

Ekphrastic Poetry Secondary (6th-12th Grade)

“Ekphrastic” refers to a work of any kind of art inspired by another work of art. Ekphrastic poetry most commonly refers to a poem that responds to a work of visual art, though other examples of ekphrastic art include a painting created while listening to a specific song, or a sculpture depicting the main character of a novel.

Students will prepare for the program by reading and discussing an example of ekphrastic poetry; a lesson plan is provided, or teachers may choose to integrate ekphrastic poetry into existing curricula. During the program, students experience a tour led by a museum educator. The museum educator leads discussions about a work of art using Visual Thinking Strategies, Artful Thinking Routines, and activities from Harvard’s Project Zero. Students then spend time writing different types of poems in response to the works of art. At the end of the program, students will have drafted 2-4 ekphrastic poems.

Essential Question:

How can images and ideas from a work of art inspire poetry?

Learning Targets:

1. Students will compare depictions of a scene or idea in a poem and a work of art.
2. Students will analyze sensory details and mood depicted in a work of visual art, supporting their ideas with evidence from the artwork.
3. Students will write poetry incorporating details, imagery, and/or ideas from a work of visual art.

Success Criteria:

- Students can identify similarities and differences between the depiction presented in a work of art and an ekphrastic poem based on that artwork.
- Students can identify and infer sensory details and mood in a work of art, with supporting evidence.
- Students draft at least two poems that incorporate details, imagery, and/or ideas from a work of art viewed together.

Standards Alignment

Washington State Visual Arts
6th Grade

- Re8.1 Interpret art by distinguishing between relevant and non-relevant contextual information and analyzing subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

7th Grade

- Re8.1 Interpret art by analyzing art-making approaches, the characteristics of form and structure, relevant contextual information, subject matter, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

8th Grade

- Re8.1 Interpret art by analyzing how the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, use of media, art-making approaches, and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed.

High School Proficient

- Re8.1 Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

High School Accomplished

- Anchor Standard 8 Interpret intent and meaning in an artistic work.

High School Advanced

- Re8.1 Analyze differing interpretations of an artwork or collection of works in order to select and defend a plausible critical analysis.

Common Core State Standards: English Language Arts

6th Grade

- RL7 Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- RL10 Read and comprehend literature, including poems, in the appropriate text complexity grade band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed.
- W10 Write routinely for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

7th Grade

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8th Grade

- RL10 Read and comprehend literature, including poems, in the appropriate text complexity grade band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed.
- W10 Write routinely for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

9th-10th Grade

- RL7 Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.
- RL10 Read and comprehend literature, including poems, in the appropriate text complexity grade band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed.
- W10 Write routinely for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

11th-12th Grade

- RL10 Read and comprehend literature, including poems, in the appropriate text complexity grade band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed.
- W10 Write routinely for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.