

Unit Title:

What Makes a Poem?

The Elements of Poetry for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts



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## Unit Calendar

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
<p><b>What is poetry? Working towards a personal definition.</b></p> <p>Students learn about poetic devices and construct a personal definition of poetry.</p>	<p><b>Poetry Vs. Prose (Part 1)</b></p> <p>Students evaluate definitions of poetry and do a close reading of a poem to expose poetic devices.</p>	<p><b>Poetry Vs. Prose (Part 2)</b></p> <p>In groups students discuss the similarities and differences between the informational and poetic texts on the warbler.</p>	<p><b>Simile and Metaphor</b></p> <p>Students will identify simile and metaphor. They will analyze and describe the relationship between simile/metaphor and the mood of poem.</p>
Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	
<p><b>Imagery</b></p> <p>Students will describe images and illustrate poetry lines in an 'art gallery.'</p> <p>Students will illustrate a poem and remark on feelings created by the images.</p>	<p><b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Students will annotate a poem and compose a 3 paragraph reflection of the poem considering the connection between poetic devices and tone in the poem. Students will describe what they think the poem is about and give reasons for their understanding.</p>	<p><b>Podcast</b></p> <p>Students will research artwork to accompany a dramatic reading of the poem and their reflection. Students will record their work to create a short podcast.</p>	

## Unit Rationale

There are multiple reasons for teaching poetry. At the most basic level, poetry can be read and enjoyed as an art form. The rhythm, sounds and affective qualities of poetry are accessible to us much in the way music is. Exposing our students to this literary form can open many doors of personal intrigue and enjoyment. From an emotional standpoint, poetry is able to address important issues that are affecting middle school students such as identity, family, change, hopes and dreams. By engaging students with poetry we can promote the development of very important emotional skills. Academically, it provides students with manageable text in which to teach and solidify grammar and vocabulary skills. Poetry is specifically useful the development of student's descriptive vocabulary. Poetry can also be used to teach reading strategies and improve comprehension. At its most basic level, poetry is simple to write and can inspire timid writers. It is an accessible outlet for children undergoing dramatic cognitive, physical and emotional changes.

## Unit Overview

The unit begins with an exploration of what poetry is. At this point in their academic careers, students may have developed misunderstandings or apprehensions about the nature of poetry. The introduction to this unit is aimed to dispel some of the more common 'myths' surrounding poetry and relate to the students that poetry can be a simple and very accessible literary form of expression. As the unit progresses we contrast poetry with informational texts to help highlight some of the unique elements of poetry. Students have just finished a unit on informational texts and we will access their knowledge of this area to assist their understanding of poetry. As the unit progresses we investigate simile, metaphor and imagery and seek to make connections between these devices and the overall tone and theme of a poem. We conclude the unit with an assessment of student's annotative skills of poetic devices in a poem, their ability to analyze connections between specific devices and tone, and their creation of a podcast centered on a poem of choice.

## Big Questions:

- ✚ What is poetry?
  - ✚ How is poetry different from other literary genres?
  - ✚ What tools do poets use to create mood and express their ideas and feelings?
- **Students will acquire knowledge of:**
- The meaning and parameters of poetry.
  - Poetic Devices including tone, imagery, metaphor, simile, perspective, personification, alliteration, stanza, rhyme and repetition.

- A variety of themes which are conveyed in the poetic texts.
- A variety of perspectives which are conveyed in the poetic texts.
- **Students will develop skills:**
  - The ability to annotate to identify various literary devices and explore the meaning of a poem.
  - Recognize poetic devices within a text and analyze their effect on the tone of the poem.
  - To make comparisons using simile and metaphor.
  - Use vivid language to create mental imagery.

### **Procedure and Methods:**

The unit utilizes a variety of techniques in an effort to teach the material most effectively:

- Students will interact with partners and work in groups to share ideas and perform peer editing.
- Student's curiosity and interest will be engaged with relevant material prepared by the teacher. In some instances texts will be chosen according to individual tastes and natural interests.
- Students will engage in a variety of individual, paired and class-wide close readings of texts in order to both guide close reading skills and allow development.
- Student's final project will require learner autonomy and self-regulation. Students will be responsible for doing independent, relevant research and creating a podcast with minimal direction from the instructor. Students will create a cross disciplinary form of expression that until recently did not exist. Students will utilize computers, the internet and voice recording software to build their podcast.

