**Honors World Literature**

**Poetry Out Loud Assignment**

*ELAGSE9-10RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone.)*

*ELAGSE9-10SL6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.*

*ELAGSE9-10L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.*

*a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*

*b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.*

Poetry is much more than words on a page; it is the creative blend of sound and meaning designed to be heard. In its earliest forms, poetry was recited or sung and often employed to remember history and genealogy. Thus, it was designed to be memorized and performed. Now, it is your turn to walk in the shoes of the ancient poets and bring Poetry Out Loud.

You will memorize and recite **ONE** poem in a class competition of poetry performance on **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** *[Class winners will advance to a school competition, and the school winner will have the opportunity to advance to a regional, state, and national level where $20,000 will ultimately be awarded. Winners must recite TWO**poems in competition beyond the classroom level. Keep this in mind as you follow the instructions below. ]*

For the class competition, you need recite only **ONE** poem, but winners who advance must have an additional poem prepared for the school competition to be held in the spring.

**You must choose poems from the website’s anthology. You may not recite any other poem(s) not found on the site.**

**The Assignment:**

1. Visit [www.poetryoutloud.org/students/find.html](http://www.poetryoutloud.org/students/find.html)
2. Choose **TWO** poems you wish to analyze from which you will choose one to memorize and recite. You can also browse the links on the right side of the page. As you find poems that appeal to you, consider the content of the poem as well as the poet who wrote it.
3. Complete a TPFASTT chart for both poems.
4. Annotate both poems by making the following notes directly on a copy of the poem:
   1. **Understanding content**—define any unfamiliar words.
   2. **Vocal intonation**—mark words and phrases that will require your voice to change and note what type of intonation you will use.
   3. **Facial expression**—mark words and phrases for which you will alter your facial expressions to fit the mood or tone of the poem and note the expression you will make.
   4. **Audience interaction**—mark words and phrases for which you might make direct eye contact with the audience or you might look away or down and note the interaction.
5. Memorize the **ONE** poem for which you have the most annotations and the best understanding.

*NOTE: This is recitation NOT**dramatic interpretation. Use appropriate tone of voice and emotion, but do not overdo it with distracting accents, hand gestures, or costumes. No musical instruments are allowed. Practice in front of a mirror, family member, friend, or teacher.*

1. Bring your two poems, TPFASTT chart, and annotations to class on **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
2. In-class performances will be held on **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Evaluation Criteria**

**PHYSICAL PRESENCE** (6 points)

* Use good posture and be attentive. Look confident.
* Engage your audience. Look them in the eye. If you have trouble with that, focus past them to the far wall and keep your head up.

**VOICE AND ARTICULATION** (6 points)

* Project to the audience. You want to capture the attention of everyone, including the people in the back row.
* Proceed at an appropriate and natural pace. People may speak or express themselves too quickly when they are nervous, which can make a recitation difficult to understand. Speak slowly, but not so slowly that the language sounds unnatural or awkward.
* With rhymed poems, be careful not to recite in a sing-song manner.
* Make sure you know how to pronounce every word in your poem. Articulate.
* Line breaks are a defining feature of poetry, with each one calling for different treatment. Decide if a break requires a pause and, if so, how long to pause.

**APPROPRIATENESS OF DRAMATIZATION** (6 points)  
For videos of outstanding student recitations: **http://www.poetryoutloud.org/poems/videos.html**

* Do not act out the poem. Too much dramatization can distract your audience from the language of the poem. Your goal should be to help audience members understand the poem more deeply than they had before hearing your recitation. Movement or accents should not detract from the author's voice.
* You are the vessel of your poem. Have confidence that your poem is strong enough to communicate its sounds and messages without a physical illustration. In other words, let the words of the poem do the work.
* Depending on the poem, occasional gestures may be appropriate, but the line between appropriate and overdone is a thin one. When uncertain, leave them out.
* Avoid monotone delivery. If you sound bored, you will project that boredom onto the audience. However, too much enthusiasm can make your performance seem insincere.

**LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY** (6 points)  
A poem with difficult content conveys complex, sophisticated ideas, which the student will be challenged to grasp and express. A poem with difficult language will have complexity of diction and syntax, meter and rhyme scheme, and shifts in tone or mood. Poem length is also a factor in difficulty. \

**EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING** (6 points)

* In order for the audience to understand the poem fully, the performer must understand the poem fully. Be attentive to the messages, meanings, allusions, irony, tones of voice, and other nuances in your poem.
* Be sure you know the meaning of every word and line in your poem. If you are unsure about something, it will be apparent to the audience and judges. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher for help.
* Think about how you should interpret the tone and volume and voice of your poem. Is it a quiet poem? Is it a boisterous poem? Should it be read more quickly or slowly, with a happy or mournful tone? Your interpretation will be different for each poem, and it is a crucial element of your performance.

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE** (12 points)  
This category is to evaluate the overall success of the recitation, taking into account the above criteria, the Diversity of poem selection, and any other factors that may impact a judge's perception of the student's performance. Note that points in this category are doubled in weight.   
  
**ACCURACY** (8 points)  
A separate judge will mark missed or incorrect words during the recitation, with small deductions for each. If the contestant relies on the Prompter, points also will be subtracted from the accuracy score. Eight points will be added to the competitor's score for a perfect recitation.