

Teaching Notes

The goal of RL.5.2 is for students to understand and determine the theme of a fictional text using details, including how the characters respond to challenges in a story, or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic. Many students are leery of understanding poetry. With all of the figurative language, imagery, and symbolism, some students find it challenging to understand the meaning of a poem. Try to make studying poetry fun and interesting for students! The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Assign students a grade-appropriate poem. As a class, discuss who the speaker is and how he or she reflects upon the topic.
2. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Provide each group with a poem and direct the groups to discuss how the speaker reflects upon the poem, using the elements covered in the playlist, such as theme and tone. Each group will present the poem and their thoughts.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.5.2:

“Reading Poetry in the Middle Grades”: This resource provides 20 poems and activities that meet the Common Core standards, including RL.5.2

- <http://www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/e02710/introduction.pdf>

“Lesson 3: A Poem’s Theme”: These two resources provide a lesson plan, texts and materials, and standard alignment related to determining the theme of a poem.

- <http://www.readworks.org/lessons/grade5/words-wings-treasury-african-american-poetry-and-art/lesson-3>
- <http://www.readworks.org/lessons/grade5/leaf-leaf-autumn-poems/lesson-3>



Self-Check: RL.5.2

Read the passage. Then answer the question.

Stimuli ID	ELA_G5_STIM00090
Passage Title	Witness to a Battle
Author	
Word Count	496
Lexile	840L

Witness to a Battle

July 1863

- 1 The weather was hot, very hot. It was the type of weather where the discomfort of the heat far outweighed the beauty of the summer day. But far worse than the heat were the sounds of the rifles and cannon fire.
- 2 As the sounds of battle drew nearer, my parents decided I should move to a safer place. I was sent with a neighbor to stay at her father's farm near Round Top, south of the town. My parents stayed behind in Gettysburg to watch over our house and help where they could.
- 3 In need of food, clothing, and other supplies, by that time, the Confederates had already been through our market town. They had burst into homes at random, taking what they needed. They grabbed shoes, clothing, food, and anything else they could carry. The river of desperate soldiers spilled through the streets, looking for places to loot.
- 4 Sent home from school, I stood in our living room and peered through the curtains, watching the soldiers pass. Out on the streets, all was chaos. I was still as a statue, terrified they would choose our house to ransack next. Thankfully, they passed us by.
- 5 The next morning, I was sent to Mr. Walters' farm. No sooner had I arrived than the Union army began to thunder past on the very same road. It was amazing to see so many soldiers on horses, all rushing at top speed over the road and across the fields. They were hurrying to battle, and watching them, we knew that many would not return home. They kept up their courage by shouting and cheering each other on.
- 6 As the day wore on, the fighting got closer and closer to the farm. Wounded men began straggling through the yard. We brought them inside and cared for them as best we could. I think I shall never forget the low moaning and sobbing of brave men trying to endure the unendurable. By the next day, the fighting had gotten so close we had to move to another farm, farther away. We waited there for most of the day, until the sounds of battle began to fade. When all was quiet, we started back to the Walters's farm.
- 7 We returned to find the house filled with casualties from the battle. Everywhere we looked, there were men who had been injured. Army surgeons set up a tent to serve as a makeshift operating room, and we gave them whatever supplies they needed from the house. It was a terrible sight to see; so many men wounded and dead in battle.



- 8 Only later did we hear the terrible numbers. More than 28,000 Confederate soldiers were reported dead, wounded, or missing. On our side, the number of casualties amounted to 23,000.
- 9 Like others around here, my heart is with the Union cause. However, the Confederates fought nobly, as did the Union soldiers. Thinking about the death and destruction on both sides, my heart is filled with sorrow.
1. The author includes details and events in this story mainly to convey the theme of —
- A. the thrill and excitement of battle
 - B. the horror and destruction of war
 - C. the honor and dignity of fighting for a cause
 - D. the bonds between soldiers

Item ID	ELA_G5_MCQ_WN00710
DOK level	3
Answer Choice Rationale 1	The narrator tells about looting, desperation, and casualties. In paragraph 4, he tells how he was terrified, not excited.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	Key. Details such as the looting, the desperation of the soldiers, and the casualties suggest the horror and destruction of war.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	The narrator does think the soldiers fought nobly, but the central idea is that he is horrified by all the death and destruction.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	The narrator focuses on the effects of the war, particularly the death and destruction.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Stimuli ID	ELA_G5_STIM00098
Passage Title	My Time With Dad
Author	
Word Count	727
Lexile	830L



