

THE SCULPTURE PROJECT

PASSAGE OF WIND & WATER

Essential Question for this lesson:

How can four different types of poetry link to *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water*?

Public art like *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* can offer people opportunities to think about other types of art. Linking poetry with the project gives us a chance to consider some new ideas. Readers who can link poetry with visual art often notice details and connections that other people miss!

Project sculptor Masayuki Nagase believes that public art projects can create new opportunities for growth. He wrote, "I have found that the interactive process of public art can be a channel for reclaiming connection and communication for communities. It is the contact and dialogue between diverse fields that creates new expression and deeper understanding for all involved." When people from different backgrounds start discussing art, they form connections with each other that may not have happened otherwise. Similarly, different forms of art—here, sculpture and poetry—can give people more to discuss and, through that discussion, the art offers new opportunities for people to understand each other.

Four different genres, or types, of poetry are here for you to consider. First, you will read a haiku by Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō, who wrote in the 17th Century. Next, you will read a sonnet from 1817 by British author Percy Bysshe Shelley called "Ozymandias." Then, you will read a 1991 text from Oglala Lakota author and Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills. Finally, you will read a 1979 poem by Mexican poet Octavio Paz called "Wind and Water and Stone."

*The lightning flashes!
And slashing through the darkness,
a night-heron's screech.*

-Matsuo Bashō

Thinking about the project: linking visual images with literary images

1. Look at the images of the sculptor's drawings and models on the project's website, <http://www.rcsculptureproject.com>. Explain how you make connections between the visual images you find and the ideas in the haiku from Bashō.

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Ozymandias

*I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."*

This sonnet was written by Percy Bysshe Shelley, and it was published in 1818 in the January 11 issue of *The Examiner* in London.



This is a partial statue of Ramses II, which is said to have inspired the poem.

Ozymandias.
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Who said - "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
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Look on my works, ye mighty, & despair!
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Of that colossal wreck, boundless & bare
The lone & level sands stretch far away."

This is Shelley's "fair copy" of the sonnet from 1817. It is housed, along with the rough draft he wrote, in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England.

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Understanding the Sonnet

In the poem "Ozymandias," the speaker describes an encounter with a traveler who has been to Egypt. The traveler tells the speaker a story about the ruins of a statue lying in the middle of the desert. The statue is broken apart, but visitors can still discern the face of a human. The face looks strict and commanding: it looks like a king's face. The sculptor did a good job of expressing the ruler's character. The king was stern, but he cared for his subjects.

An inscription carved into a nearby pedestal, obviously the base of the now-ruined statue, gives a message from Ozymandias. He intended for visitors to look at his huge statue and feel how powerful he was. All that is left of his power, however, is a shattered statue in the midst of endless sand. Here, the traveler ends his story to the speaker.

Thinking about the Project: the theme of man and the natural world

"Ozymandias" describes a statue, and statues are made from rocks and stones found in nature. While the poem explores the way in which art necessarily involves some kind of engagement with the natural world, it also considers how nature can eventually destroy art. The statue's head is all that remains of the ruin, and readers recognize the role that dust storms, wind, and rain played in its destruction.¹

1. Besides getting its raw materials (paper, rocks, stones) from nature, in what other ways do you think art interacts with the natural world?

2. The statue in "Ozymandias" is destroyed by natural forces long after the power of the king is gone from the world. Why do you think people still exert great effort to create large public sculptures?²

3. In what ways do you notice humans trying to conquer the natural world?

¹ Shmoop Editorial Team, "Questions About Man and the Natural World," Shmoop University Inc. , 2013, <http://www.shmoop.com/ozymandias/man-the-natural-world-theme.html#qa> (accessed July 3, 2013).

