more than one use of “to be” words
at least 6 concrete visual images
varied sentence patterns
concise writing; no redundancy
Student’s name and date in top right corner
has an appropriate title
spell-checked

**Homework Day 3**
Revise your poem until it meets all of the grading criteria. You will read your completed poem before the class. After your reading, store all copies of the poem in the Homework section of your notebook.
Week 5: Formal Poetry and Free Verse Have Their Day in Court

Final Copy of First Poem Due

A VERY brief history of formal poetry: Most countries’ traditional poetry follows certain rules. The ends of lines may rhyme and have a very specific rhythm (like much European poetry), or lines may have a certain number of syllables (like some Asian poems), or every line may have a pause in the middle (like Beowulf). Traditional poems in English often come from French, Italian, or Latin forms.

Many European languages contain many rhyming words, but English works differently. Take the English word trifle as an example. Trifle rhymes with rifle, Eiffel, and not much else. It doesn’t take much to imagine a poem ending tragically with a rifle on the Eiffel tower and a character throwing bowls of trifle. In cases when a word rhymes with few other words, the need to rhyme often limits what English speaking poets can say, at least until the poets learn to choose words very, very carefully. For English speakers, rhyme both frustrates and delights.

Despite the frustration, poetry in English continued to follow formal patterns from the Renaissance until the nineteenth century. Many poets wrote in blank verse, a kind special kind of formal poetry with little or no rhyme, but the same number of syllables in each line (more about this later).

An even briefer history of free verse: Around the beginning of the 20th century, English speaking poets started to experiment with free verse. Free verse doesn’t rhyme and doesn’t have a regular number of syllables per line or. In free verse, poets create unique effects by carefully choosing the points at which lines end and by cutting all unnecessary words. Like most recent poems from around the world, the poem you wrote last week was probably a free verse poem.

Which is better, formal or free verse? Well, BOTH! The different types of poetry are like spoons and forks. Sometimes one is better, sometimes another. Sometimes either one will do.

Verdict: With many ways to express ourselves, we all win!
Here’s a free verse example, published in Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* in 1855.

**A Farm Picture**

Through the ample door of the peaceful country barn,  
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,  
And haze and vista and the far horizon fading away.

If I revise the poem so that the lines don’t stop as Mr. Whitman wrote them, I have an entirely different work:

A farm picture: Through the ample door of the peaceful country barn, a sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding, and haze and vista and the far horizon fading away.

Can you see how the line breaks change the poem? The description seems so tiny written as long lines, but the little poem has a lot of visual weight printed the way Mr. Whitman intended.

**In-Class Exercise**

“A Farm Picture” seems really simple at first, but consider the smart the metaphor and word choices.

Identify the images and list them.

How many different things do we see in this tiny poem? I think you’ll find quite a few

Take out some drawing paper and sketch the images described in the poem.

Another example of free verse comes from the 1915 book *Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters. The speaker is an ordinary Illinois woman during the American Civil War, a woman who once rented a room to President Lincoln. Note that the poet has titled the poem with the speaker’s name.

**Hannah Armstrong**

I wrote him a letter asking him for old times, sake  
To discharge my sick boy from the army;  
But maybe he couldn't read it.  
Then I went to town and had James Garber,
Who wrote beautifully, write him a letter.
But maybe that was lost in the mail.
So I traveled all the way to Washington.
I was more than an hour finding the White House.
And when I found it they turned me away,
Hiding their smiles.
Then I thought: "Oh, well, he ain't the same as when I boarded him
And he and my husband worked together
And all of us called him Abe, there in Menard."
As a last attempt I turned to a guard and said:
"Please say it's old Aunt Hannah Armstrong
From Illinois, come to see him about her sick boy
In the army."
Well, just in a moment they let me in!
And when he saw me he broke in a laugh,
And dropped his business as president,
And wrote in his own hand Doug's discharge,
Talking the while of the early days,
And telling stories.

Homework Day 1
Find another appropriate poem to memorize and recite.

Homework Day 2
Look back at "Hannah Armstrong," and then consider the following questions:
Why do you think the line "Hiding their smiles" is so short?
Would you call the language natural or poetic? Why?
Why do you think the poet chose to let Hannah speak in free verse rather than a in more formal, obvious verse?