### **Unit Assessment**

To assess student understanding and skill building students will complete a final project in the final two classes of the unit. Students will choose a poem and annotate its literary devices. They will create a 3 paragraph reflection of the poem considering how the literary devices that the poet employed affect the tone of the poem and relates to the theme. Students will describe what they think the poem is about and give reasons for their understanding. In the final session, students will research artwork to accompany a dramatic reading of the poem and their reflection. Students will record their work to create a short podcast that will be aired in a subsequent lesson. Depending on the class, ELL will have the option of using a non-English text. The students will have to discuss and have their text approved by the instructor.

Day 1: What is poetry? Working towards a personal definition.

Grade Level: 7

Number of students: 10

Time: 25 minutes

<b>Behavioral Objectives</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
Students will be able to identify specific poetic devices embedded in an example.	During student discussion the teacher will listen for specific poetic devices that have been discussed in the class (i.e. metaphor, simile, imagery, symbolism).
Students will be able to evaluate definitions of poetry and construct their own personal definition.	Students will turn in their evaluation and poetry definition worksheet as an exit slip. If there are time constraints, as homework assignment.

**Materials:** Whiteboard, markers and erasers, poetic examples, poem handouts, quotations to post around the room.

**Pre-Class Assignments/ Prior Knowledge:**

There are no pre-class assignments but the students have just concluded a unit on informational texts.

**Lesson Beginning: (5 minutes)**

The teacher will greet the class and ask them to sit quietly in their seats with eyes closed. The teacher will read a short passage and will ask the students to notice the rhythm and pace of the words, the mood created and the feeling evoked. After the poem is read, students will share their observations in pairs and then a class wide discussion.

**Main Body of the Lesson:**

1. The teacher will introduce the new unit on poetry, give a brief rationale and address the major questions the unit will investigate. Teacher will inform the students that for today, the major question of inquiry is ‘What is poetry?’ **(1-2 minutes)**
2. In pairs, students will discuss the selected poetic devices that the teacher posted on the whiteboard prior to class. After working in pairs, the teacher will lead a whole class feedback session. During this time, the teacher will give brief explanations of various poetic devices (repetition, metaphor, simile, rhyme, symbolism, personification, imagery). **(6-7 minutes)**
3. In the same pairs, students will receive a poem to practice reading and annotating. Students will take turns reading the poem to practice the rhythm and stresses of the poem. After reading and annotating the poem, students will report their findings back to the class. **(6-7 minutes)**  
**\*The teacher will create a word wall prior to the unit that defines the key terms so that students can refer to it throughout the unit study.**

#### **Closure Activity:**

For the final activity, students will receive a slip of paper with six statements regarding the definition of poetry. Students will evaluate each one and decide to what degree they agree or disagree with each definition. Students will then write their brief personal definition of poetry as an exit slip. **(5 minutes)**

#### **Questions**

Listen closely to the composition and notice the speed and rhythm of the words, the overall mood and pay attention any feelings you might experience.

What is poetry?

What are some patterns or tools that poets use?

What are some things that poets use to help get their message across?

You’ll have an opportunity to read a famous poem. While you read, take notes about your observations. Feel free to write on the paper and use the terms written on the board for reference.

**Homework-** If we run out of time, students will complete their exit slip for homework and bring it to the next class.

Name:

Date:

What is poetry?

Directions: Read the statement and decide whether you agree or disagree.

1- Strongly Agree      2- Somewhat Agree      3- Neutral      4- Somewhat disagree      5- Strongly disagree

A. Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moment of the happiest and best minds. – <i>Percy Blythe Shelly</i>	1 2 3 4 5
B. All poetry is boring.	1 2 3 4 5
C. Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words. – <i>Edgar Allan Poe</i>	1 2 3 4 5
D. Poetry is thoughts that breathe, and words that burn. – <i>Thomas Gray</i>	1 2 3 4 5
E. All poetry must rhyme.	1 2 3 4 5
F. The art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts.	1 2 3 4 5

Consider how you evaluated the statements about poetry and your own knowledge of poetry. Write a 1-2 sentence definition of poetry as *you* understand it.

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**A Dream Within a Dream**

*By Edgar Allan Poe*

Take this kiss upon the brow!  
And, in parting from you now,  
Thus much let me avow —  
You are not wrong, who deem  
That my days have been a dream;  
Yet if hope has flown away  
In a night, or in a day,  
In a vision, or in none,  
Is it therefore the less gone?  
All that we see or seem  
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar  
Of a surf-tormented shore,  
And I hold within my hand  
Grains of the golden sand —  
How few! yet how they creep  
Through my fingers to the deep,  
While I weep — while I weep!  
O God! Can I not grasp  
Them with a tighter clasp?  
O God! can I not save  
One from the pitiless wave?  
Is all that we see or seem  
But a dream within a dream?

