

Grade 4: Module 1A: Unit 1: Lesson 7

Reading Poetry and Identifying Theme: Robert Frost's "A Time to Talk"



| Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS) | |
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| I can determine the theme of a poem. (RL.4.2) I can explain the structural elements of a poem. (RL.4.5) I can engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions. (SL.4.1) | |
| Supporting Learning Targets | Ongoing Assessment |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can plan a symbol for my wampum belt. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping Track anchor chart Guiding Questions handout |

| Agenda | Teaching Notes |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Opening <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging the Reader (5 minutes) Work Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to “A Time To Talk” (10 minutes) Master Read (10 minutes) What Is This Poem About? (20 minutes) Determining the Theme of a Poem (10 minutes) Closing and Assessment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Debrief (5 minutes) Homework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While this lesson addresses a piece of poetry by a famous poet, the lesson itself is not about teaching poetry. The focus is on how Robert Frost’s “A Time to Talk” connects to the other texts in the unit. There is a brief discussion on the difference between poetry and prose, with a specific focus on visual format, without getting into too much detail. For students who are intimidated by poetry, consider chunking the poem into lines or sentences to ease the deconstruction of the poem. This poem is about communication and connects to the other texts in the unit. Students will be able to refer to this poem when planning their wampum belt symbols. |

| Lesson Vocabulary | Materials |
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| structural, poetry, theme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping Track of How it All Fits Together anchor chart • Robert Frost’s “A Time to Talk” (students copies) • Guiding Questions handout (supplementary materials) • Document camera |

| Opening | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>A. Opening: Engaging the Reader (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to form pairs and take turns so each of them reads one of the learning targets: “Can anyone explain these learning targets in their own words?” Focus on ensuring that students know <i>structural</i>, <i>elements</i>, and <i>theme</i>. • Ask students what they know about poems or poetry. Cold call students for responses. Inform students that today’s text will be a poem which is different than the texts we have been reading in this unit. • In this lesson, students will be looking for the theme of the poem. The CCLS use the term <i>theme</i> in RL.4.2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide nonlinguistic symbols (e.g., a person with a think bubble above their head for <i>questions</i>) to assist ELLs and other struggling readers in making connections with vocabulary. These symbols can be used throughout the year. Specifically, they can be used in directions and learning targets. • All students developing academic language will benefit from direct instruction of academic vocabulary. |

| Work Time | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>A. Introduction to “A Time to Talk” (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute student copies of “A Time to Talk” by Robert Frost. With their partners, ask students to talk about how this poem looks different from the previous texts. What makes this a poem? Call on student volunteers to share differences they find with the rest of the class. Students should notice that punctuation is different. If not, call their attention to the fact that each line is not necessarily a sentence. Inform students that poets do this for different reasons, but the important thing to remember is that when we read the poem, we should read it using the punctuation marks the poet includes. This means | |

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| <p>pausing at commas and stopping at periods, even if they are in the middle of a line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional differences that they may notice (or you can point out) : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the poem is visually set up differently than regular sentences • there is some rhyme • it has a title • Ask a student to read aloud the title of the poem. With their partners, students should discuss what this poem may be about. Cold call several students for ideas. | |
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| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>B. Master Reading of “A Time to Talk” (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that reading poetry aloud often helps us to gain better understanding of the poem. Also, poems usually need to be read multiple times to figure out what the poet is saying. Sometimes even adults will read a poem ten times when trying to figure out its meaning! Students should follow along as you read the poem aloud once. • Pause for a moment and ask the students what they noticed about your reading. Listen for “You stopped at the periods and paused at the commas” in addition to comments about rhythm or rhyme, comments about images, comments about the speed at which you read. • Explain that the structure of poems will vary, but the punctuation will always tell you how you should read them. Read the poem aloud again. Ask students how many sentences there are in the poem and how do they know (3- question mark, period, period). • Instruct the students to read the poem silently and circle any words that are unfamiliar. Inform the students that many of the words can be figured out using context. Model figuring out the definition of <i>meaning for the students</i>. “I know that the word meaning is something like a definition, or what is meant by an action or word. So since the friend is slowing his horse so that he can talk to his friend, I think the walk is meaningful, or has purpose,” Explain to students that this is an outdated usage of the word and does not have a clear definition. But, the important thing is that not understanding the word does not hinder comprehension of the entire poem. | |

| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>C. What is this poem about? (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group students into fours (pairs that have been working together work with another pair). Inform them that they will now read the poem themselves to deconstruct it, or figure out its meaning. Encourage students to read the poem aloud multiple times as they answer the questions. Distribute Guiding Questions from Supplementary Materials. • Students may not be familiar with the words “hoe, hoed, mellow, plod”. Encourage groups to use context clues to figure out the meanings which will be discussed before the end of the class. Reinforce the idea that sometimes the definition is not necessary in order to get the gist of the poem. <p>Circulate to provide support and guidance. When students have completed the activity, review their answers to questions 1-3 by calling on volunteers to share. Review additional vocabulary at this time and have students enter unfamiliar words into their vocabulary journals.</p> | |

| Work Time (continued) | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>D. Determining the Theme of “A Time to talk” (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell students that we will now be talking about the theme of this poem. Explain that the theme is central message or main idea. • Call on student volunteers to share their ideas for theme as well as any evidence they have to support that theme. Listen for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is always time for friends. • Friends should always make time to talk to each other. • Communication is important to friendship. • Display your model anchor chart on a document camera. Instruct students to take out their Keeping Track anchor chart and elicit student responses for filling in a row for the poem, focusing on summary theme and making connections. Read the poem once again, stopping at the end of each sentence to “remind yourself” of what is going on – or in some cases stopping at the end of each piece of punctuation and asking students to call out the summary. Put it all together here. • If not enough time, allow students to complete the anchor chart at the beginning of the next lesson. This can segue into the next day’s activity. | |

| Closing and Assessment | Meeting Students’ Needs |
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| <p>A. Debrief (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to think about the learning targets from today. How would they explain the structure of this poem? How does this poem connect to the other texts they have read? • Allow students time to think about how this poem may influence the symbol they choose for their wampum belt. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The debrief process solidifies the learning of students and also is a good formative assessment for teachers. |
| Homework | Meeting Students’ Needs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should continue in their independent reading book and/or think about a symbol they would create for their wampum belt based on the texts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who cannot yet read independently at any level will benefit from hearing books read to them, either by a caregiver or through audio recordings. Hearing books/texts can be an ongoing assignment for these students. |

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Supporting Materials



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Read the poem aloud. Talk with your group about the imagery, or what you see in this poem, as you answer these questions. Each group member should read the poem aloud at least once. The more you read it, the more you will get out of it.

1. How many people are there? How do they know each other? How do you know?

2. What is the setting? (location, time of day, weather) How do you know?

3. What do you see when you read this poem? Put it into your own words.

4. What do you think is the message or theme of this poem?

“A Time to Talk” by Robert Frost

WHEN a friend calls to me from the road

And slows his horse to a meaning walk,

I don't stand still and look around

On all the hills I haven't hoed,

And shout from where I am, What is it? 5

No, not as there is a time to talk.

I thrust my hoe in the mellow ground,

Blade-end up and five feet tall,

And plod: I go up to the stone wall

For a friendly visit. 10