Homework Day 3
People sometimes try to make rules about reading poems aloud. Some say readers should always pause at the end of lines. Some say readers should never pause at the end of lines. What do you think?

Pick a poem from an earlier lesson and change the line breaks. You can make the lines shorter, you can make the lines longer, or you can mix up the lines. Write your "revised" poem in the Homework section of your notebook. Read your new version aloud and compare it to the original. At the bottom of the page on which you have written your version of the poem, comment on whether you notice any difference in how you read the poem with the original line breaks vs. the new line breaks.
Week 6: Putting Things Your Way

Turn in homework and recite your poem for your class.
Understanding poetry takes work, and good poems may have multiple layers of meaning due to irony, puns, and other literary devices we’ll study later. Some people conclude that since they have to work hard to understand poems, poems must not have real meaning!

This just isn’t so. One way to practice finding the meaning of a poem is by making a habit of paraphrasing (remember, paraphrasing means putting the meaning of a written work into your own words, using about the same number of words as the original). You may remember paraphrasing lines a few lessons ago; from this point forward, you will paraphrase entire poems.

Read this untitled poem by Emily Dickinson, and then read the paraphrase that follows.

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody, too?  
Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!  
They'll advertise.

How dreary to be somebody!  
How public, like a frog  
To tell your name the livelong day  
To an admiring bog!

Paraphrase: The speaker insists that she is a nobody and asks the listener whether he is “nobody, too.” The listener apparently answers, prompting the speaker to request that the listener keep their joint “nobody” status secret. The speaker then compares being “somebody” to to a noisy creature that croaks before an audience all day, like a frog.

Notice that in the instances where I could think of no words better than the speaker’s to express the meaning (“nobody, too” AND “somebody”) I used quotation marks to indicate that the words were the speaker’s, not mine. When I use my own words, I don’t need quotation marks. Also note that I didn’t try to change the meaning, and I didn’t bother with line breaks or poetic language. The paraphrase is dull, but it demonstrates basic understanding of the poem.

Homework Day 1
Memorize the Emily Dickinson poem to recite in class next week.
List at least one metaphor or simile here:
Homework Day 2
Paraphrase this passage from “When Lilacs Last in the Door Yard Bloom’d” by Walt Whitman, written to mourn the murder of Abraham Lincoln. Paraphrasing is hard work, but keep in mind as you struggle along that nearly every college degree and professional job requires lots of paraphrasing. You will use this skill again.

Vocabulary help:
- **Dooryard** means near the door
- **Perennial** means every year
- **Murk** means darkness
- **Palings** mean boards of a fence

WHEN lilacs last in the door-yard bloom’d,
And the great star early droop’d in the western sky in the night,
I mourn’d—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.
O ever-returning spring! Trinity sure to me you bring;
Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,

Homework Day 3
Revise your paraphrase following these criteria:

- My paraphrase has a title
- My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
- My paraphrase has a topic sentence
- My paraphrase contains at least 3 supporting details
- My paraphrase contains at least 1 sentence if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age
- My paraphrase is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
- My paraphrase contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
- My paraphrase contains no errors in grammar
Week 7: Congratulations, You Are Poet of the Week!

List the metaphors you find in the passage from “When Lilacs by the Dooryard Last Bloomed” Check your list against the key at the back of this book. Over the past weeks, you’ve learned about several aspects of poetry. Now you are ready to try your hand at writing a poem.

Poetry Writing Assignment #2 (Completed as homework over three days this week)

Homework Day 1
Make a list of concrete words to describe your room. The words on the list should all show a dominant impression (ex: the room is dismal, the room is cheery, the room is messy...). DON’T MAKE THE DOMINANT IMPRESSION PART OF THE LIST! We’ll start this part in class so I can give you some assistance

Now, you will use that list to compose a poem. Start by deciding upon a dominant impression from the abstract list. Do you want to describe the holiday as funny, sad, exciting...?

Dominant impression:

Next, put an X through your abstract list. Poems usually contain more concrete imagery than abstraction. Then, cut any details from the concrete list that don’t fit your dominant impression.

Group the images you’re your concrete list logically here. A good rule of thumb is to move around the scene described by starting with one side of the scene and moving from one side of the scene to the other.

