



GREAT MINDS®



MODULE 1
THE POETICS AND POWER OF STORYTELLING

WIT &
WISDOM

GRADE

8

GREAT MINDS® WIT & WISDOM™

Grade 8 Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Student Edition

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Volume of Reading Reflection Questions

Wit & Wisdom Parent Tip Sheet

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Handout 1A: Fluency Homework

Directions:

1. Day 1: Read the text carefully and annotate to help you read fluently.
2. Each day:

a. Practice reading the text three to five times.

b. Evaluate your progress by placing a ✓+, ✓, or ✓- in each unshaded box.

c. Ask someone (adult or peer) to listen and evaluate you as well.
3. Last day: Respond to the self-reflection questions at the end of this handout.

Poem title:

Page numbers:

Student Performance Checklist:	Day 1		Day 2		Day 3		Day 4	
	You	Listener*	You	Listener*	You	Listener*	You	Listener*
Accurately read the passage 3–5 times.								
Read with appropriate phrasing and pausing.								
Read with appropriate expression.								
Read articulately at a good pace and an audible volume.								

Self-reflection: What choices did you make when deciding how to read this passage, and why? What would you like to improve on or try differently next time? (Thoughtfully answer these questions on the back of this paper.)

*Adult or peer

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Handout 1B: Relationship Maps

PART 1: Review the examples.

Directions: Words represent ideas that can have many different relationships. Some of the relationships are listed below:

1. Synonyms

2. Antonyms

3. Parts of a whole

4. Cause and effect
5. Items in a category

6. Steps in a sequence

7. Description of an object

You can visually represent these relationships:

Parts of a whole	Steps in a sequence or Cause and effect
------------------	---

PART 2: Complete a Relationship Map.

Directions: On the back of this handout, draw a relationship map that represents the relationship between storytelling, power, content and form. You may also use key words from the definitions to make your relationship map.

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Handout 5A: Character Relationships

PART A: “Dad Takes Us to Krispy Kreme and Tells Us His Favorite Story (Again)”

Directions: Reread “Dad Takes Us to Krispy Kreme and Tells Us His Favorite Story (Again)” (page 63), and answer the following questions before returning to your home group.

1. What do the title and the first four lines of this poem reveal about the twins’ relationship to their father?
2. What is the effect of Chuck’s analogy about the twins’ first basketball shot?
3. What is the message about expectations in this poem?
4. Choose one example from the poem, and explain what it reveals about the characters’ relationships.

PART B: “Mom Shouts”

Directions: Reread “Mom Shouts” (page 74), and answer the following questions before returning to your home group.

1. Why does Crystal tell Chuck “this isn’t a basketball game”?
2. What do Chuck’s reactions reveal about the relationship between Josh’s parents?
3. How does Josh’s eavesdropping deepen your understanding of the Bell family?

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PART C: “Gym Class”

Directions: Reread “Gym Class” (page 84), and answer the following questions before returning to your home group.

1. How do the changes in gym class relate to Josh’s relationship with JB?
2. Why does Josh believe this situation is “unfair”?
3. In addition to being a CPR/first-aid tool, what might the “dummy” represent, or symbolize, in the poem?

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Handout 6A: Poem Frame

Directions: Complete the poem frame below using descriptive and sensory language. Consult a thesaurus to help you generate effective word choices. Remember to title the poem!

“ _____ ”

Josh Bell is a real cool and _____ guy *[precise adjective]*

He plays basketball like _____, so fly *[simile]*

Every time he's on the court the crowd _____ *[active verb]*

Seriously, Josh is _____, I wouldn't lie! *[metaphor]*

His old man's real _____, too. *[precise adjective]*

He has a twin named JB, who is _____, *[metaphor]*

But lately Josh is feeling like _____, *[simile]*

What is there for Josh, aka Filthy McNasty, to do?

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Handout 8A: Vertical and Horizontal Images in “Dear Jordan”

Directions: Read and explain the vertical and horizontal images from “Dear Jordan,” and write a new image has a similar meaning.

Image from a vertical read	Image from a horizontal read	Explanation	New image
without u the goal seems broken	without u i am empty, the goal with no net.		
like puzzle pieces i can no longer fit	Seems my life was broken shattered, like puzzle pieces on the court. i can no longer fit.		

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can you run with me, like we used to? Stealing sun, burning up.	like two brothers burning up together		
--	---	--	--

Image from a vertical read	Image from a horizontal read	Explanation	New image
help me heal, slash with me like two stars like two brothers together.	can you help me heal, run with me, slash with me like we used to? like two stars stealing sun		

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Handout 11A: Frayer Model

PART A:
Directions: Complete the Frayer Model for the word you’ve chosen from The Crossover.

Definition:

Characteristics:

Word:

Examples:

Non-Examples:

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PART B:

Directions: Return to the poem that includes this word. How has your understanding of the sentence and poem changed now that you know more about this word?

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Handout 12A: Narrative Arc in “Third Quarter”

Directions: Respond to the following questions to complete an analysis of structure and narrative arc in the “Third Quarter” section of The Crossover.

1. Twice in this article the importance of having a “coherent” story is emphasized. What does *coherent* mean, and why is coherence important for a story?

2. In sequence, list the major events in “Third Quarter” that define the story of this section.

Stage of Narrative Arc Poem	What is happening in this poem?	How does the poem contribute to the narrative arc of “Third Quarter”?
Beginning “After” (Alexander 137)		
Middle “I run into Dad’s room” (165–167)		
End “At Noon, in the Gym, with Dad” (194–196)		

3. Which poem is most important in this narrative arc? Why?

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Handout 13A: Write Like–Occasional Poem

Directions: On this occasion of completing your reading of *The Crossover*, you will write a poem, called **“Teacher, since you asked, I’ll tell you about my reading of *The Crossover*.”**

Express how you feel and what you think now that you have finishing your reading of this novel-in-verse. What are your responses to the story? What moments, images, or interactions stick with you (for good or bad)? What surprised, angered, or excited you? What questions do you still have? What questions did you have that have been answered?

As you compose your free-verse poem, include narrative elements we have practiced together, including:

- Descriptive and sensory language
- Metaphor and simile
- Verb moods
- Sentence variation

Consider including repetition or rhythm.

- Example of repetition: the use of Because as the start of each line in “Mom, since you asked, I’ll tell you why I’m so angry.”
- You might extend the repetition: “I used to think _____. But now I know _____.”
OR: “I used to feel that _____. But now I feel that _____.”
- Example of rhythm: the two-word lines in “At Noon, in the Gym, with Dad” (194–196).

Focus on writing in your personal voice. What language, tone, and style best represent you?

My Occasional Poem:

“Teacher, since you asked, I’ll tell you about my reading of *The Crossover*”

Name_____

Date_____Class_____

Handout 14A: “Free Throws” Paragraph

Directions: Use the following organizer to complete an analysis of the poem “Free Throws.”

Topic Statement (state your essential idea about a topic): “Free Throws” develops the meaning of the story because _____ and _____.	
Evidence (cite evidence that develops your topic, including necessary content): The poem shows _____ because _____.	Elaboration (explain how the evidence develops your topic): This develops the story’s meaning because _____.
Evidence: The free throw can also be interpreted as a symbol that distills the story’s meaning because _____.	Elaboration (develop your point with a specific example from the poem): _____.
Concluding Statement (reinforce your essential idea): “Free Throws” is a fitting end to <i>The Crossover</i> because _____ _____.	

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Handout 15A: Evidence Collection for Crossover

Directions: Consider the use of the word crossover—or a variation of the word—in each of the following instances.

