

Diagnostic Assessment for I'm A Poet and Didn't Know It!



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Diagnostic Assessment Constructed Response

Duration: One class period

Standard (s) Assessed: LA.E.1.3.4.8.1, LA.E.1.3.4.8.2, LA.E.1.3.4.8.3, LA.E.1.3.3.8.2
LA.B.1.3.2.8.5, LA.B.1.3.3.8.7, LA.D.2.3.2.8.1

Description of Assessment Activity: In this diagnostic assessment, students answer questions about poetry pieces and reflect on their own past writing. All answers lead to the teacher's understanding of the student's present level of comprehension. It is suggested that the diagnostic be given on a Friday in order to have the weekend to complete the assessment of the diagnostic.

Teacher Directions:

Prior to the Diagnostic

1. Make a class set of the student's diagnostic assessment, "I'm A Poet and Didn't Know It." Each student will need a copy of the assessment, but will write their answers on their own paper.
2. Decide which option will work best for you.
 - A. In order to assess LA.B.1.3.2.8.5, LA.B.1.3.3.8.7, LA.D.2.3.2.8.1, the teacher can choose to look through student writing portfolios and using the criteria (See Scoring Criteria) decide students' present level of comprehension. If you choose to do this option, students will not need to complete Part II of the Diagnostic assessment.
 - B. Have students complete Part II of the Diagnostic assessment. Students will need to use their writing portfolios in order to answer the questions. If students do not have writing portfolios, they will need to answer the questions as best they can.
3. Make copies of the poem, "Mother To Son" by Langston Hughes. See the Poetry Bibliography for a link to this poem. Copyright laws allow for copies of this poem to be made as long as they are destroyed at the unit's end. The poem may be found in the literature anthology being used in your school. If so, have students bring in their literature anthology the day of the diagnostic.

Day of the Diagnostic

1. Pass out copies of the assessment to students.
2. Make sure they know where to find a copy of the poem, "Mother To Son."
3. Read over the directions and make sure students know how to do the assessment. Specifically, explain to students if they will be doing Part II. If they will be doing Part II, explain if they will be using writing portfolios or answering the questions to the best of their ability.
4. Explain that this is an ungraded assignment, but that students should do the best work that they can. This assignment will help you guide their future instruction.

Student Directions:

1. Listen while I go over the diagnostic assessment.
2. Know where to find the poem, "Mother To Son".
3. (If teacher decides) Use your writing portfolio to answer the questions in Part II.
OR If you will not be using writing portfolios, then answer the questions to the best of your ability being as specific as you possibly can.
4. Know that this is an ungraded assignment. It will help me understand where you are in the writing process.

Scoring Method and Criteria:

Once students complete the assessment, score using the answer key.



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Please write on your own paper.

Part I: Standards LA.E.1.3.4.8.1, LA.E.1.3.4.8.2, LA.E.1.3.4.8.3, LA.E.1.3.3.8.2

1. In the poem, "Mother To Son," by Langston Hughes, how do his word choice and use of figurative language contribute to the mood and meaning of the poem? Use examples from the poem to explain your answer.

2. In the poem, "Sea Lullaby" by Elinor Wylie, the author uses specific words and figurative language as well as a certain rhythm to describe the sea:

A treacherous smiler
With teeth white as milk
A savage beguiler
In sheathings of silk.

- A. What figurative language is being used?
- B. How are her words meant to impact the reader?
- C. How is the rhythm meant to impact the reader?

3. In the poem, "The lesson of the moth" by Don Marquis, the author says:
i was talking to a moth
the other evening
he was trying to break into
an electric light bulb
and fry himself on the wires

- A. What do you think his lack of punctuation is trying to achieve?
- B. Is there a rhythm to the poem? If yes or no, how does the rhythm or lack of it contribute to the effect of the poem?

4. All poems have different line lengths. Why do you think this is?

5. In the poem, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost, the poet concludes his poem by saying:

"Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."

The road isn't a road. It represents something else.

- A. What poetic technique is this?
- B. Any ideas as to what the road could mean? Why?