Order of images
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
#6
Think of at least one metaphor and one simile to add to your descriptions. The metaphor and the simile may take the place of more straightforward descriptions you’ve thought of earlier.

Metaphor(s):

Simile(s):

Your poem should have a turn. For now, it is enough for your turn to **summarize** the main feeling of the poem. Make your turn in the last two lines of the poem. You may use an abstraction in the turn.

Put your poem aside and rest your mind for a day before proceeding with the next day’s work. You’ll write better after a rest.

**Homework Day 2**

Now, add enough details and connecting words to write a “sloppy copy” poem that meets the following grading criteria:

- 3-10 syllables per line/appropriate line breaks
- 6-15 lines
- rhymed or unrhymed (Warning: short rhymed lines will sound humorous in English. Humor is encouraged but not required)
- one metaphor
- one simile
- no more than 2 abstract words
- appeals to at least 2 senses (sight and smell, for instance)
- contains a “turn” in the last two lines
- no more than one use of “to be” words
- at least 6 concrete visual images
- varied sentence patterns
- concise writing; no redundancy
- student’s name and date in top right corner
- has an appropriate title
- spell-checked
**Homework Day 3**
Revise your poem. Continue to revise until the poem meets all of the grading criteria.
Week 8: The Lives of the Poor but Famous

Read your poem aloud to your family members.

So far, we’ve learned about several tools poets use to write poems. Let’s review the tools we’ve studied by working together as a class to define each term.

Metaphor:

Simile:

Abstract:

Concrete:

Imagery:

Blank Verse:

Free Verse:

Line Breaks:

Turn:

We’ve also studied one type of writing useful to students of poetry.

Paraphrase:

This week, we have some new writing tools to study. Like line breaks, these tools affect the sound of a poem (some of you may note that these new tools have an effect on meaning, but their contribution to meaning is beyond the scope of this course).

Assonance is the repetition of repeated internal vowel sounds.

Example: Loud the bell knells on the prow of the old French scow

This is an example of assonance because of the repeated vowel sound “ow” in the words loud, prow, and scow.
*Alliteration* is the repetition of initial consonant sounds, usually within one line.

Example: Silly swans swim and swish suavely

This is an example of alliteration because of the repeated initial consonant sounds “s” and “sw” in the words *silly, swans, swim, swish,* and *suavely.*

*Consonance* is the repetition of consonant sounds in a line.

Example: Pitter-patter of little feet

This is an example of consonance because of the repeated consonant sound “t” in the words *pitter, patter, little,* and *feet.*

Take a few minutes to make sure that all of the above terms are recorded in your notebook.

**Homework Days 1 and 2**

Research one of the following poets and write a one-paragraph biography. Despite what I implied in the title of this chapter, not all famous poets are poor, so don’t make any assumptions until you do your research.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Robert Browning
Emily Dickinson
John Keats
Ann Bradstreet
Phillis Wheatley
Henry Longfellow
Homework Day 3

Revise your paragraph using the following criteria:

- My paragraph has a title
- My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
- My paragraph has a topic sentence
- My paragraph contains at least 3 supporting details
- My paragraph contains at least 5 sentences if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age (maximum 10 sentences)
- My paragraph is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
- My paragraph contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
- My paragraph contains no errors in grammar

Continue revising until your paragraph meets all of the grading criteria.

Copy at least 3 lines of the poem you wrote about into your notebook, along with information about the source (author, book title, etc.).

Make sure that you like the lines you copy. Older students should copy more than three lines! Add 2 lines for each year of age past 10.
**Week 9: Poems of the Poor But Famous**
Read the biography report to your family members during your class meeting.

**Homework Day 1**
Find a poem by the author about whom you wrote in your biography report. Memorize at least one stanza (about 4 lines) for those 10 and under and 2 more lines.

**Homework Day 2**
Paraphrase the poem (stop at 10-20 lines for longer poems).

**Homework Day 3**
Revise your paraphrase following these criteria:

- My paraphrase has a title
- My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
- My paraphrase has a topic sentence
- My paraphrase contains at least 3 supporting details
- My paraphrase contains at least 4 sentences if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age
- My paraphrase is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
- My paraphrase contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
- My paraphrase contains no errors in grammar

Continue revising until your poem meets all of the grading criteria.
**Week 10: A Little Literary**

Recite your poem to your family and submit your paraphrase to your teacher for grading.

