

Analyzing History from the Context of Poetry

ABOUT THIS LESSON

Using poetry students will analyze varying viewpoints of the Korean War. Through their analysis and interpretation students will be able to understand the complexity of history. Students will learn about the traditional Korean poetry and look at poetry of those during the war or observing the war. Students will create their own poem and/or write an essay to analyze the war in their gathered perspective.

GRADE LEVEL

9-12

CLASSROOM TIME

Two 90 minute class periods (1 for analysis and 1 for writing and editing)

RESOURCES

- Information on Poetic Elements for teachers/students: (see worksheet below)
- Copies of the Poetry Analysis form TP-CASTT (see worksheet below)
- Copies of the Poems
- Sijo resources found on <https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/resources/resources.php>

BACKGROUND

The students have background knowledge on the Korean War before this lesson. Students will already have this background knowledge. The students will have background on poetry analysis from their ELA class. This lesson will be used for expanding students critical thinking skills and understanding of the complexities of war.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Analyze the poetry of the Korean War to understand varying viewpoints
- Create a Korean sijo of their own or essay based on research/knowledge of the Korean War

STANDARDS

Louisiana State Standards (World History)

WH.1.1 Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by: evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources

Louisiana State Standards (ELA 9-10 and 11-12)

R.L.6. Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in works of literature drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

R.I.1. Cite relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

LESSON

1. Opening Activity

Students will identify elements of poetry. As a group students will call out elements of poetry for the teacher to write on the board. After the teacher has 5-10 elements, the teacher can ask students to define them. Once defined the teacher can leave them up for the students to review.

2. Historical Background

The students will have been taught the background information surrounding the Korean War. We will do a quick review using Crash Course US History by John Green (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2IcmLkuhG0>).

3. Interpretation and Evaluation of the Poetry

- A. Together with the teacher the students will analyze the poem (“Korea, The Chosen Place”) by S/SGT Irvin V. Worden for poetic elements and historical content. The poem can be found below and on (<https://www.koreanwar.org/html/units/frontline/worden.htm>). The teacher will post the TP-CASTT sheet on an overhead or on the projector writing/typing in the blanks as the students discuss.
- B. Students will then work with a partner to analyze the poem from a varying viewpoint. Reading “Salutation, Syngman Rhee” by Vincent G. Burns in a letter to Syngman Rhee. The poem can be found on page 3 of the letter found below or on <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/220091> using the TPCASTT Worksheet. Groups will have 20 minutes to complete then another 5 to share and discuss with another pair to discuss and add to their analysis.
- C. After this analysis, groups will share some poetic elements and historical facts found in the poem. The teacher will note this on the board or on butcher paper.

D. Students will choose a poem to analyze individually from another viewpoint using poems from the text *Brother Enemy-Poems of the Korean War*. If you don't have a class set a wonderful selection of poems can be found here for analysis <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/brother-enemy-paradoxes-of-the-korean-war.pdf>. I recommend "Where to Go?" (97), "Beautiful Soldiers" (74), "Here Lies a Communist Soldier (55), "To a Dead United Nations Soldier" (89), Scapegoats (163-164) or "To My Baby Daughter" (183) from *Brother Enemy Poems of the Korean War* or you can have students pick one of their own that shows a varying viewpoint.

POST LESSON ACTIVITIES

These are two optional post-lesson activities to extend student engagement in this topic.

1. Sijo Videos:

Have students watch modern artist perform silos as they were traditionally done by song. This will allow for students to better understand the sijo format for their own writing. Here is an example of the group Elephant Rebellion who does a modern interpretation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=offUT5xwwmg>) and a traditional sijo (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCBajj3v9sE>).

2. Making a Poem a Political Cartoon

Students can illustrate one of the poems using whichever illustration method (digital, drawing, picture collage, etc.) they prefer to change a poem to a political cartoon.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Essay

Students can write a three paragraph essay evaluating information gathered from the poems they read as well as personal resource. Students should be able to explain the historical perspective as well as the poetic elements

Or a comparative essay where students analyze and compare and contrast T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47311/the-waste-land>) with Park Yangkyun's "Flower" from *Brother Enemy* also found here (<https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/brother-enemy-paradoxes-of-the-korean-war.pdf>).

Sijo

Students will work to research a topic of the Korean War and the silo format to write their own sijo. This basic guide can be helpful for students/teachers (https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/current/resources/sijo_guide.php). Also, Larry Gros's Sijo Primer can be helpful as well (https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/mediafiles/writing/current/sijoprimer_gross.pdf). More resources can be found on the Sejong Cultural Society's website including

information for their competition for which students can enter their sijos
(<https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/resources/resources.php>)

TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

TITLE: Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

PARAPHRASE: Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be inverted) and look up unfamiliar words.