Text	What does the word mean in this context? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Use a dictionary when necessary.Record connotations.Is the word used in a figurative sense? A literal sense? Both?
The title, <i>The Crossover</i>	
“cross o ver” (29)	
“Article #2 in the Daily News (January 14)” (225–226)	
“Where Do We Go from Here?” (227–228)	
“Free Throws” (234–237)	
<p>Explain how the meaning of the word crossover changes over the course of the novel by describing the different uses of the word crossover in terms of a narrative arc.</p> <p>Which use of the word represents the meaning of the beginning of the story? Why?</p> <p>Which use of the word represents the meaning of the middle of the story? Why?</p> <p>Which use of the word represents the meaning of the end of the story? Why?</p>	

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Handout 16A: Collect Evidence–Form and Meaning in *The Crossover*

Directions: Choose two poetic types from the Poetic Types anchor chart that you feel most contribute to the overall meaning of *The Crossover*. Then identify an example of each type in the novel that exemplifies this contribution to the novel’s meaning.

	Poetic Type: Poem:	Poetic Type: Poem:
What is happening in this poem?		
What are the elements that structure the poem? <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Characteristics of poetic type▪ Rhyme/rhythm/repetition▪ Line breaks/stanzas		
How do specific language choices, lines, and incidents in the poem develop your understanding of Josh Bell’s sense of self?		
How do specific language choices, lines, and incidents in the poem develop your understanding of Josh Bell’s sense of his world?		
How does the structure of this poem convey how stories help Josh make sense of himself or the world around him?		

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Handout 16B: Frayer Model

Complete the Frayer Model for irony and ironic.

Definition:

Characteristics:

Word:

Examples:

Non-Examples:

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Handout 19A: Poetic Performance and Reading Analysis

Directions: Respond to questions about the poem and performance of “Nikki-Rosa” by Nikki Giovanni or “Slam, Dunk, and Hook” by Yusef Komunyakaa.

Poem Title:

By:

1. Summarize: What is the poem about? What story is being told?

2. Choose the most important line from this poem and paraphrase the meaning of that line.

Original Line:

Paraphrase:

3. Explain how the chosen line contributes to the overall meaning of the poem, and why you identified it as most important.

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4. Describe the performance or reading of this poem in your own words. Who is the audience? What choices is this poet making about how to express their poem orally?

Name

Date

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Handout 20A: Evidence Collection

Directions: Respond to questions about each of the poetry performances in this module.

Text	Who is the audience for this performance?	How does the audience shape the choices the poet makes in performing?

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Handout 21A: Poetry Performance Checklist

Directions: Respond to questions about each of the poetry performances in this module.

Poetry Performance Checklist			
	Self + / Δ	Peer + / Δ	Teacher + / Δ
I used varied volume and appropriate emphasis.			
I paused for emphasis at least once.			
I read at an appropriate pace, varying speed appropriate to the content of my poem.			
I changed my inflection to indicate a variety of punctuation as needed.			
I used a tone appropriate to the content of my poem.			
I made at least one gesture appropriate to the content of my poem.			
I considered the identity of my audience when making decisions about my performance.			
I engaged with my audience.			
Total # of checks			

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Handout 23A: Summarizing “Your Brain on Fiction”

Directions: Provide the central idea, supporting ideas, and a brief account of how these ideas develop in “Your Brain on Fiction.”

Central Idea:

Supporting idea:

Supporting idea:

Supporting idea:

How does the author use the supporting ideas to develop the central idea over the course of the text?

Summary:

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Handout 24A: An Excerpt from “The Man Made of Words”

Directions: Read the following excerpt from a lecture given by N. Scott Momaday, published as an essay in 1998; use your Glossary to define any unfamiliar vocabulary words.

The following excerpt is from a lecture given by N. Scott Momaday, published as an essay in 1998.

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Name

DateClass

[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted text block]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Momaday, N. Scott. “The Man Made of Words.” *Nothing But the Truth: An Anthology of Native American Literature*, edited by John Purdy and James Ruppert, Prentice Hall, 2001, pp. 82-95.

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Handout 25A: Five Important Words from “The Man Made of Words”

Directions: Decide on five words from “The Man Made of Words” that are most essential to understanding the essay’s central idea. First define your word. Then write briefly about why this word is important to your understanding of the essay. Finally, use the word in a sentence.

Word	Definition	Why is it important?	Use it in a sentence
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

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Handout 25B: Incorporating Textual Evidence

Directions: Read the following guidelines and complete the sentence stems below.