**Homework Days 1-3**
In the copywork section of your notebook, copy the poem you memorized and recited. Complete the following exercise, recording your answers on a separate sheet of paper. This exercise will lead you through a structural analysis of a poem.

**Step 1** Find any instance of the following literary elements in the section of the poem you paraphrased.

**Literary Elements:**
- Metaphor
- Simile
- Conceit
- Concrete Imagery
- Abstraction
- Assonance
- Alliteration
- Consonance

**Step 2** Follow this format for recording literary elements:
First, quotation
Second, name of element
Third, way in which quotation fits element definition.

For example, if you decided that the sentence “Her hand opened like a leaf bud” exemplified simile, you would write this:
"Her hand opened like a leaf bud” is an example of simile because the unlike objects hand and leaf bud are compared with the use of the word *like.*
**Week 11: Stinky Feet**

Show your structural analysis to your teacher.

**Lesson: Poetic Meter**

You may remember that early in the course, we learned how songs and poems originated together. In the times before most people had ways of writing, ancient poets sung their poems, often to the accompaniment of drums or other musical instruments. Like songs today, ancient poems had rhythm to make them sound more musical. Today, poems still have rhythm. Some poets deliberately use certain traditional rhythms, while others seek new ways to add rhythm to their writing (remember line breaks?).

Readers can analyze rhythm through the use of *meter*. In some types of poetry, the meter takes a very structured form. Many of these forms have names, such as the sonnet, but we’ll get to that later.

We call the tiniest unit of meter a *foot*. In most cases, several similar poetic feet make up one line of poetry. A foot contains short or long beats. Every possible combination of 1-3 beats has a special name.

You can often tap out the rhythm of a poem if you read the poem aloud, but if you can’t “hear” the beat of language, don’t despair. You can use a dictionary to figure out which words and syllables have short (unaccented) beats and which have long (accented) beats.

Please take out your family dictionary and look up the word *chihuahua*. You will see a small accent mark over the first syllable of the word. This means that in a poem, the first syllable of chihuahua would receive a long beat, and the second and third syllables would receive a short beat.

We use the mark X to show when a beat is short and the mark / to show when a beat is long.

**Types of Poetic Feet with Examples**

**Iambic** (X /): each iambic foot contains a short beat followed by a long beat.

\[
X / \quad | \quad X / \quad | \quad X / \quad | \quad X / \\
\]

Leaf *fall*, cat *call*, at *day’s* last *light*

**Anapestic** (X X /): each anapestic foot contains two short beats followed by one long beat.

\[
X \quad X / \quad | \quad X X / \quad | \quad X X / \\
\]

And the *beat* of a *hand* on a *drum*
Trochaic (/ X): one long beat followed by one short beat.
/ X | / X | / X | / X |
Running, jumping, singing loudly

Dactylic (/ X X)
/ X X | / X X | / X X
Eyes on the edge of the world to come

If this is all too confusing right now, remember that the most common poetic foot in English is the iamb, and that poets frequently write 5 iambs per line of poetry. The bottom line is that you will find ten syllables per line in an awful lot of poetry written in English.

Homework Day 1

Copy the above information about types of poetic feet into your notebook’s Notes section.

Homework Day 2

Find a copy of the poem “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?” by William Shakespeare. Read the poem, and copy it into copywork, marking the iambic rhythm with X and /, as shown in the notes on iambic feet. The poem should have 14 lines with 5 iambic feet per line.

Homework Day 3

Paraphrase “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day?”. After your paraphrase, list any instance of the following literary elements in the poem, just as you did in last week’s literary analysis.

Revise your paraphrase following these criteria:

My paraphrase has a title
My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
My paraphrase has a topic sentence
My paraphrase contains at least 3 supporting details
My paraphrase contains at least 4 sentence if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age
My paraphrase is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
My paraphrase contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
My paraphrase contains no errors in grammar

Continue revising until your poem meets all of the grading criteria.
Week 12: Those Feet Sure Have Rhythm
Show your homework to your teacher.

Remember way back near the beginning of the course, when we talked about free verse, blank verse, and rhymed verse? After all the poems we have studied, I hope you agree that all of these types of poetry have their good points. However, I know you like rhyme. When rhyme is done right, it just sounds so wonderful.