CONNOTATION: Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

ATTITUDE/TONE: Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

SHIFTS: Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

TITLE: Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

Poetic Elements

Edited from <https://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/poeterms.htm>

- Alliteration: The repetition of identical consonant sounds, most often the sounds beginning words, in close proximity. Example: pensive poets, nattering nabobs of negativism.
- Allusion: Unacknowledged reference and quotations that authors assume their readers will recognize.
- Anaphora: Repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of a line throughout a work or the section of a work.
- Apostrophe: Speaker in a poem addresses a person not present or an animal, inanimate object, or concept as though it is a person. Example: Wordsworth--"Milton! Thou shouldst be living at this hour / England has need of thee"
- Assonance: The repetition of identical vowel sounds in different words in close proximity. Example: deep green sea.
- Caesura: A short but definite pause used for effect within a line of poetry. Carpe diem poetry: "seize the day." Poetry concerned with the shortness of life and the need to act in or enjoy the present. Example: Herrick's "To the Virgins to Make Much of Time"
- Chiasmus (antimetabole): Chiasmus is a "crossing" or reversal of two elements; antimetabole, a form of chiasmus, is the reversal of the same words in a grammatical structure. Example: Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.
- Consonance is the counterpart of assonance; the partial or total identity of consonants in words whose main vowels differ. Example: shadow meadow; pressed, passed; sipped, supped. Owen uses this "impure rhyme" to convey the anguish of war and death.
- Diction: word choice used by writer
- Dramatic monologue: A type of poem, derived from the theater, in which a speaker addresses an internal listener or the reader. In some dramatic monologues, especially those by Robert Browning, the speaker may reveal his personality in unexpected and unflattering ways.
- Enjambment (or enjambement): A line having no end punctuation but running over to the next line.
- Hyperbole (overstatement) and litotes (understatement): Hyperbole is exaggeration for effect; litotes is understatement for effect, often used for irony.
- Imagery: Images are references that trigger the mind to fuse together memories of sight (visual), sounds (auditory), tastes (gustatory), smells (olfactory), and sensations of touch (tactile). Imagery refers to images throughout a work or throughout the works of a writer or group of writers.
- Internal rhyme: An exact rhyme (rather than rhyming vowel sounds, as with assonance) within a line of poetry: "Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary."
- Metaphor: A comparison between two unlike things, this describes one thing as if it were something else. Does not use "like" or "as" for the comparison (see simile).
- Metaphysical conceit: An elaborate and extended metaphor or simile that links two apparently unrelated fields or subjects in an unusual and surprising conjunction of ideas. The term is commonly applied to the metaphorical language of a number of early seventeenth-century poets, particularly John Donne. Example: stiff twin compasses//the joining together of lovers like legs of a compass. See "To His Coy Mistress"
- Onomatopoeia. A blending of consonant and vowel sounds designed to imitate or suggest the activity being described. Example: buzz, slurp.
- Paradox: A rhetorical figure embodying a seeming contradiction that is nonetheless true.
- Personification: Attributing human characteristics to nonhuman things or abstractions.
- Refrain: repeated word or series of words in response or counterpoint to the main verse, as in a ballad.
- Rhyme: The repetition of identical concluding syllables in different words, most often at the ends of lines.

- Simile. A direct comparison between two dissimilar things; uses "like" or "as" to state the terms of the comparison.
- Stanza: A group of poetic lines corresponding to paragraphs in prose; the meters and rhymes are usually repeating or systematic.
- Synesthesia: A rhetorical figure that describes one sensory impression in terms of a different sense, or one perception in terms of a totally different or even opposite feeling. Example: "darkness visible" "green thought"
- Syntax: Word order and sentence structure.

Korea, The Chosen Place, a poem

Korea

Korea, the chosen place
 Ravished by war, laid to waste
 All United Nations there engaged
 In another history Page.

Korea, tis not a beauty site
 To see by day or by night.
 The eye beholds only the gloom
 Of a country buried in war's tomb.

Korea, it's been torn up
 and torn down;
 Marched up
 and marched down.

Korea, blood shed, land and mountains
 Have been bathed by youthful fountains.
 Brave men here have gone to their reward
 Perishing 'neath the sword.

Korea, twas not a war they say;
 Only a police action day by day,
 A testing place
 For the human race.

Korea, two ideals clashing
 Communism and democracy smashing;
 The U.N.'s firm stand
 Against the hammer red hand.

Korea, a question of peace there,
 A question of peace everywhere
 Soon it may be inflamed
 Again in blood and war's shame.

Korea, a prayer of the free
 That inpeace here we may see
 The sword no more to rise
 On any land or any skies.
 ---S/Sgt. Irvin V. Worden

The poem is by S/SGT Irvin V. Worden, on 14 December 1953, while stationed in Korea. This poem is included in the book "Korea, The Chosen Place, a view from Old Smokey", the story of my fathers experiences in Korea. --Stephen H. Worden

SALUTATIONS, SYNGMAN RHEE !

Salutations, Syngman Rhee !
As long as men love liberty
Your strong, heroic name shall be
A symbol of faith and bravery ---
Unmoved, unbowed like a redwood tree !
Salutations, Syngman Rhee !

Salutations, Syngman Rhee !
You stood your ground and turned the key
And set the hosts of the prisoners free ---
That deed you did so fearlessly
Has thrilled brave men from sea to sea !
Salutations, Syngman Rhee !

Salutations, Syngman Rhee !
In spite of pain and poverty,
A nation plagued by misery ---
In spite of fear and treachery
You swore you'd fight till all were free !
Salutations, Syngman Rhee !

Salutations, Syngman Rhee !
The free world cheers your constancy
And hearts take hope unflinching
That some day soon the world shall see
The end of Communist tyranny !
Salutations, Syngman Rhee !

Salutations, Syngman Rhee !
God grant your fiery energy
May stab awake our lethargy
To break the chains of slavery
And turn the tides of destiny !
Salutations, Syngman Rhee !

Vincent Godfrey Burns