Evidence that is well integrated into your writing accomplishes three things:

- It gives your reader text-specific evidence to support your thinking.
- It shows your reader why you are using that particular piece of evidence.
- It adds variation and interest to your writing.

Guidelines

- Choose evidence that is relevant. This means it should strongly support the ideas you want to communicate in your writing.
- Explain why you are including this particular textual evidence. There are many reasons to choose textual evidence, so your job is to make your reason clear to your reader. There are several ways to effectively incorporate evidence:
- Use introductory sentences or phrases to set the scene for your textual evidence.

No Textual Evidence	Incorporates Evidence	Why is this incorporation of evidence effective?
Josh uses figurative language to explain JB’s situation on the basketball court. Josh’s language is detailed and humorous.	In “Josh’s Play by Play,” Josh uses figurative language to explain JB’s situation on the basketball court. According to Josh, JB is “McDonald’s drive-thru open” (131), which adds detail and humor to the poem while developing unique Josh’s voice.	

- Provide your own statement to introduce the evidence, followed by a colon.

No Textual Evidence	Incorporates Evidence	Why is this incorporation of evidence effective?
Josh shows he is hurt when his brother JB leaves him for his girlfriend.	Josh shows he is hurt when his brother JB leaves him for his girlfriend, when he states: “you are walking home / by yourself / and your brother owns the world” (115).	

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- Use evidence directly in a sentence.

No Textual Evidence	Incorporates Evidence	Why is this incorporation of evidence effective?
Despite using hyperbolic words, Josh’s definition poem on page 154 accurately describes his father’s overwhelming condition.	Despite using hyperbolic words like <i>profusely</i> , Josh’s definition poem on page 154 accurately describes his father’s overwhelming condition.	

Try incorporating evidence from “The Man Made of Words” using the following sentence frames:

- Momaday uses _____ to explain how stories have power. According to Momaday, _____, which supports the idea that _____.
- Momaday shows the power of stories when he states: _____.
- Momaday’s use of words like _____ accurately describes his idea that _____.

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Handout 27A: Evidence Collection

Directions: Review the informational texts in this module and consider your understanding about the power of storytelling across the three texts.

	"Your Brain on Fiction," Annie Murphy Paul	"The Man Made of Words," N. Scott Momaday	"The Danger of a Single Story," Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
What does this text say about the power of storytelling?			
Provide the two most effective pieces of textual evidence for your answer above.			
What's one idea about stories that connects these texts?			

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Handout 28A: Identify and Revise Sentence Structure

PART 1:

Directions: Read the paragraph below. Underline simple sentences, circle compound sentences, and place a star at the start of complex sentences:

¹Stories help readers better understand the world by allowing them to experience the adventures and conflicts of characters. ²In “Your Brain on Fiction,” Annie Murphy Paul uses evidence from scientific studies to show how stories have power: ³“Words like ‘lavender,’ ‘cinnamon’ and ‘soap,’ for example, elicit a response not only from [. . .] but also those devoted to dealing with smells” (1). ⁴By making readers’ brains respond as though they were experiencing the actual event, stories expose readers to new experiences without leaving their homes. ⁵Most importantly though, Paul shows the power of stories when she writes that stories let readers “identify with characters’ longings and frustrations”(3) and hone “our real-life social skills” (3). ⁶Telling and reading stories can actually make people more considerate and socially aware. ⁷Storytelling is powerful because it lets writers and readers explore new parts of the world. ⁸Storytellers allow readers to gain better understanding of the lives of other people.

PART 2:

Directions: With a partner, respond to the prompts below:

- Revise sentence 4 to make the relationship between ideas clearer.

- Read sentences 6–8 aloud to your partner. How does this portion of the paragraph sound?

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- Revise sentences 6–8 to include variety in sentence structure.

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Handout 29A: EOM Poetry Portfolio Planning Packet

What does it mean to be a storyteller?