Despite the great sound effects rhyme lends to poetry, rhyme doesn’t always work. As you read in an earlier chapter, rhyme can lead poets away from their intended meaning, and sometimes, rhyme sounds silly and light when the poem needs to sound more serious. Fortunately, poets have a huge number of tools for creating sound effects. Even in Shakespeare’s time, poets and playwrights ended lines without any rhyme at all when doing so suited their purposes.

Now that you know about meter, you have the key to using one of the other great sound effect tools. Controlling meter is one more way to make a poem sound like...a poem.

When a poem is written with a regular meter, or even a regular number of syllables per line, readers should suspect that the poem follows a prescribed form, even if the poem doesn’t rhyme. One common form in English, at least for the past 500 years, is blank verse.

A blank verse poem can be any length, from one line on to infinity (but not beyond). But most lines in a blank verse poem consist of unrhymed iambic pentameter, with a few variations thrown in to keep the poem lively. In our example, You will note that every now and then, an irregular rhythm pops in because the poet uses something besides an iamb or throws in an extra unaccented beat at the end (this is called a feminine ending). Sometimes, poets add or drop a foot because a change in line length draws attention to important ideas (we talked about this trick way back when we looked at line breaks—it works for formal and informal poetry).

Below, I have scanned the meter of several lines of blank verse from Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream (in these lines, the speaker, Theseus, the villain of the play, considers how our imagination at times tricks us):

```
X / | X / | X /|X / | X /
More than cool reason ever comprehends
X / |X/| X /| X X / |X /
```

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,

That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:

The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; (feminine iamb)

And as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination.

HW: Blank verse to scan, analyze, and paraphrase

**Homework Day 1**

Into the copywork section of your notebook, copy these lines from the beginning of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*, skipping every other line to leave space for scanning the meter. The passage below is spoken by the title character, whom Shakespeare paints as a very enthusiastically super-villain.
Richard describes a time of peace, but goes on to remark that he finds peace boring, and plans to stir some trouble.

Next, scan the meter. This is blank verse poetry, so most of the lines will contain 5 iambs.

Vocabulary help:
Lour'd=lowered
Bound with victorious wreaths=wearing crowns, perhaps made of leaves
Arms=weapons
Marches=war music
Merry measures=party music

**From Richard III, by William Shakespeare**

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds that lour'd upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums chang'd to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures.

**Homework Day 2**

Into the copywork section of your notebook, copy these lines from the beginning of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* skipping every other line to leave space for scanning the meter. In this passage, Macbeth thinks about how meaningless his life of villainy has been, comparing life to reflections of reality such as a shadow or an actor.

Next, scan the meter. This is blank verse poetry, so most of the lines will contain 5 iambs.

Vocabulary help:
Signifying: meaning

**From William Shakespeare’s Macbeth**

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

**Homework Day 3**
You may have heard all kinds of crazy stories about Shakespeare’s true identity. The truth is, we know a lot about him! Some people just have trouble believing that a guy who came from an ordinary family and didn’t get to go to school for very long could have taught himself so much. We all know that the human mind is amazing, right? Who knows better than homeschoolers just how much people can learn on their own!

Research Shakespeare’s life, finding answers questions that follow. Copy the answers into the Notes section of your notebook and save them for later. Next week, you will write a paragraph about Mr. Shakespeare.

When did Shakespeare live?
Where did he live?
Who ran the government of his country?
What kind of education did he have?
What various jobs did he hold during his lifetime?
What kinds of things does he mention in his will?
What makes him so famous?
Week 13: End Rhyme

Show your homework to your teacher.

End rhyme is one of the most charming elements of “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day.” Many, many poems contain rhyme, most often at the end of a line. Just like meter, rhyme can follow certain established patterns. When we look at end rhyme, we mark the first rhyming word “A,” and all the other words that rhyme with the first word “A.” The second set of rhyming words will take the letter “B,” and so on.

Here is an untitled little poem from Christina Rossetti, with the rhyme marked for you.

