Introduction To Poetry
by Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,
or walk inside the poem’s room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author’s name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Directions: Answer the following questions to annotate the poem.

1. Infer who “them” is in the line “I ask them to take a poem…”?
   a. teachers
   b. poets
   c. students
   d. authors

2. Find and label any 2 pieces of figurative language in the poem.
   a. metaphor
   b. simile
   c. personification
   d. hyperbole

3. Highlight one part of the poem that you find memorable/interesting. Explain your choice.


Journal Prompt: Interpret what the meaning is behind this poem.
Rockets Red Glare

By Johnathan Sluder

I see above my head sparkling lights of bright colors
Announcing Signaling Rejoicing Sounding dreaming calling to my being telling me that I am free of oppressions can you see what they Have Said

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Directions: Answer the following questions to annotate the poem.

1. “I see above my head sparkling lights of bright colors” is an example of what kind of **figurative language**?
   a. hyperbole
   b. metaphor
   c. imagery
   d. alliteration

2. Highlight one part of the poem that you find memorable/interesting. Explain your choice.

3. Describe the **tone** expressed in the poem. Provide evidence from the poem to **support your answer**.

Journal Prompt: What is the relationship between the shape/layout of the poem and the poet’s purpose? Why did the poet make these choices?
The Dream of Now

By William Stafford

When you wake to the dream of now from night and its other dream, you carry day out of the dark like a flame.

When spring comes north and flowers unfold from earth and its even sleep, you lift summer on with your breath lest it be lost ever so deep.

Your life you live by the light you find and follow it on as well as you can, carrying through darkness wherever you go your one little fire that will start again.

Dreams

By Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die Life is a broken-winged bird That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go Life is a barren field Frozen with snow.

Directions: Answer the following questions to annotate the poems.

1. In the first poem, what does the author compare dreams to?
   a. spring
   b. night
   c. fire
   d. sleep

2. In the second poem, the line “For if dreams die/Life is a broken-winged bird/That cannot fly” is an example of what kind of figurative language?
   a. metaphor
   b. simile
   c. hyperbole
   d. imagery

3. Compare the two poems. What theme do they have in common? In what ways are the poems different?

4. Using context clues, predict what the word lest means.

Journal Prompt:

Stafford and Hughes wrote poems about the importance of having dreams. What dreams do you have for your future? What value do those dreams hold to you?
Inside
By Janelle Battle

Daily
I noticed you frown
at my thick casing,
feel you poke me
with the sharp tip
of your booted words.
You laugh,
rap my woody shell
with wicked whispers shaped
like knuckles,
then toss me aside.
Lucky for me,
I don't bruise easily.
Besides,
your loss
is someone else's gain
for I am coconut, and the heart of me
is sweeter
than you know

Directions: Answer the following questions to annotate the poem.

1. The line, “You laugh/rap my woody shell/with wicked whispers” is an example of what kind of figurative language?
   a. simile
   b. imagery
   c. alliteration
   d. hyperbole

2. Highlight one part of the poem that you find memorable/interesting. Explain your choice.

3. The author uses a coconut as an extended metaphor for herself. Explain how she is like a coconut. Include evidence from the poem.

Journal Prompt:

Battle wrote a poem that demonstrates how she is a coconut. She describes the physical similarities of herself to a coconut in order to better explain her feelings. The use of the extended metaphor (a comparison through the entire poem to herself and a coconut) makes her story memorable.

What metaphor could you use to best represent you? Explain.
Ode to the Fallen Soldier

By David A Harris

Ode to the Fallen soldier,
For he has made the ultimate
Sacrifice for his world.

Ode to his Mother for while
She lives, the grief and sadness
Take their toll on her mind, as
She goes throughout her day,
Answering questions like “are
You ok? ” and “where is your
Son, I haven’t seen him for a while? ”
She always answers, “yes I’m fine”
Or, “he’s away.” But she knows, inside,
She can’t deny.

Ode to the son he left behind,
For he will grow up without
Knowing who his father is,
Only what he’s done. Never
Will he play catch in the yard,
Like the neighbors next door.
Never will he hear that “Man to
Man” talk, that all boys should.

Ode to the music that will never
Be heard, for the only music
He made, rests in his heart.

Ode to the art that will never be
Seen, for the only art he made,
Remains in a box underground.

Ode to the Fallen Soldier, who
Died so we could live, the way
All mankind should, happy and free.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. a. Explain what the ode is celebrating.

b. Include evidence from the poem.

2. a. What did you like the most about this poem?

b. Highlight things that stood out to you as significant.

Journal Prompt:

An ode poem is a poem that is about one specific thing that you think is truly amazing and praiseworthy. This type of poem can be centered upon an object, an idea, or even a person.

Who or what would you write an ode poem about? Explain why.
Stars
By Natalie Zavala

Ode to the stars
For making me think
Wonder and wishing
I can fly

Ode to the stars
For shining so bright
And guiding me through
The lonesome night

Ode to the stars
For being there
Not through day
But through night

Directions: Answer the following questions.

3.  a. Explain what the ode is celebrating.

        b. Include evidence from the poem.

4.  a. What did you like the most about this poem?

        b. Highlight things that stood out to you as significant.