

## Examination

It is science to see my father's skull—  
as he lies in the dim machine next door—  
on a screen, faint white, vague black, a pot  
of thoughts, whether broken or not, the question,

and another science to see my father's skull,  
an X-ray of the grave, the bare old bone  
of everyone, jaw's jut, the forehead's curve,  
the dark rounds that hold eyes seeing, or not.

He follows orders not to move. I barely  
move myself. I shouldn't be seeing this.  
I can't stop looking. This could be  
a thousand-year-old find in a sandy cave,

the plates and fissures of our last design,  
a round home held in the hands and turned,  
the singular museum of memories  
gone hollow, dry in the driest air.

"Wendell, wake up," the technician murmurs  
into a microphone. He needs him awake.  
The son, too, needs him awake, wanting  
to see that unique familiar mask

pulled back over the general stone,  
the temporary look a long time loved.  
"Okay," he murmurs back, the soft wet eyes,  
which I can't see on this machine, now opening.

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## LESSON PLAN

**Note:** Before this lesson the teacher should be aware of any students who have lost a parent, sibling, or close relative to some illness that might have required an x-ray or MRI. Be aware of any possible trauma.

### RESOURCES:

- For Poetic Terms: Poetry Foundation: Glossary of Poetic Terms (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms>)

### STANDARDS:

#### Colorado Academic Standards

#### Seventh Grade, Standard 1. Oral Expression and Listening

##### Grade Level Expectation

1. Incorporate language, tools, and techniques appropriate for task and audience during formal presentations.

##### Evidence Outcomes

- a. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - i. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
  - ii. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - iii. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
  - iv. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
- b. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (for example: visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
- c. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

#### Standard 2. Reading for All Purposes

##### Grade Level Expectation:

1. Analyze the connections between interrelated literary elements to understand literary texts.

##### Evidence Outcomes

a. Use Key Ideas and Details to:

- i. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
  - ii. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- b. Use Craft and Structure to:
- i. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (for example: alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
  - ii. Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (for example: soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.
  - iii. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.
- c. Use Integration of Knowledge and Ideas to:
- i. Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (for example: lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

### **Grade Level Expectation:**

3. Apply knowledge of word relationships, word structures, and sentence structures to determine the meaning of new words in increasingly complex texts.

### **Evidence Outcomes**

- b. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- i. Interpret figures of speech (for example: literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.
  - ii. Use the relationship between particular words (for example: synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
  - iii. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (for example: \*refined\*, \*respectful\*, \*polite\*, \*diplomatic\*, \*condescending\*).
- c. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### **Social and Emotional Competencies**

**\*\*Note:** We use Austin ISD SEL standards, Grades 6-8 Student Expectations

#### **I: Self Awareness Skills**

- A. Recognizes uncomfortable emotions as indicators of situations in need of attention
- B. Analyzes emotional states that contribute to or detract from one's ability to problem solve
- C. Identifies the areas of control one has over situations in life

#### **II. Self-Management**

- A. Analyzes how honesty and integrity influence relationships
- B. Identifies personal characteristics and values

### III. Social Awareness

- A. Analyzes ways one's behavior may affect the feelings of others and adjusts accordingly
- B. Identifies constructive ways to provide support and encouragement to others
- C. Explains how individual, social, and cultural differences may increase vulnerability to stereotyping and identifies ways to address this
- D. Respects personal boundaries of self and others (friends, family members, teachers)

### IV. Interpersonal Skills

- A. Demonstrates an ability to be a team player in achieving group goals
- B. Demonstrates ability to perform different roles in cooperative groups (i.e. leader, recorder, reporter, time-keeper)

### **Social Justice Standards**

**\*\*Note:** We use the Teaching Tolerance Grade 6-8 Level Outcomes

#### Identity (ID):

- A. Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.

#### Diversity (DIV):

- A. Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.
- B. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
- C. Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.

#### **Justice (JUS):**

- A. Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.

### **CONTEXT OR HOOK:**

#### **Ask:**

- Have any of you ever had an X-ray taken or an MRI? (Show hands)
- Ask about the process, especially MRI.
- Did you get to see the "film"? What did it look like?
- If no one has had an MRI, show a picture the machine.
- NOTE: If no one has, show image of brain scan. Talk about the dark and light places.

#### **Discussion:**

- Think about what we see when we look into our brains.

**DIRECT INSTRUCTION:****Explain:**

- we are reading a poem titled “Examination.” From that title, what do you think it will be about?