There is but one May in the year,   A  (year rhymes with year)
And sometimes May is wet and cold;   B  (cold rhymes with old)
There is but one May in the year   A
Before the year grows old.   B

Yet though it be the chilliest May,   C  (May rhymes with day)
With least of sun and most of showers, D  (showers rhymes with flowers)
Its wind and dew, its night and day,   C
Bring up the flowers.   D

See how the pattern goes ABAB in the first stanza, and then CDCD in the second stanza? These repeated rhyme patterns help hold the poem together. Very often, rhyme follows an alternating pattern like the one above, or pairs of lines rhyme, as shown in these couplets (paired lines of poetry) by Alexander Pope:

Wou'd you your writings to some Palates fit   A
Purged all you verses from the sin of wit   A
For authors now are so conceited grown   B
They praise no works but what are like their own.   B
In case you didn’t catch the meaning, Pope is making fun of authors who “purge,” or remove, everything funny from their writing in order to please the “Palates,” or tastes, of other writers who have no sense of humor.

**Homework Day 1**
Using the information from the research you conducted last week, write a rough-draft paragraph about William Shakespeare’s life.

**Homework Day 2**
Using the criteria below, revise your paragraph about Shakespeare until you feel that it is a polished final draft.

- My paragraph has a title
- My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
- My paragraph has a topic sentence
- My paragraph contains at least 3 supporting details
- My paragraph contains at least 4 sentences if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age
- My paragraph is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use
- My paragraph contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”
- My paragraph contains no errors in grammar

Keep revising until your writing meets all of the grading criteria.

**Homework Day 3**
Find a copy of “The Hunting of the Snark” by Lewis Carroll. Copy the poem into the Copywork section of your notebook, and mark the rhyme scheme as shown in the examples above.
**Week 14: With a Sonnet Upon It**
Show your homework to your teacher.

**The Sonnet**
One of the most common and famous forms of iambic poem, the sonnet consists of 14 lines of rhymed iambic pentameter. Different types of sonnet use different rhyme schemes.

Sonnets frequently use a two-part structure. The sonnet starts out by introducing the situation, but ends by turning to a conclusion or solution. If I wrote a sonnet about my cat, I might begin by explaining that my cat doesn't like me, but end by telling how I have learned patience from life with a hostile kitty.

Scan this poem by William Shakespeare for both meter (hint: Shakespeare takes a syllable out of some words by using an apostrophe, as in "possess'd." Those words don't scan the way the dictionary indicates, but Shakespeare does catch the way people really say the words). You may need to copy the poem into the Homework section of your notebook to give yourself room to work.

**Vocabulary help:**
Disgrace=state of shame
BewEEP=cry
Bootless=useless (surprise! This word has nothing to do with footwear)
Possessed=having something
Art and scope=degree and variety of abilities
Haply=happily
Sullen=gloomy
Scorn=refuse or reject

**When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,**
I all alone bewEEP my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
Count the syllables per line. Yep, about 10 syllables per line. Check to see exactly how many iambic feet you found in this poem. Yep, you found 5 feet in each line.

Yep, you can conclude that this poem is made up of rhymed iambic pentameter. Now, count the lines. Yep, 14 lines.

This poem fits the definition of a sonnet.

Now that we know we have a sonnet, we need to figure out a few more features of the poem. Before we get to the meaning, we should try to scan the rhyme scheme. Remember that we always mark the first line ending "A":

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, A
I all alone beweep my outcast state B
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries A
And look upon myself and curse my fate, B
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, C
Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd, D
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope, C
With what I most enjoy contented least; D (kind of)
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising, E
Haply I think on thee, and then my state, B
Like to the lark at break of day arising E
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate; B
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings F
That then I scorn to change my state with kings. F

You may have come up with something a little different, like ABAB CDCED EFED GG. If your answer is really different from the answer I gave, have an adult help you read the poem aloud. Sometimes, hearing how to pronounce a word can help with identifying rhyme.

Now what does this thing mean? Remember that sonnets often come in two parts: a problem and a solution. This one has that typical structure.

In the first part of the poem, the speaker explains a problem. He sometimes feels that he is disgraced, that he needs the talents and abilities of others, that he can feel content with his life. We all feel those feelings sometimes, don't we?

In the second section, the speaker reports that thinking of "thee" makes everything seem better: it is a new day with larks singing "at heaven's gate."
The speaker never tells who "thee" is; we have to decide for ourselves. Whether "thee" is God or Shakespeare's grandma, "thee" solves the problem by making the speaker feel better.