² *ibid.*

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*In my youth I respected the world and life, I needed not anything but peace of heart
And yet I changed despite myself and believed in Iktomi's lies.
He seemed to know all the truth, he promised to make me happy.
He made me ask Wakan Tanka for wealth, that I might have power;
I was given poverty, that I might find my inner strength.
I asked for fame, so others would know me;
I was given obscurity, that I might know myself.
I asked for a person to love that I might never be alone,
I was given a life of a hermit, that I might learn to accept myself.
I asked for power, that I might achieve,
I was given weakness, that I might learn to obey.
I asked for health, that I might lead a long life.
I was given infirmity, that I might appreciate each minute.
I asked Mother Earth for strength, that I might have my way,
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need for Her.
I asked to live happily, that I might enjoy life,
I was given life, that I might live happily,
I received nothing I asked for, yet all my wishes came true.
Despite myself and Iktomi, my dreams were fulfilled,
I am richly blessed more than I ever hoped,
I thank-you, Wakan Tanka, for what you've given me.*

-From Billy Mills' 1991 book, Wokini (New Life)

Thinking about the Project: the theme of wisdom gained through experience

1. The speaker in this poem looks back over his life and makes an important distinction between what he asked for and what he was given. What do you think **experience** teaches people that advice and instruction cannot teach?

2. *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* gives people a chance to experience outdoor art all year long. What do you think visitors might learn from experiencing this piece of art?

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Wind and Water and Stone

*The water hollowed the stone,
the wind dispersed the water,
the stone stopped the wind.
Water and wind and stone.*

*The wind sculpted the stone,
the stone is a cup of water,
The water runs off and is wind.
Stone and wind and water.*

*The wind sings in its turnings,
the water murmurs as it goes,
the motionless stone is quiet.
Wind and water and stone.*

*One is the other and is neither:
among their empty names
they pass and disappear,
water and stone and wind.*

-Octavio Paz

Thinking about the project: linking visual images with literary images

1. How do you notice the ideas from this poem being depicted in the designs of *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water*?
2. Wind and water are natural forces that are both life-giving and potentially life-taking. Explain examples of wind both giving and taking life, and then explain examples of water both giving and taking life.
3. How has wind acted as a sculptor in the Badlands?

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Notes for Teachers

The lessons connected with *The Sculpture Project: Passage of Wind and Water* are designed to be used with students in many grade levels. You may need to provide scaffolding in order to help your students access the text. To help with this, we have included this vocabulary bank. This bank can be easily used with the existing word study procedures you use with students.

- interactive process
- reclaiming
- dialogue
- diverse
- expression
- similarly
- genres
- haiku
- sonnet
- visual images
- literary images
- antique
- visage
- sneer
- pedestal
- despair
- decay
- colossal

- encounter
- discern
- sculptor
- interacts
- conquer
- Iktomi
- Wakan Tanka
- poverty
- obscurity
- hermit
- poverty
- obscurity
- hermit
- infirmity
- distinction
- dispersed
- murmurs
- depicted

CCSS Language Arts Anchor Standards Addressed:

R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

R10: Read and comprehend complex informational texts independently and proficiently.

W9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, & research.

SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly & persuasively.

L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown & multiple-meaning words & phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, & consulting reference materials as appropriate.

L6: Acquire & use accurately a range of general academic & domain-specific words & phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, & listening at the college & career-readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge.

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Notes for Teachers, continued

This lesson group uses poetic literature from four different genres, timeframes, and cultures. The lesson group also includes informational text. The accompanying questions are designed to elicit high-level thinking and need no answer key. If students are showing their original thinking, engaging with the topic and the ways in which they perceive the project, then they are doing good work.

