# Lesson Plan: Word Play

## Poetry, Dictionaries, and the Power of Play

NCTE Standards

1. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
2. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

NEW JERSEY CORE CONTENT STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.4.C: Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.1.B](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/11-12/1/b/): Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary of English Usage, Garner’s Modern American Usage) as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4.C: Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.4.D: Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10 (11-12).10: By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 (11-12)text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 (11-12) text complexity band independently and proficiently.

SUPPLIES required: pen and paper, post-it notes, access to internet (either collaboratively or individually), poem

PEDAGOGY: Open-Ended Instruction; Collaborative Learning

Learning Outcomes:

* students will learn to use Wordnik.com (online dictionary) and all of its components to identify meanings and identify prosodical patterns.
* students will reinforce terms related to poetic analysis and production
* students will learn the difference between pastiche and plagiarism.

Activity:

1. Teacher reads poem outloud for students, asking them to underline unfamiliar words or words whose meanings they are uncertain of as they listen.

John Keats, "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

Lexile Score: 1100

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,   
       Alone and palely loitering?   
The sedge has withered from the lake,   
       And no birds sing.   
  
O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,   
       So haggard and so woe-begone?   
The squirrel’s granary is full,   
       And the harvest’s done.   
  
I see a lily on thy brow,   
       With anguish moist and fever-dew,   
And on thy cheeks a fading rose   
       Fast withereth too.   
  
I met a lady in the meads,   
       Full beautiful—a faery’s child,   
Her hair was long, her foot was light,   
       And her eyes were wild.   
  
I made a garland for her head,   
       And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;   
She looked at me as she did love,   
       And made sweet moan   
  
I set her on my pacing steed,   
       And nothing else saw all day long,   
For sidelong would she bend, and sing   
       A faery’s song.   
  
She found me roots of relish sweet,   
       And honey wild, and manna-dew,   
And sure in language strange she said—   
       ‘I love thee true’.   
  
She took me to her Elfin grot,   
       And there she wept and sighed full sore,   
And there I shut her wild wild eyes   
       With kisses four.   
  
And there she lullèd me asleep,   
       And there I dreamed—Ah! woe betide!—   
The latest dream I ever dreamt   
       On the cold hill side.   
  
I saw pale kings and princes too,   
       Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;   
They cried—‘La Belle Dame sans Merci   
       Thee hath in thrall!’   
  
I saw their starved lips in the gloam,   
       With horrid warning gapèd wide,   
And I awoke and found me here,   
       On the cold hill’s side.   
  
And this is why I sojourn here,   
       Alone and palely loitering,   
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,   
       And no birds sing.

2. Teacher generates a list of words based on what students underlined and writes those on the board.

3. Divides students into groups that each look up one of the identified words. Ensure that as many parts of speech as possible are represented.

4. Each group of students will identify the meaning of the word and formulate as large a list of synonyms as possible.

5. Each group of students will select either a phrase or a clause that includes the word from the "examples" field and then write the phrase or clause on a post-it note.

6. Students go back to the original poem and identify the rhyme scheme and the meter, if a metered and rhyming poem. They also discuss the tone and genre of the poem (for example, elgiac, confessional, pastoral, ballad).

7. The groups' post it notes go up on the wall or board in the front of the classroom.

8. Class collaborates to find rhyming words and metrical patterns within the example sentences.

9. Students return to their groups to weave the example lines into a form that imitates the original poem.

10. Groups switch poems. Each group selects five words from the poem to look up from the dictionary. They replace those five words with synonyms or definitions.

11. Student groups continue to swap until the poems have made a full circuit of the classroom.

12. Share and debrief.

Links:

Wordnik Online Dictionary: Wordnik.com

Jez Burrows, *Dictionary Stories*, Harper Perennial, 2018. <http://www.dictionarystories.com/>

*Oxford English Dictionary*, oed.com

Poetry Archive, "Pastiche," <https://www.poetryarchive.org/glossary/pastiche>