**Day 1**
Scan the meter of poem below. The poem tells about planting seeds along with some apple blossom petals that will feed the growing seeds. The speaker doesn't want to quit planting for supper time.

Have you ever enjoyed an activity so interesting that you didn't want to stop to eat? I'll bet you have.

"Putting in the Seed" by Robert Frost:

You come to fetch me from my work to-night
When supper's on the table, and we'll see
If I can leave off burying the white
Soft petals fallen from the apple tree
(soft petals, yes, but not so barren quite,
Mingled with these, smooth bean and wrinkled pea;)
And go along with you ere you lose sight
Of what you came for and become like me,
Slave to a springtime passion for the earth.
How Love burns through the Putting in the Seed
On through the watching for that early birth
When, just as the soil tarnishes with weed,

The sturdy seedling with arched body comes
Shouldering its way and shedding the earth crumbs

**Day 2**
Scan the rhyme of "Putting in the Seed" and write a paraphrase of the poem. Remember that the speaker is the slave mentioned in the poem; he is made a slave to the seeds by his own great love for the way seeds grow.

**Day 3**
Revise your paraphrase following these criteria:

My paraphrase has a title
My name and the date appear in the top RIGHT corner
My paraphrase has a topic sentence
My paraphrase contains at least 3 supporting details
My paraphrase contains at least 4 sentence if am 10, and one more for each additional year of age.
My paraphrase is free of errors in spelling/apostrophe use.
My paraphrase contains no more than 2 forms of “to be”.
My paraphrase contains no errors in grammar.

Continue revising until your poem meets all of the grading criteria.
Week 15: What Do You See?
Show your homework to your teacher.

Now that you have learned iambic pentameter, you are a poetic meter pro. You know more about poetry than most of the grownups you will meet in your life. But this is week 15 in a 16 week course. We aren't done yet!

The final type of poem I'd like to show you is the concrete poem. Try entering the term "concrete poetry" in an Internet search engine. You might have to perform an image search. I would bet you see more than words. Concrete poems take the shapes of the objects they describe.

A poem about a robot would take a robot shape. A poem about a cat will take a cat shape. A poem about a boat will take a boat shape. In other words, concrete poetry is shape poetry.

For Days 1-3 of this week, you are going to write your own concrete poem. Pick a shape and decide what you want to say about the shape. Work the words so that they make an image. You may want to make your poem by hand.

This is harder than it looks! To write all of the words neatly in a shape, with no spelling errors, you may need to complete many drafts. You use one part of your brain to draw, but another part to write. Spelling and drawing at the same time challenges many people!

When you have a draft you like, consider adding color. Also consider writing more concrete poems.

I hope your family frames your poem and hangs it in the hall. Concrete poems have a very complex kind of beauty.
Week 16: Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow

My apologies to William Shakespeare for my stealing the title of this chapter from his *Romeo and Juliet*.

For your last week, please write a reflective letter to your teacher. Tape the final draft of the letter into your notebook. This letter will help you contemplate what you have learned so that the learning sticks with you longer.

Letter Writing Instructions
Start your letter by addressing it to your teacher with the words "Dear Instructor." Then consider the following questions:

During this course, what did you learn about how poetry started?
Did you always write several drafts before you turned in a writing assignment, or did you start doing so this year?
What have you learned about where poems get their unique sound?
What did you learn about how to figure out the meaning of a poem?
Which writing assignments do you like best and why?
Which poems did you like best and why?
Have you improved your proofreading skills this semester?
Describe how you might use your knowledge of poetry in the future.

After you write your letter, please revise it until you have corrected all errors. You know what to do. You're a real pro now.

Tape the letter in your notebook and show it to your teacher. You may want to give a copy to the teacher, or you may want to give your teacher a poem. We teachers like things like that.

Farewell. May you think of fun words, poke under rocks, play games, read good books, and have a life that makes your parents proud.
Note to parents and teachers: once students know how to identify the major aspects of poetry, consider adding paraphrase and literary analysis to their regular lessons indefinitely so that they retain their knowledge of poetic devices, improve their reading and problem solving skills, and develop a mature appreciation for the written word.