My Time With Dad

- 1 Dad passed me the ball, challenging me to make a shot over his outstretched arms. Using what he had taught me, I wove to the right, then to the left, and then scooted around him to do an easy lay-up. Dad is over six feet tall, and I feel like I'm half his size, so I have to use every trick to score against him. That's what we did every afternoon when Dad got off work, and I always looked forward to my time with him.
- 2 The comforting sound of the ball going through the hoop seemed to bind me to Dad. Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh. Of course, once we finished, our time together ended as all my four younger siblings competed for his attention. Inside the house, I was just one of five who wanted my dad's attention, but out on the court, it was just me.
- 3 Then, my dad got an overseas assignment, which meant he'd be away from home for at least three or four months. School had just started, and Mom needed my help to make order out of chaos. With two coyotes for brothers running through the house and my twin three-year-old sisters constantly asking for something, I had my hands full. It was hectic, to say the least. The only retreat I had was outside with my basketball and the hoop.
- 4 I dribbled, I practiced lay-ups, and I shot basket after basket from ten feet away. Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh. With every successful goal, my feeling of comfort returned, and Dad didn't seem to be so far away.
- 5 One late Friday afternoon I was shooting from ten feet away, and a car on my street screeched to a stop. A woman got out of the car and watched me play for a while, and then approached me. She looked familiar. Then, I realized she was Mrs. Sanchez, one of the teachers in my school.
- 6 "You're pretty good with that basketball," she said casually.
- 7 I shot again, heard the soothing swoosh, and smiled at her.
- 8 "I want you to play on the girls' team," she said. "Practice starts next Monday after school. From what I'm seeing now, I think you'd be good."
- 9 I thought of Mom and how she needed me after school. Then, I thought of my dad, and how we shared basketball together—just the two of us. I really didn't want to play with anyone else. So, I said, "No, thanks."
- 10 Mrs. Sanchez walked back to her car. Then, she called out, "I'm in the gym every afternoon at 2:30. Let me know if you change your mind."
- 11 The next morning, we had our first video chat with my dad. He sat in a chair in front of a computer. The sun shone brightly through the beige mosquito netting behind him. My sisters and brothers all had a chance to talk to him. Then, it was my turn. He smiled at me, but then his tone turned serious.
- 12 "You're playing a lot of hoops, I hear," he said.
- 13 "It's getting cooler so my hands get a little chilly in the evening. But yes," I said.



- 14 “If you play inside a gymnasium, you will be warmer,” he smiled.
- 15 I looked away from Dad and he continued without beating around the bush, “Your mother says that you don’t want to play basketball with your girls’ team.”
- 16 I didn’t know what to say, so he said, “Jennie, think of me when you play, and I’ll imagine you shooting baskets while I’m here. It’ll be a way we can keep close together.”
- 17 I looked up at Dad, whose head was cocked in concern. I said, “Okay, dad, I’ll give it a go if you think I should.”
- 18 “Of course I think you should! Once you learn how to work with a team, I bet you’ll be the best player!”
- 19 He put his hand up on the computer screen, touching it with his fingers. I put my hand up to match his, and said, “I’ll do my best, Dad!”
- 20 The next Monday I started playing with a team. I was surprised to find that I really enjoyed learning the plays and working with other girls. However, the best part was making baskets and hearing the sound the ball made as it passed through the hoop. Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh, the sounds that bind me to my dad.
2. Why does the “swoosh” sound of the basketball going through the hoop help Jennie during her dad’s absence?
- A. It helps her take her mind off her dad being away.
 - B. It gives her something to brag to her dad about.
 - C. It makes her feel connected to her dad.
 - D. It shows that her dad is watching her play.

Item ID	ELA_G5_MCQ_WN03140
DOK level	2
Answer Choice Rationale 1	The “swoosh” sound helps relax Jennie, but it makes her think more about her dad, not forget that he is away.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	Jennie does not intend to brag to her dad about her play.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	Key. Jennie feels connected to her dad when she hears the “swoosh” sound. This comforts her when he is far away.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	Jennie’s dad is away and is not physically watching her play.



3. How does Jennie deal with her dad's absence?

- A. She writes him letters.
- B. She makes new friends.
- C. She practices basketball.
- D. She learns to play new sports.

Item ID	ELA_G5_MCQ_WN03141
DOK level	2
Answer Choice Rationale 1	The story does not say that Jennie writes her dad letters.
Answer Choice Rationale 2	Although Jennie eventually joins the basketball team, the story does not specifically say that Jennie makes new friends to deal with her dad's absence.
Answer Choice Rationale 3	Key. Jennie deals with her dad's absence by practicing basketball. This makes her feel close to her dad while he is away.
Answer Choice Rationale 4	Although Jennie continues to be athletic, the story does not say that Jennie learns to play new sports.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Stimuli ID	ELA_G05_SetG
Passage Title	<i>The Children's Hour</i>
Author	Henry W. Longfellow
Word Count	249
Lexile	820

The Children's Hour
Henry W. Longfellow

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.



- 5 I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.
- From my study I see in the lamplight,
- 10 Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.
- A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their merry eyes
- 15 They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.
- A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
- 20 They enter my castle wall!
- They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.
- 25 They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-tower on the Rhine!



Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,

30 Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,

35 But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,

40 And moulder in dust away!

4. Refer to “The Children’s Hour.”

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences using the options in parentheses next to each blank.

The theme of this poem focuses on _____ (love / danger / strength) and the importance of _____ (war / youth / family). The speaker wants to show that he _____ (avoids / misses / appreciates) the Children’s Hour.

Item ID	ELA_RL.5.2_DRD_Q66
DOK level	3
Key/ Answer	The correctly completed sentences are as follows: The theme of this poem focuses on <u>love</u> and the importance of <u>family</u> . The speaker wants to show that he <u>appreciates</u> the Children’s Hour.



5. Refer to “The Children’s Hour.”

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences using the options in parentheses next to each blank to create a summary of the poem.

In the beginning of the poem, the speaker is in his study. He hears three children _____ (arguing / laughing / whispering) outside his door. The group rushes into the room and _____ (hit / yell at / climb on) the man. The speaker compares this event to a _____ (play / battle / journey). In the end, the speaker implies that he will _____ (later adopt / always love / greatly miss) the children.

Item ID	ELA_RL.5.2_DRD_Q67
DOK level	2
Key/ Answer	In the beginning of the poem, the speaker is in his study. He hears three children <u>whispering</u> outside his door. The group rushes into the room and <u>climb on</u> the man. The speaker compares this event to a <u>battle</u> . In the end, the speaker implies that he will always <u>love</u> the children.