Part II: Standards LA.B.1.3.2.8.5, LA.B.1.3.3.8.7, LA.D.2.3.2.8.1

Using your writing portfolio, answer the following questions. You must be able to provide the piece of writing you are referring to.

If you do not have a writing portfolio, answer them to the best of your ability.

1. A good command of language is important in any piece of writing. Give two examples of where you feel you have demonstrated a command of language.
2. Explain how, in a recent piece of writing, you created vivid images in the reader's mind.
3. Have you used similes and/or metaphors and/or sensory language in a recent piece of writing? Give an example of one or more.



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Answer Key

Part I:

1. In the poem, "Mother To Son" by Langston Hughes, how do his word choice and use of figurative language contribute to the mood and meaning of the poem?

(LA.E.1.3.4.8.1)

Students should suggest that the word choice and figurative language all make the poem dark and moody but with an element of hope.

For example: The word choice (tacks, splinters, no carpet, no light, bare) all imply that life has been hard for the mother, but her ending, "I'se still climbin'" suggests that her mood is dark but there is still hope. The use of the metaphor (figurative language), "life ain't been no crystal stair," implies that things haven't always been easy, but the mother is still climbing those stairs even though it hasn't been easy.

2. In the poem, "Sea Lullaby" by Elinor Wylie, the author uses specific words and figurative language to describe the sea: (LA.E.1.3.4.8.2)

A. What figurative language is being used? **Simile and Metaphor**

B. How are her words meant to impact the reader?

Students should suggest that the words are meant to give the reader a less than nice view of the sea. With words like "treacherous" and "savage" the image we get of the sea is not the usual calm and nice one we usually get. The word "milk" is meant to explain the whiteness of the caps on an ocean and "silk" meant to explain the silky but dangerous aspects of the sea.

C. How is the rhythm meant to impact? **Students might suggest that the rhythmic use of rhyme and meter is meant to mimic the rhythm of the sea.**

3. In the poem, "The lesson of the moth" by Don Marquis, the author says: (LA.E.1.3.4.8.3)

A. What do you think his lack of punctuation is trying to achieve?

Students may suggest that the lack of punctuation is trying indicate the lack of rhyme or reason to a moth's method of banging into a light bulb. As a moth

flits against a light bulb, it twists and turns and is rhythmless. With a lack of punctuation, the author punctuates this idea.

B. Is there a rhythm to the poem? If yes or no, how does the rhythm or lack of it contribute to the effect of the poem? **There is no real rhythm to this stanza. Again, the writer may be trying to indicate the lack of rhyme or reason a moth may show when banging against a light bulb.**

4. All poems have different line lengths. Why do you think this is? (LA.E.1.3.4.8.3) **Students should indicate that different line lengths can indicate flow of time, flow of a thought, or show emphasis of a certain word or phrase and can also establish a rhythm or cadence.**
5. In the poem, "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost, the poet concludes his poem by saying: (LA.E.1.3.3.8.2)
- C. What poetic technique is this? **Symbolism**
 - D. Any ideas as to what the road could mean? **Why?**
The road is symbolic of life. By taking the "road less traveled by" the author has chosen a road that the majority didn't choose.

Part II:

In this area, students should be able to show pieces of writing that:

- (Question 1) Demonstrate how they have a command of language. Students may show evidence of usage of precise and mature word choice, appropriate figurative language. (LA.B.1.3.2.8.5)
 - (Question 2) Show how they have used creative writing strategies appropriate to the format. Students may show evidence of how they used figurative language (metaphor, similes, sensory language or others) in order to create a vivid image in the reader's mind. Vivid images should be vivid! (LA.B.1.3.3.8.7)
 - (Question 3) Students may show evidence of the proper usage of similes, metaphors or sensory language. (LA.D.2.3.2.8.1)
1. A good command of language is important in any piece of writing. Give two examples of where you feel you have demonstrated a command of language.
 2. Explain how, in a recent piece of writing, you created vivid images in the reader's mind.
 3. Have you used similes and/or metaphors and/or sensory language in a recent piece of writing? Give an example of one or more.