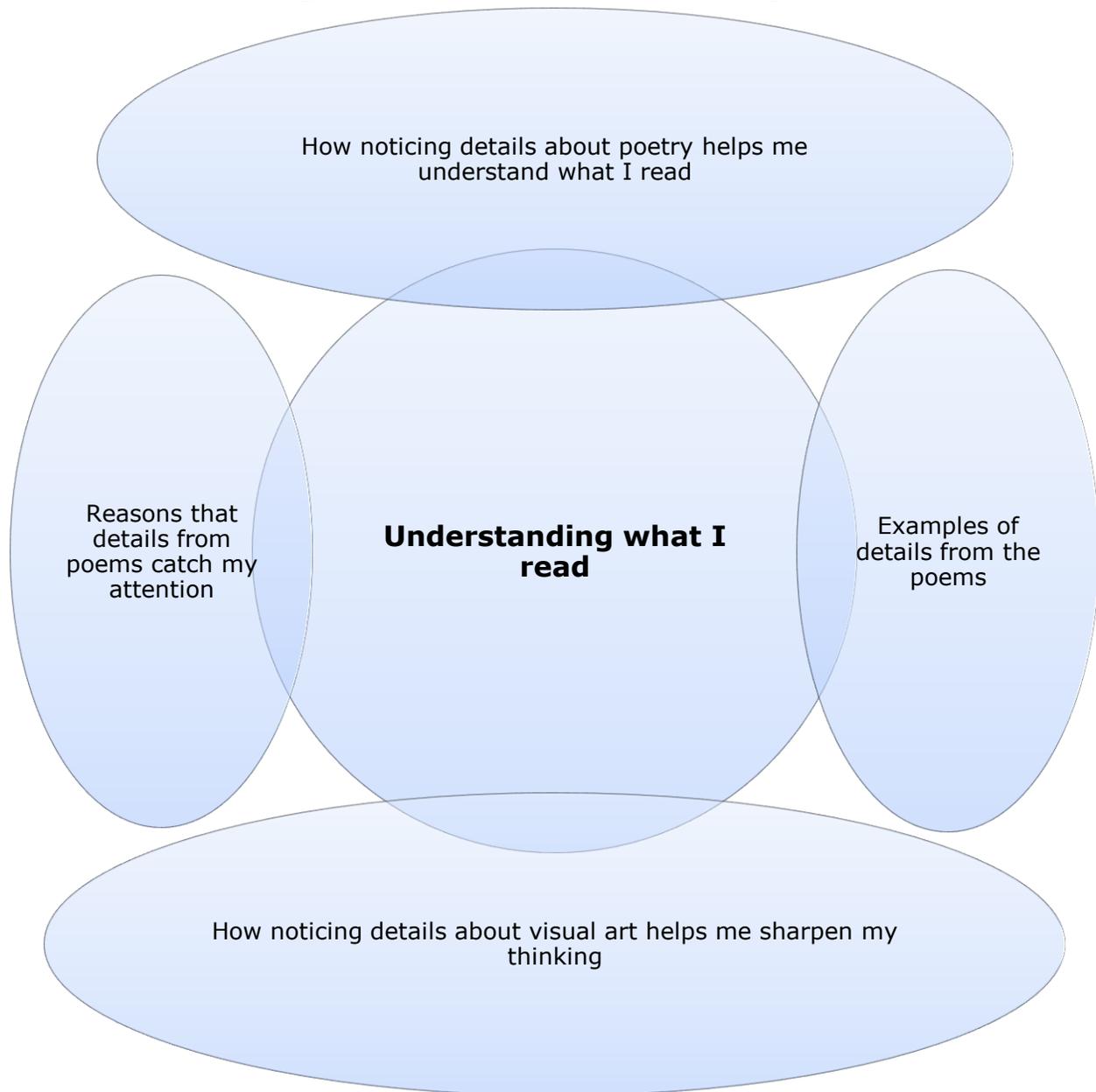
Teachers will have success when they encourage students to show and explain their thinking. Great student discussions can follow! The next page contains a graphic organizer that can help thinkers prepare for their discussions. This process of preparing for & engaging in peer discussions addresses the CCSS Speaking and Listening Standard SL.1!

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How noticing details increases understanding: A discussion



Name:

Date of discussion: