UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Teacher Guide

SUMMARY

In this lesson, students will use the Internet or library to find a poem they would like to research and analyze. They will then create an informal "working" paper on the poem, and create a multimedia presentation to explain the poem to classmates.

OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To build skills in literary analysis, expository writing and oral presentations
- ◆ To enhance students' appreciation of poetry
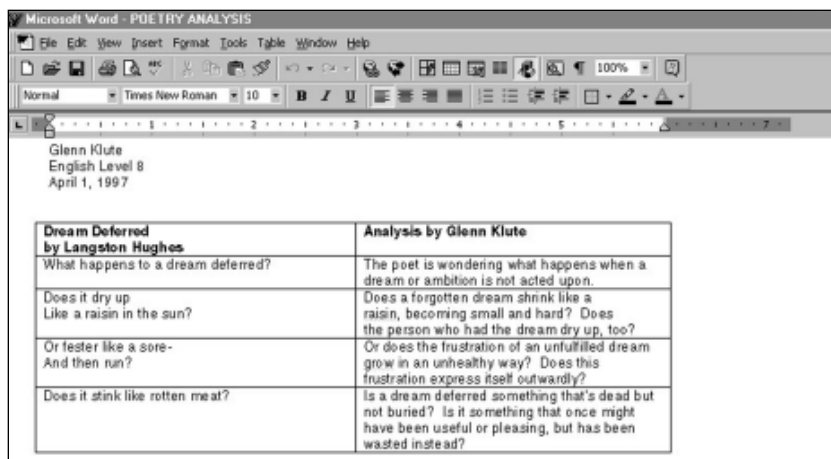
PREREQUISITE SKILLS

- ◆ Can navigate Web sites using *Microsoft® Internet Explorer*
- ◆ Knows *Microsoft® Powerpoint* features including slide transitions and adding sound effects
- ◆ Has basic knowledge of *Microsoft® Word*

TIME ALLOTED

Approximately 1 week

HOW TO BEGIN

One of the best ways for students to develop an interest in poetry is for them to explore a variety of anthologies and single poet collections. Regular expo-

Analysis of "Dream Deferred" in a *Microsoft Word* table

sure to poetry will encourage students to pick up poetry books to browse through just as naturally as they would pick up story books.

Begin a discussion with your students about their favorite poets. Make a list of the poets they name on the chalkboard. Have students tell what they know about each poet. You might also suggest that they use *Internet Explorer* and a search engine such as Yahoo to locate Web sites devoted to the poets listed and to download some of their poems. Students might also enjoy visiting special poetry pages for kids like "Zia Kids Poetry Page."

Explain to students that in this lesson they are going to have the opportunity to research and analyze a poem that has particular meaning to them.

Recommended Web Sites
- ◆ **Zia Kids Poetry Page**
  http://www.zia.com/
  educate/books/epoet/htm

Adaptability

◆ For younger or less experienced students, make the lesson a class project. Choose a poem and work through its analysis together with the class. Then have students work in groups of four to create a multimedia slide presentation in Powerpoint about the poem. All four team members should participate in the presentation.

Student Activity

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, you will use the Internet to find a poem that you like and then research, analyze and present your interpretation of that poem to the class.

STEP 1

Researching Poems

SOFTWARE: Internet Explorer

WHAT TO DO: Use *Internet Explorer* or a poetry book from the library to choose a poem that you would like to analyze. Share any poems you find especially interesting with others in the class to build on and increase everyone's appreciation of poetry.
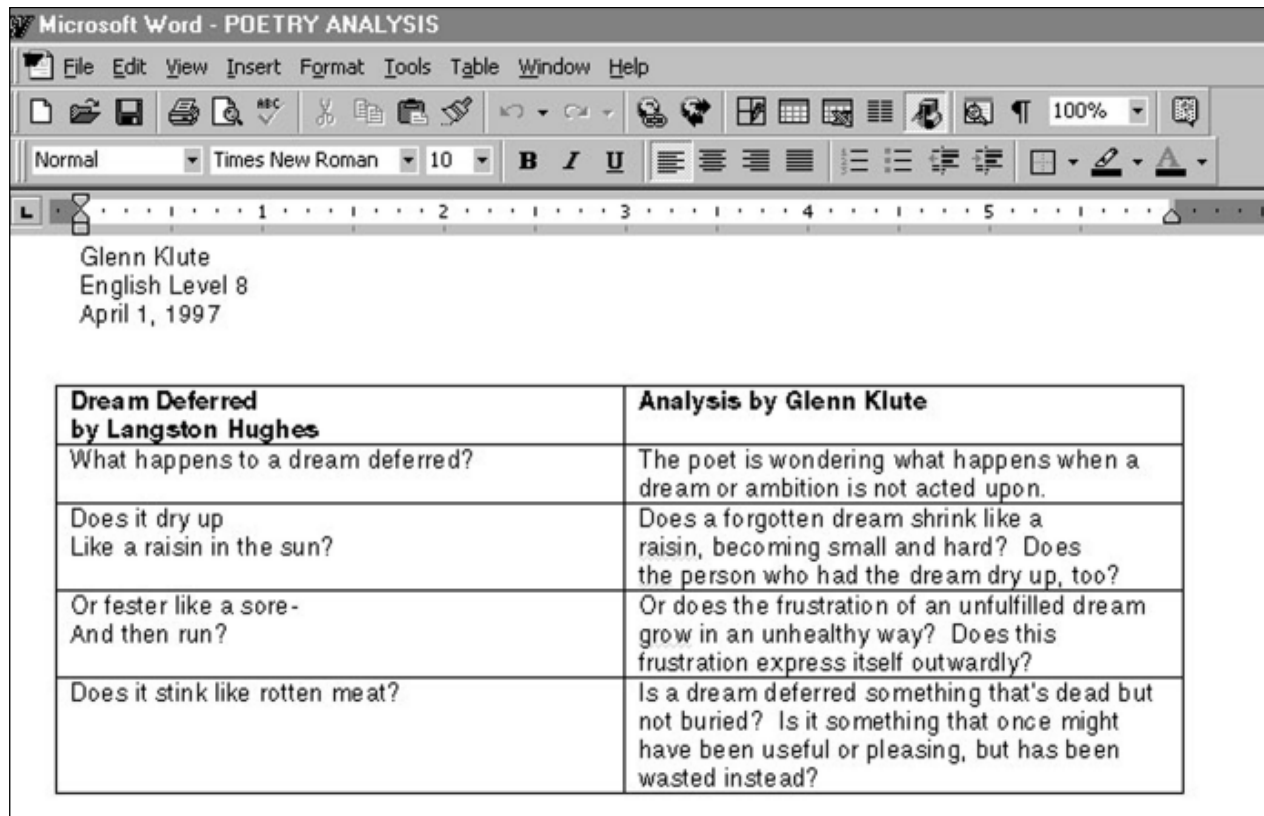
STEP 2

Analyzing the Poems

SOFTWARE: Microsoft Word

WHAT TO DO: In this part of the lesson you will be analyzing your poem in writing. Retyping your poem into a *Word* table will make it easy to analyze your poem line by line. Create a new *Word* document. At the top of the document type your name, the title of your poem, and today's date. Press Enter three times. To create a table, choose Insert Table from the Table menu, then OK (*Word* will automatically add more rows when you press tab while in last cell of an existing table).

Click in column 1, row 1 of your table. Type the name of your poem and the name of the author, then press Tab key. Type Analysis by, type your name, and then press Tab key.

In column 1, row 2 of the table type the first line of the poem, and then press Tab twice. In column 1, row 3 of the table, type the second line of the poem, then press Tab twice. Continue these steps until you have your entire poem typed in column 1 of the table - one sentence per cell (see example below).

Click in each cell in the right hand column and write a line-by-line explanation of the poem. The written explanation should sit beside the line of poetry it explicates (see Example 1). The

Dream Deferred by Langston Hughes	Analysis by Glenn Klute
What happens to a dream deferred?	The poet is wondering what happens when a dream or ambition is not acted upon.
Does it dry up Like a raisin in the sun?	Does a forgotten dream shrink like a raisin, becoming small and hard? Does the person who had the dream dry up, too?
Or fester like a sore- And then run?	Or does the frustration of an unfulfilled dream grow in an unhealthy way? Does this frustration express itself outwardly?
Does it stink like rotten meat?	Is a dream deferred something that's dead but not buried? Is it something that once might have been useful or pleasing, but has been wasted instead?

Example 1: **Analysis of "Dream Deferred" in a *Word* table from *Microsoft Word***

explication should include definitions of unfamiliar vocabulary, possible associations with the poem's images, and explanations of the poem's metaphors and meaning.

Click in the document below the table and describe why this poem has personal meaning to you. What do you identify with and why? What happened to you personally that helps you understand the poem? Include some autobiographical information that you feel comfortable sharing.

Keep in mind that this paper is a "working" document, not a polished piece. However, it should be accurate in its interpretation and must include analysis as well as some autobiographical information.
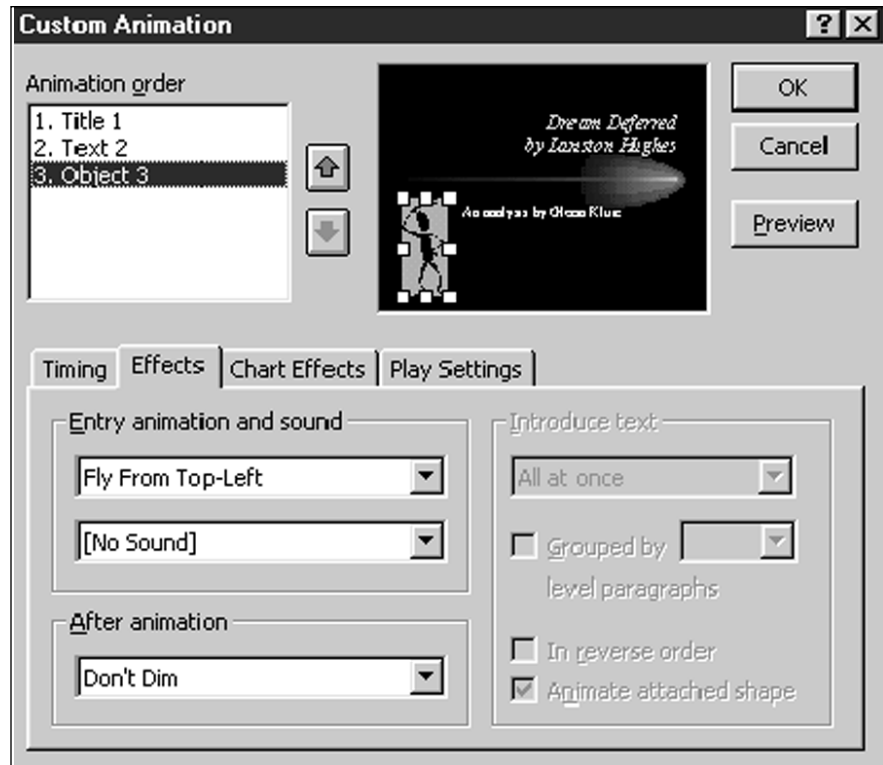
STEP 3

Presenting the Interpretation

SOFTWARE: Microsoft Powerpoint

WHAT TO DO: You are now going to present your interpretation of the poem to classmates by creating a five to ten minute slide presentation using *Powerpoint*. The presentation should have three key elements:

1. The poem must be read aloud at some time during the presentation — but not necessarily at the beginning.

2. The presentation must help the audience understand the poem.

3. The meaning of the poem must be expressed both verbally and through images and sound added to your *PowerPoint* presentation.

Example 2: **Custom Animation option from *Powerpoint*'s Slide Show menu**

STEP 4

Presentation Tips

SOFTWARE: Microsoft Powerpoint

◆ Take advantage of the many features of *PowerPoint* to make your slide shows creative and interesting. Experiment with color, backgrounds, text styles, clip art, office art drawing tools, slide transitions, and custom animations.

◆ To animate a slide, choose Custom Animation from the Slide Show menu (see Example 2.) Consider using music, sound effects, or recorded narration. Choose Record Narration from the Slide Show menu. To learn more about adding music, sound and video to your presentation, ask the Office Assistant about "multi-media." To learn more about using your *PowerPoint* presentation on the Web, ask the Office assistant about the "Web."

◆ Practice your presentation with a classmate. Be sure to speak loudly, clearly, and enthusiastically, but not too fast. Time your presentation by choosing Rehearse Timings from the Slide Show menu. Run through each slide of your presentation just like you would deliver it, then click the right arrow to move to the next slide. You can review the timings in the Slide Sorter view. The listener should take notes. Is anything in the presentation confusing? Is anything particularly interesting or great? Practice giving each other constructive feedback. ■