**Direct Instruction:**

- Say: Want to think about the steps we use to engage with a poem: have these on display, have students write them down in notebook, remind them that these apply to all poems.
  1. Before we read a poem, you want to start by thinking about the title and what you think it might mean.
  2. Look at it. Remember, some poems have very strict structures—(Ask: do you know any? Sonnet, Haiku, Limerick). A quick glance will let you know.
    - a. **Ask:** what other structural things could you look at (rhyme)
  3. Read it (or even better, listen to it being read)
  4. Think about: your initial response. How it made you feel. Do you have any questions?
  5. Read it again—but now annotating it.
    - a. **Ask:** what kinds of things do we look for: more surface: repetition, words that stand out, sounds, the way lines break; deeper: symbols, images, comparisons, allusions)
 

**NOTE:** if student uses a literary term: i. ask for a definition; ii. ask for an example, iii. agree on a definition as a class, iv. have students write it in their notebooks. **Don’t introduce** new literary terms here—attach them to examples later when discussion the poem.
  6. Read it again section by section noting what you think is happening in each section (for example, a brief summary)
  7. Ask yourself: What does the poet want me to think, feel, or do after reading this poem? What does the poet do with the literary tools at his disposal to get that response from me as a reader)

**Check for Understanding/Review:**

- **Say:** Okay, somebody tell me the first step (then second, third, etc.)

**WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITY:**

Read the poem:

- 1. **What about the title:** Examination? What do you think of before you read? Do you have an experience with an examination? How does it make you feel when approaching the poem?
- 2. **Take a look,** what do you see before we even read? (stanzas – review definition

**STANZA** is a grouped set of lines within a poem, usually set off from other stanzas by a blank line or indentation. **Ask:** how many lines? (4? Ask: what do you call it? **QUATRAIN**)

- 3. **Read:** The poem and have students just listen
- 4. **Ask:** So, what is your initial response? What questions does it raise for you?  
**Ask:** What do you think the speaker is feeling?
- 5. **Annotate** it (together) use document camera: As you read each stanza, ask them: what should we annotate and why? (If they don't know, you suggest)

### Examination

It is **science** to see **my father's** skull—  
as he lies in the dim **machine** next door—  
on a screen, **faint white**, vague black, a **pot**  
**of thoughts**, whether **broken** or not, the question,

Speaker's father  
MRI (refer pix) - dashes  
**refer to images, "pot of thoughts"**  
"diagnosis" "broken"  
sentence break – (def: **enjambment**)

and **another science** to see my father's skull,  
an **X-ray of the grave**, the bare old bone  
of **everyone**, jaw's jut, the forehead's curve,  
the dark rounds that hold eyes **seeing, or not.**

what other science (archaeology?)  
  
everyone—we all look alike as bones  
The same either way

**He** follows orders not to move. I barely  
move myself. I **shouldn't be seeing this.**  
I can't stop looking. This could be  
a **thousand-year-old find** in a sandy cave,

Father  
What is "this"? Why shouldn't he see?  
  
back to above point

the **plates and fissures** of our last design,  
a round **home** held in the hands and turned,  
the singular **museum of memories**  
gone hollow, dry in the driest air.

geology (another science) but plate in brain!  
"home" skulls found by other type of scientist  
sound (alliteration), "museum" houses stuff  
Skulls found in dust

"Wendell, **wake up,**" the technician murmurs  
into a microphone. He **needs** him awake.  
The son, too, **needs** him **awake**, wanting  
to see that **unique familiar** mask

Dad's name (back to now)  
Needs and needs ,, two kinds  
Awake = alive  
Unique and familiar (the face we know over skull)

pulled back over the general **stone**,  
the **temporary** look a **long time** loved.  
"Okay," he murmurs back, the **soft wet eyes**,  
which I **can't see** on this machine, now opening.

bones to stone (not dust)—or looks like stone?  
Another polemic (temporary and long time)  
human, alive  
What we can't see but we know, open = back to life

- 6. **Read it again:** if they are doing well put them in pairs or trios – have one student read to the others (b/c of enjambment) and summarize each stanza.

- Come back as a group and go thru each stanza—with you reading and pausing at punctuation. After reading section—discuss.
- Define terms/explain as usual. For example, is you note that “museum of memories is a metaphor, you should: 1. Ask students what they know about metaphor; 2. Offer a definition that they write down; 3. Have them also write the example, so they have something to hang the term on to.
- 7. **Ask:** What does Bob King want us to think, feel, or do after reading this poem?
  - You can have students do this in pairs of trios before reporting out to the group.
  - Report out: three columns on the board: THINK, FEEL, DO**Ask:** as students report out: how did Bob King achieve that result using what he has at his disposal as a poet?