1. List the Poetic Devices that you observed:
2. How could you describe the tone or mood of this poem?

**The Road Not Taken**

*By Robert Frost*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

1. List the Poetic Devices that you observed:
2. How could you describe the tone or mood of this poem?

**Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night**

*By Dylan Thomas*

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

1. List the Poetic Devices that you observed:
2. How could you describe the tone or mood of this poem?

Day 2: Poetry vs. Prose (Part 1)

Grade Level: 7

Number of students: 20

Time: 50 minutes

<b>Behavioral Objectives</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
Students should be able to identify differing strategies for reading informational and poetic texts.	In discussion teacher will listen for reading concepts such as scanning, skimming, reading for detail, reading critically.
Students should be able to identify various poetic devices embedded in a text.	Students will complete a close reading handout of a poem.
Students should be able to dissect the components of a poetic text and evaluate the effects on the tone or mood of the poem.	Students will complete a close reading handout of a poem.

**Materials:** Whiteboard, markers, homework from previous lesson, assessment handout, poem handout, homework handout.

**Pre-Class Assignments/ Prior Knowledge:**

Students will have evaluated various statements about the definition of poetry and briefly formed a personal definition. Students will have a basic understanding of the poetic devices from the previous lesson.

**Lesson Beginning: (5 minutes)**

The teacher will write a generalization about poetry on the board (ie. All poetry has to rhyme/Poetry is can only be understood by experts) and students will discuss their opinions of the statement in pairs. The teacher will lead a class wide discussion to review student's opinions.

**Main Body of the Lesson:**

1. Students will be broken into groups of four and asked to have their homework present. The teacher will write a statement on the board from the homework and ask students to take turns sharing their opinions (agreements and disagreements) and their reasoning about the particular statement. After 2-3 example statements, students will share their definitions of poetry with their group mates and give some reasoning behind their definition. The teacher will monitor and at the end of the discussion ask each group to report back with some of their opinions. **(10 minutes)**

2. The teacher writes a few literary genres on the board (i.e. poetry, short story, informational, expository, letter) and questions students about what type of content they expect to find in each. The teacher will extend this by asking students to elaborate on the different ways they would read each genre. Teacher instructs students that they are going to read two kinds of texts in the lesson about the same subject. One is an informational text, and the other is a poem. Teacher elicits ideas about strategies for read each literary form. **(5-7 minutes)**
  
3. The teacher writes the poem title on the board, posts a picture of a warbler (and informs them of the bird's name) and gives students the handout. Before receiving the poem, students predict the subject of the poem titled "In the Memphis Airport" by Timothy Steele on their handout. After predicting the subject matter, students receive the poem and complete the handout. **(10-12 minutes)**
  
4. The teacher leads a class reading of the poem and elicits student's responses to the questions. Teacher clarifies the poetic devices used with an emphasis on the tone of the poem. Teacher prompts students to think about the poet's reason for writing the poem and **(10 minutes)**

### **Closure Activity:**

At the end of the lesson, the student's will complete an exit slip for the following question: "Now that we've read a poem about the warbler, what text features do you expect to find in an informational text about the warbler? The teacher will give students their homework assignment and explain how to complete it. Students will read a short informational text about the yellow warbler and complete a chart summarizing the article. **(3-4 minutes)**

### **Questions**

Do you agree with these statements about poetry? Why or why not?

Discuss the statements from your homework with your group. Do you agree? Why or why not? What is your personal definition of poetry? What reasons support your ideas?

How do we read an informational text? How would you read a newspaper article, for example? How do we read a novel or a short story? How do we read poems? What are some strategies for reading different kinds of literary texts?

Based on the title of the poem and the picture you see on the board, can you predict what the poem is going to be about?

What were some poetic devices that you identified in this poem? Can you give me an example?

How could you describe the tone of the poem?

What do you think this poem is about?

Name:

Date:

Think about the title of the poem, what do you think the poem is going to be about?

What poetic tool (devices) can you identify in this poem? When identifying a poetic tool please show evidence from the poem.

The **tone or mood** of the poem is the attitude that it suggests. How can you describe the tone of this poem? How do the poetic **tools** in the poem affect the **tone** of the poem?

**Theme:** Briefly state, in your own words, what the poem is about.

Poetic Devices (tools)	
<p><b>Alliteration:</b> Repeated consonant sounds at the beginning of words placed near each other, usually on the same or adjacent lines. Example: Peter was proud of the pink panther.</p> <p><b>Repetition:</b> The purposeful re-use of words and phrases for an effect.</p> <p><b>Rhyme:</b> Words that have different beginning sounds but whose endings sound alike, including the final vowel sound and everything following it, are said to rhyme.</p>	<p><b>Metaphor:</b> A direct comparison between two unlike things, stating that one is the other or does the action of the other.</p> <p><b>Simile:</b> A direct comparison of two unlike things using "like" or "as."</p> <p><b>Personification:</b> Attributing human characteristics to an inanimate object, animal, or abstract idea</p> <p><b>Imagery:</b> The use of vivid language to generate ideas and/or evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but of sensation and emotion as well.</p> <p><b>Tone/Mood:</b> The attitude that the poem implies.</p>

## IN THE MEMPHIS AIRPORT

By Timothy Steele

Above the concourse, from a beam,  
A little warbler pours forth song.  
Beneath him, hurried humans stream:  
Some draw wheeled suitcases along  
Or from a beeping belt or purse  
Apply a cell phone to an ear;  
Some pause at banks of monitors  
Where times and gates for flights appear.

Although by nature flight-endowed,  
He seems too gentle to reproach  
These souls who soon will climb through cloud  
In first class, business class, and coach.  
He may feel that it's his mistake  
He's here, but someone ought to bring  
A net to catch and help him make  
His own connections north to spring.

He cheeps and trills on, swift and sweet,  
Though no one outside hears his strains.  
There, telescopic tunnels greet  
The cheeks of their arriving planes;  
A ground crew welcomes and assists  
Luggage that skycaps, treating bags  
Like careful ornithologists,  
Banded with destination tags.

<http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/tsteele/tspage2/MEMPHIS-AIRPORT.html>

Name:

Date:

Directions: For homework read the informational text on the yellow warbler. You should create a title for each heading add details to each column.



True to its name the yellow warbler is bright yellow. A light olive-green tinge colors its back and males have rusty streaks on their breast. Most warblers have white tail spots, but the yellow warbler is the only one of this species with yellow spots on its tail.

The yellow warbler can be found in moist thickets and willows. In Florida mangroves attract this bird.

Four or five pale blue eggs, spotted thickly with brown, make up the clutch of the yellow warbler. Their nest is constructed of bark and grasses. Inside, fur or plant fibers make a comfortable and warm nest. The complete cup is placed in the upright fork of a small sapling.

The brown-headed cowbird frequently lays its own eggs in the nest of yellow warblers. The victimized bird seems to take this in stride by building another nest on top of the freshly laid cowbird eggs. This back and forth exchange can happen several times over a season and occasionally nests have been found with up to six layers of nests and eggs.

<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/birds/yellow-warbler.htm>


**Day 3 – 50 minutes**

Topic	Key Objectives	Key Learning Activity	Assessments	Homework
Poetry vs. Prose (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SSBAT compare and contrast the treatments of a subject in poetic and informational texts.</li> <li>○ SSBAT categorize the differences between poetic and informational texts.</li> <li>○ SSBAT construct a revised personal definition of poetry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In groups students discuss the similarities and differences between the informational and poetic texts on the warbler.</li> <li>○ Teacher leads the creation of a Venn diagram categorizing the similarities and differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teacher observes discussions and review accompanying handout to make sure the proper distinctions have been made.</li> <li>○ Students complete a reflection describing poetry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students respond to a questionnaire regarding their favorite poem. Students interview a family member to learn about their favorite poem and reasoning.</li> </ul>

**Day 4 – 50 minutes**

Topic	Key Objectives	Key Learning Activity	Assessments	Homework
Simile and Metaphor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students should be able to identify simile and metaphor.</li> <li>○ Students should be able to analyze and describe the relationship between simile/metaphor and the mood of poem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Class reading of Langston Hughes’ ‘Dreams’</li> <li>○ Pair readings of Wordsworth’s ‘Lonely as a Cloud’</li> <li>○ Individual reading of Dickinson’s ‘Hope is the thing with Feathers’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Individual close reading assignment where students identify simile/ metaphor in a poem and answer the question: What does the author hope to express by making this comparison?</li> </ul>	Choose two poems and annotate them, identifying simile, metaphor and other poetic devices. Explain the significance of the comparison made in the poem in relation to the overall theme.

Day 5 – 50 minutes				
Topic	Key Objectives	Key Learning Activity	Assessments	Homework
Imagery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SSBAT to apply a reading strategy for identifying imagery and describing effect within a poem.</li> <li>○ SSBAT to analyze and describe the connection between imagery and tone in a poem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will describe images and illustrate poetry lines in an ‘art gallery.’</li> <li>○ Students will illustrate a poem and remark on feelings created by the images.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teacher will observe students during art gallery to check comprehension.</li> <li>○ Students will hand in illustration as an exit slip for teacher observation.</li> </ul>	Students need to choose a poem for their final project and bring it the next session.
Day 6 – 50 minutes				
Topic	Key Objectives	Key Learning Activity	Assessments	Homework
Poetic Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SSBAT to analyze and describe the connection between imagery and tone in a poem.</li> <li>○ SSBAT formulate an opinion and demonstrate their reasoning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will annotate a poem and compose a 3 paragraph reflection of the poem considering the connection between poetic devices and tone in the poem. Students will describe what they think the poem is about and give reasons for their understanding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will peer edit with group mates, teacher will monitor and assist.</li> <li>○ Students will hand in a copy of their draft to the teacher.</li> </ul>	Before the final session, students will meet the teacher to discuss strengths and weaknesses of their analysis and rewrite their draft for the final session.



**Day 7 – 80 minutes**

Topic	Key Objectives	Key Learning Activity	Assessments	Homework
Poetic Devices  Podcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SSBAT make a comparison between a poem and a piece of artwork based on an analysis of the poem.</li> <li>○ SSBAT create an original podcast expressing their views on a poem and giving a dramatic reading of the poem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students will research artwork to accompany a dramatic reading of the poem and their reflection. Students will record their work to create a short podcast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The teacher will save copies of student's podcasts and observe to measure understanding and skills.</li> </ul>	Reflection- Students write in their journals about how their definition of poetry has changed.

## Unit Bibliography:

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## Unit and Teaching Reflection

I found my sample unit creation and teaching exercise to be quite rewarding, although it was difficult and time consuming. My unit consisted of an introduction to poetry for middle school English Language Arts students. My demonstration lesson focused on defining poetry and identifying key poetic devices.

Once I had decided to teach poetry, I referred to a graphic organizer that was given to us in the first few days of class. The organizer detailed the possible 'entry points' to consider when preparing a unit. I decided that I would let objectives guide my lesson. After some review I decided that I'd like students to be able to construct their own personal definitions of poetry, identify and analyze the effects of various poetic devices and consider the unique expressions that poetry is capable of. When writing the objectives, I utilized a cognitive categories graphic organizer that listed specific verbs associated with different cognitive tasks. This was very helpful in determining specific aims and designing assessments. During the first lesson, which was demonstrated, we addressed poetic devices and the definition of poetry. I plan to return to these themes and allow students chances for reflection as their understandings evolve. I like to present students with opportunities to consider the way that their thinking has changed.

When looking at the demonstration lesson, I think that I may have overestimated my classmates' interest in poetry and I felt this almost as soon as the class began. It is possible that they played the role of '7<sup>th</sup> grader' very well and simulated conditions that I might find in a typical middle school. Considering this, I think that the lesson involved the students just enough. I was worried while defining the lessons' poetic devices that the student's interest

dropped. This was a big sticking point for me because I wanted to make sure that I actually instructed the students in a tangible way without disengaging them. If I were to teach this again, I would define fewer terms (time constraints) and remind the students that for the lesson's purposes, they need not have a deep understanding of each term but rather the ability to identify them in the example poems. Students worked in pairs to help offset any differences in reading level or prior knowledge areas. Since so much in poetry depends on communication, I wanted to make sure I incorporated communication into this lesson and throughout the unit. Collaboration and communication are themes present throughout the unit, as students work to analyze poetic devices and their own work.

In preparing and teaching this unit I learned a few new things about myself as a teaching professional. A challenge I had was making sure that I had enough knowledge in the basic elements of poetry to instruct the students. Going forward, I'm more aware of the type of preparation necessary to deliver a useful unit to students at this level. I learned that as a teacher I approach lessons in terms of student activity. I'm concerned with giving students plenty of opportunities to speak and practice the skills of the lesson. I believe in a student centered approach. On the other hand, I'm apprehensive to go into long, detailed explanations of material. My apprehension is in part due to my background in elementary ESL teaching. During the other teacher's classes I saw examples of lecturing that provided a stimulating and beneficial learning experience. I hope to become more comfortable with lecturing because there will be moments in my teaching career that I will have to give longer explanations. Overall, I'm satisfied with the work that I put into the unit but see room for growth. I feel that I

am developing at a good pace and feel more confident going forward and making a transition into secondary education.

## Works Cited

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