Directions: Use this packet to guide you through the process of planning, drafting and revising your poetry portfolio. Throughout the next five lessons, track your progress with this checklist:

Planning Packet Checklist	
Item	Completed?
Read Assessment 29: EOM Task	
Read and Annotate Handout 29B: EOM Exemplar Poems	
Complete Step One in packet	
Complete Step Two in packet	
Deconstruct Handout 30A: EOM Exemplar Cover Letter	
Complete Step Three in packet	
Complete Step Four in packet	
Complete first draft of my poetry portfolio	
Complete Step Five in packet	
Complete Step Six in packet	
Complete Step Seven in packet	
Revise my poetry portfolio	
Complete my cover letter	
Check my second draft using Handout 30C: Narrative Writing Checklist	
Complete my final draft	
Perform my poetry portfolio	

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Step One

Directions: Brainstorm a list of experiences that shape you your sense of self and who you are—or that define your family. Try to think of an experience that took place over a shorter period of time than The Crossover—you will not have a whole novel to tell many months’ worth of story! Brainstorm in the space below.

Brainstorm Ideas:

- A time you witnessed something you knew was not right, and you did something about it;
- A time that you felt misunderstood, and how you responded to the misunderstanding;
- A time that you experienced a conflict with a family member or friend and were able to resolve it;
- A time you attempted something difficult, faced challenges, and learned from your experiences;
- A time of your choosing that feels significant to you!

Step Two

Directions: After you have brainstormed your list of experiences, use the following flowchart to evaluate these ideas. Record at least two to three ideas that meet the criteria, as well as a few sentences about why you think they might work.

Experience Briefly describe the experience (e.g., the time I broke my sister’s nose)	Evaluate Briefly record a few sentences about why this idea might work. Why is this experience important? What did you learn about yourself? How did it shape or change your sense of yourself or the world? What will others learn about you from reading about this experience?

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Now you will need to decide which experience you want to focus on. Look over your list of experiences that meet the criteria: which are you most interested in writing about? Record your decision in the chart below.

I am writing about:	
---------------------	--

Step Three

Directions: Taken together, your three poems will create a narrative arc. You will need to consider the order of events in your poems in more detail to give your reader a sense of the whole story. In order to make sure your narrative has meaning, as well as a narrative arc, you will also need to reflect on each moment you choose: why is it important?

Narrative Arc	Details <i>What happened? What did you do? See? Smell? Hear? Feel?</i>	Reflections <i>What did you learn about who you are, what shapes your sense of yourself or the world, or where you’ve come from through reflecting on these events?</i>
Beginning <i>How did it begin? What’s the first thing you remember?</i>		
Middle <i>What are the most important moments? Was there a point of tension or conflict? A turning point? If you told this story to a friend, what would they need to know to understand what happened?</i>		
End <i>How did it end? These events may still impact your life today, but telling a narrative means you have to end your story somewhere—what moment will you choose for an ending to your story?</i>		

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After you have decided on your plot points, find a partner and tell him or her your story out loud. Then reflect: Are there any details you included with your partner that you didn't include on your chart? Did you decide to describe a different moment to your partner? Was anything unclear? Edit the chart above as necessary.

Step Four

Directions: Next, you will need to decide which poetic type will best express the content and purpose of each poem; that is, the meaning you are trying to communicate. From the following list, choose a different poetic type for each of the three poems in your portfolio and consider how the type relates to your poem's content and purpose:

- A definition poem (e.g., "cross-o-ver" [29])
- A list poem (e.g., "Five Reasons I Have Locks" [14-15])
- An ode (e.g., "Ode to my Hair" [33])
- A time-stamp poem (e.g., "Game Time: 6:00pm" [125-127])
- A found materials poem (e.g., "Article #1 in the Daily News (December 14)" [155])
- An occasional poem (e.g., "Mom, since you asked, I'll tell you why I'm so angry" [204])

Poem <i>Describe the content and meaning of each of your poems, and give each one a title.</i>	Poetic Type <i>Choose from the list above.</i>	Why <i>How does this type relate to your poem's meaning: its content and purpose?</i>
Beginning		
Middle		
End		

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WAIT! Before you complete Step Five, make sure you have completed the following tasks:

- **Completed a first draft of my poetry portfolio.**
- **Read and annotated the exemplar cover letter.**

Step Five

Directions: After you have completed the first draft of your poems and before you receive peer feedback, write a cover letter with three ToSEEC paragraphs (i.e., paragraphs each containing a **T**opic **S**entence, **E**vidence, **E**laboration, and a **C**oncluding **S**tatement) in which you:

<div>Provide the context of the story:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider your audience: what background information would help your reader understand your story?• Why was this a significant experience?	
<div>Explain each poem in terms of the poetic type you chose:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is that poetic type the right choice for that poem?• How does the form of the poetic type relate to the content of the poem?	
<div>Explain what you learned about the Essential Question of the module and what a reader might learn about the power of storytelling through this poetry portfolio:</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw on one informational article from the module in order to consider the power of storytelling.• Apply your understanding of the power of storytelling to one poem in your portfolio.• What did you learn about yourself as a storyteller through this experience?	

Using these notes, independently compose a cover letter for your poetry portfolio.

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Step Six

Directions: Based on your partner’s feedback, and any feedback from your teacher, explain your plan for revision:

I received the following feedback from my partner...
I received the following feedback from my teacher...
I plan to revise my poetry portfolio by...

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Step Seven

Directions: Share your poetry portfolio with a partner. Your partner provides feedback here:

Reviewed by:

These poems convey a clear narrative arc. The beginning is The middle is The end is	Yes / No
These poems convey a deeper meaning. What I learned is 	Yes / No
The forms of these poems match their content and meaning. The most effective form is because	Yes / No
These poems contain sensory, descriptive, and figurative language metaphors. The language is effective in the story because *Review list of criteria for effective descriptive and sensory language generated in Lesson 3.	Yes / No
What are the most effective aspects of your partner's poetry portfolio?	
How do the poetic types in the poetry portfolio impact your understanding of the story?	

Name _____

Date _____

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Handout 29B: EOM Exemplar Poems

Directions: Read the following exemplar poems.

A One in a Million Chance

By Sara Clarke

Diagnosis

Friday, October 3rd, 3:15pm
Mom picks me up after school
I can tell she has been crying, **black rivers**
Streaking down her face.
We are both silent on the drive to the doctor's office.

Friday, October 3rd, 4:45pm
On the way home from the doctor
We both cry.

Tuesday, October 7th, 5:10am
I am so thirsty but they don't let you
Drink anything for 12 hours before surgery.
A week ago right now I was sleeping,
I was about to wake up and watch TV,
Eat my cereal, have a totally normal day.
Today is the new normal, I think, **as I get sleepy**
From the anesthetics.

Tuesday, October 21th, 7:30am
I am going back to school today. It doesn't
Seem real that two weeks ago I was on an
Operating table, a week before that
I didn't know any of this was real.
I have a big angry scar, **like the world's ugliest**
Necklace, hiding underneath my scarf.
I guess this is the new normal, even if
Nothing really feels normal anymore.

Name _____

Date _____

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Report Card*English – A+**Math – A –**Social Studies – A**Science – A*

*Sara missed
two weeks of school
this semester
due to surgery.*

*She is a quiet student
she hasn't talked
about her illness and
she hasn't missed a beat.*

Let Me Tell You How I Got This Scar

I got in a fight with a tiger, a dragon, and a really mean cat.
I went sky diving and got hit by lightning.
I got into a knife fight with pirates, and won.
I can't tell you where I hid the gold, though. I sang in an opera and hit the high C note.
It's just a cool new trend, I'm ahead of the curve.
I have magic powers, like Harry Potter.
Scar? What scar? I think you must be seeing things.
Actually, I had cancer and I beat it.
And no, I'm not contagious, and yes,
I'll have this scar forever.

**And, yes, I am OK.
Thanks for asking.**

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Handout 30A: EOM Exemplar Cover Letter

Directions: Read the following exemplar cover letter.

A One in a Million Chance

By Sara Clarke

Cover Letter:

The fall after I turned fourteen my doctor found a lump on my throat. At first they thought it was just nothing, but they decided to check for thyroid cancer anyway. They told me there was only a one in one million chance that it was, but it turned out I was that one in a million! I was diagnosed, had surgery, and went back to school all in less than a month. In this series of poems, *A One in a Million Chance*, I explain the experience of going back to school after my surgery, feeling like the world was moving fast and slow at the same time, and realizing that I am capable of overcoming really difficult experiences.

The first poem, “Diagnosis,” is a time-stamp poem. I chose a time-stamp structure because it allowed me to show exactly how quickly everything happened from the time I was diagnosed until I was back in school. The second poem, “Report Card,” is a poem using found materials. This poem shows someone else’s perspective on my situation and this time in my life, and it shows that even if I felt totally out of place and weird, that I was actually really brave and capable of being okay after my surgery. Finally, my third poem, “How I Got This Scar,” is an occasional poem of all the responses I gave when people asked how I got my scar. This poem shows how humor helped me to be able to talk about what happened and helped me get back to a “new normal” after my experience.

These poems show the narrative of my illness and recovery, and also the growth I went through as a person because of this experience. I struggled with how emotional it was for me to write and share these poems—writing about personal issues is so difficult! Exploring the way that retelling difficult stories can help us process them, Benedict Carey explains: “Mental resilience relies in part on exactly this kind of autobiographical storytelling.” This is particularly true in my first poem, “Diagnosis,” because I had to think about my reactions to this illness step by step. Ultimately, telling my story in these poems helped me to better understand my own reactions to my diagnosis, and that is a powerful way stories can shape the way we understand ourselves.

Name

Date

Class

Handout 30B: Drafting Cover Letter Paragraphs

Directions: Outline and summarize each of the paragraphs from the exemplar cover letter on Handout 30A.

Paragraph 1

Central Idea:
Supporting idea:
Supporting idea:
Summary:

Paragraph 2

Central Idea:
Supporting idea:
Supporting idea:
Summary:

Paragraph 3

Central Idea:
Supporting idea:
Supporting idea:
Summary:

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Handout 30C: Narrative Writing Checklist

Directions: Self-assess your EOM Task, then give the checklist to a peer and your teacher.

Narrative Writing Checklist			
	Self + / Δ	Peer + / Δ	Teacher + / Δ
Reading Comprehension			
I use three distinct poetic types.			
I provide background information about my story in my cover letter.			
I explain the relationship between each poetic type and the content of the poem in my cover letter.			
I apply an understanding of and incorporate evidence from one informational article in my cover letter.			
I reflect on what I learned about myself as a storyteller in my cover letter.			
Structure			
I respond to all parts of the prompt.			
I establish a context for my narrative.			
I organize my events according to a narrative arc.			
My conclusion follows from the events, providing resolution.			
Development			
I write about an experience that is significant to me.			
I use description to develop events and experiences.			
I use descriptive details.			
I use sensory language.			
I use at least one to two examples of figurative language (metaphor, simile, hyperbole).			
Style			
I use a variety of sentence patterns (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex) to add clarity and interest to my cover letter.			
I use precise words and phrases to describe what happened.			
My writing style is appropriate for the audience.			
I consider oral expression when writing.			

Name _____

Date _____

Class _____

Volume of Reading Reflection Questions

The Poetics and Power of Storytelling, Grade 8, Module 1

Student Name: _____

Text: _____

Author: _____

Topic: _____

Genre/type of book: _____

Directions: Share your insights about your independent reading text by answering the questions below.

1. Wonder: What drew your attention to this text? What qualities about the story or the structure enticed you to read it?
2. Wonder: How will reading a text in this structure be different than a traditional narrative?
3. Organize: Describe the way that the author organized the narrative. How is the experience of reading a narrative written in verse different than a more traditional narrative structure?
4. Organize: What examples from this text highlight the author's central themes?
5. Reveal: How do specific language and structural choices of the author convey and/or develop a theme?
6. Distill: How does this text deal with storytelling, and the idea that storytelling shapes the way people think about themselves and the world?
7. Distill: How does the author's decision to write this book as in a non-traditional structure, such as a novel-in-verse, support the themes in the book?

WIT & WISDOM PARENT TIP SHEET

WHAT IS MY EIGHTH GRADE STUDENT LEARNING IN MODULE 1?

Wit & Wisdom is our English curriculum. It builds knowledge of key topics in history, science, and literature through the study of excellent texts. By reading and responding to stories and nonfiction texts, we will build knowledge of the following topics:

Module 1: The Poetics and Power of Storytelling

Module 2: The Great War

Module 3: What Is Love?

Module 4: Teens as Change Agents

In this first module, *The Poetics and Power of Storytelling*, students will study how we build community, understand ourselves, and explain the world around us using stories and poems. They will read a novel and poetry and ask the question: What is the power of storytelling?

OUR CLASS WILL READ THESE TEXTS:

Novel

- *The Crossover*, Kwame Alexander

Articles

- “This Is Your Life (and How You Tell It),” Benedict Carey
- “Your Brain on Fiction,” Annie Murphy Paul, *The New York Times*

Poetry

- “Nikki-Rosa,” Nikki Giovanni
- “Slam, Dunk, & Hook,” Yusef Komunyakaa
- “Sometimes Silence Is the Loudest Kind of Noise,” Bassey Ikpi

Speech

- “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Music

- “Filthy McNasty,” Horace Silver

OUR CLASS WILL EXAMINE THESE WORKS OF ART:

- *The Block*, Romare Bearden
- *Children’s Games*, Pieter Bruegel the Elder

OUR CLASS WILL WATCH THESE VIDEOS:

- “Sometimes Silence Is the Loudest Kind of Noise,” Bassey Ikpi
- “Nikki Rosa on Def Jam Poetry,” Nikki Giovanni
- “Slam, Dunk, & Hook,” Yusef Komunyakaa
- “The Danger of a Single Story,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- “The Human Soul Distilled,” Reading Rockets

OUR CLASS WILL ASK THESE QUESTIONS:

- What shapes Josh Bell’s sense of himself and his world?
- How does form shape a story’s meaning?
- What is the role of expression in storytelling?
- How do stories help us make sense of ourselves and the world?
- What does it mean to be a storyteller?

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT HOME

As your eighth grade student reads, ask:

- *What do you notice and wonder?*

BOOKS TO READ AT HOME:

- *Spoon River Anthology*, Edgar Lee Masters
- *I Am Phoenix*, Paul Fleischman
- *Inside Out and Back Again*, Thanhha Lai
- *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Jacqueline Woodson
- *Witness*, Karen Hesse
- *The Red Pencil*, Andrea Davis Pinkney

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSING THE POWER OF STORYTELLING:

You can talk about storytelling at any time, anywhere. Ask:

- *What's your favorite family story? Why?*
- *Tell me a story you remember from your childhood.*
- *Share a story with your eighth grader about your childhood.*

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THE POETICS AND POWER OF STORYTELLING

Basketball and family, teamwork and superstar moves, split-second decisions and their reverberating effects: these are the foci of the contemporary novel in verse *The Crossover*. These are also subjects of the protagonist's energetic, freestyle poems, which will help you explore the question: *What is the power of storytelling?*

MORE MEANINGFUL ENGLISH Excellent texts are at the heart of your explorations of history, science, literature, and the arts. As you read, ask questions and take time to think about what you notice. When you read each text to expand your knowledge, ask yourself: *What do I notice and wonder about this text?*



ON THE COVER

Children's Games (1560)

Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Dutch, 1525–1569

Oil on panel

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

GRADE 8 MODULES

1. *The Poetics and Power of Storytelling*

2. *The Great War*

3. *What Is Love?*

4. *Teens as Change Agents*

GREAT MINDS A group of education leaders founded the nonprofit Great Minds in 2007 to define and encourage content-rich comprehensive education for all American schoolchildren. In pursuit of that mission, Great Minds brings schoolteachers together in collaboration with scholars to craft exemplary instructional materials and share them with the field. Great Minds' *Eureka Math™* is the only comprehensive math curriculum aligned to the new standards at every grade.

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Grade 8 | Module 1

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