### DISCUSSION:

- **Ask:** What emotions do you sense in the poem? How is the speaker feeling at this moment? (SEL I.A.) If you were to be with him, what kinds of things might you say to him? (SEL III.A.)
- **Ask:** What is the poet imagining when he moves from his father’s living brain to the idea of skulls is dug up graves? Is he saying something about life in general? (SEL I.B)
- **Ask:** Do you think it is hard to imagine people we love being gone? (SEL I.A and B)? Do you know anyone who has lost a loved one? What can you say to people in those situations? (III.A)

### INDEPENDENT WORK:

- **Ask:** Go back to the title: “Examination” what do you make of that? (The idea that an everyday event can open the door to a world of thoughts and feelings).
- **Ask:** can you think about times when you have been doing something seemingly ordinary, but then you begin to think about other stuff?
- **Assign:** take 5 minutes and think about a time when your mind “wandered” or expanded while you were doing something everyday or ordinary. If you don’t have such an experience, then write about a moment in the poem that you really liked—either because of the way the poem was written or something the poet was trying to say.

**EXTENSION &/OR DIFFERENTIATION OPPORTUNITY:** “Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark” from *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (see below)

NOTE: Students more comfortable with the poetry or process could use the Robert Hayden poem, “Those Winter Sundays” (see below)

- **Say:** The writer, Sandra Cisneros describes the stories in her book *House on Mango Street* as “prose poems.”
- **Ask:** what do you think that means? (A prose composition that, while not broken into verse lines, demonstrates other traits common to poetry)
- **Explain:** We listed steps for reading poetry, and they are not that different from how we approach short pieces like those in Cisneros’s book.

- **Ask:** Remind me of the steps you wrote in your notebook. For stories, we can follow the same steps
  1. Think about the title and what it might mean.
  2. Look at it. What do you notice? (If it is in a book, look at the whole book—a book walk: either review or define a book walk)
    - Show them a copy of *House ...*
  3. Read it (or even better, listen to it being read)
  4. Think about: your initial response. How it made you feel. Do you have any questions?
  5. Read it again—but now annotating it.
  6. Read it again section by section noting what you think is happening in each section (for example, a brief summary)
  7. Ask yourself: What does the writer want me to think, feel, or do after reading this text? What does the writer do with the literary tools at his/her/their disposal to get that response from me as a reader?
- **Say:** so let's start at Step #1 with the title? (Note: if you look at the entire book, start from the novel title ...)
- **Step #2:** (If you use the whole book, do the book walk, if not ...) do you notice anything? (here, the use of Spanish, with no translation. Discuss use of italics) Ask: why do you think the author does this (you can define “codeswitch” here: “alternate between two or more languages or varieties of language in conversation or writing.”)
- **Step #3:** You read it to class
- **Explain** they will do the remaining steps in their groups. You will stop after each step to share out as a class.

#### **SMALL GROUP (SEL IV. A and B):**

\*\*Note: Students should have assigned tasks for working in groups. Give students 5-7 minutes (then check in) at each step. Have them share out after each step what they came up with.

- Step #4: Think about: your initial response. How it made you feel. Do you have any questions?
- Step #5: Read it again—but now annotating it.
- Step #6 Read it again section by section noting what you think is happening in each section (for example, a brief summary) **(SEL I. A and B)**
- Step #7: Ask yourself: What does the writer want me to think, feel, or do after reading this text? What does the writer do with the literary tools at his/her/their disposal to get that response from me as a reader? **(SEL III C and D)**

“Papa Who Wakes Up Tired in the Dark”

Your *abuelito* is dead, Papa says early one morning in my room. *Está muerto*, and then as if he just heard the news himself, crumples like a coat and cries, my brave Papa cries. I have never seen my Papa cry and don't know what to do.



I know he will have to go away, that he will take a plane to Mexico, all the uncles and aunts will be there, and they will have a black-and-white photo taken in front of the tomb with flowers shaped like spears in a white vase because this is how they send the dead away in that country. Because I am the oldest, my father has told me first, and now it is my turn to tell the others. I will have to explain why we can't play. I will have to tell them to be quiet today. My Papa, his thick hands and thick shoes, who wakes up tired in the dark, who combs his hair with water, drinks his coffee, and is gone before we wake, today is sitting on my bed.

And I think if my own Papa died what would I do. I hold my Papa in my arms. I hold and hold and hold him.

“Those Winter Sundays”

Sundays too my father got up early  
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,  
then with cracked hands that ached  
from labor in the weekday weather made  
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.  
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,  
and slowly I would rise and dress,  
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,  
who had driven out the cold  
and polished my good shoes as well.  
What did I know, what did I know  
of love's austere and lonely offices?