

Writing Workshop

Poem

In this unit, you saw how the romantics expressed a view of nature as a powerful and transformative force. The lyric poetry of the romantics uses imagery and musical effects to express deep personal feelings inspired by nature. In this workshop, you will use a range of poetic techniques to write a lyric nature poem that expresses a strong emotion.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

WRITE WITH A PURPOSE

WRITING PROMPT

Write a **lyric poem** about nature that reflects an awareness of poetic conventions such as the use of imagery and musical effects. You may model your poem after the lyric poems of the Romantic poets, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats.

Idea Starters

- a childhood memory of a natural event or place
- a favorite scene or place in nature
- a photograph or illustration of a place in nature

THE ESSENTIALS

Here are some common purposes, audiences, and formats for writing poetry.

PURPOSES	AUDIENCES	GENRES/FORMATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to express a single, deeply felt emotion • to celebrate the power of nature • to convey a musical quality through language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • classmates and teacher • literary club members • poetry Web site readers • poetry magazine editors • poetry Web log visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blank verse in the style of Wordsworth • odes like those of Keats or Shelley • rhyming couplets • sonnets • song lyrics • ballads



TEXAS KEY TRAITS

1. FOCUS AND COHERENCE

- engages readers in the **subject**
- evokes a natural **scene** or **event**
- implies a **single strong emotion**

2. ORGANIZATION

- uses line arrangement, stanzas, meter, and **musical effects**
- follows poetic conventions, such as those of **blank verse**, **rhyming couplets**, **odes**, or **sonnets**

3. DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS

- expresses a **single strong emotion**
- uses **specific language** that appeals to the **senses**
- uses **poetic devices**, such as **rhyme**, **meter**, **alliteration**, and **onomatopoeia**

4. VOICE

- maintains an appropriate **tone**
- appeals to the reader's **emotions** and **imagination**

5. CONVENTIONS

- uses adverbs and adverb **phrases** effectively
- employs effective **grammar** and **punctuation**

Writing Online



Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML12-892

Planning/Prewriting



WRITING 14B Write a poem that reflects an awareness of poetic conventions and traditions within different forms.

Getting Started

CHOOSE A SUBJECT

Make a list of natural places or events, such as a favorite beach or a snowstorm, that you might re-create in words. Then, choose one that evokes a strong emotion. Your subject should be a place or event you feel strongly about and don't mind sharing with others.

ASK YOURSELF:

- What are my most vivid memories of nature or natural events?
- How does nature make me feel?
- What strong feeling would I be comfortable expressing in a poem?

THINK ABOUT AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Before you think about your experiences in and feelings about nature, remember that the **purpose** of a lyric poem is to express a single, strong emotion and to get your readers to share that emotion. As you consider your purpose, think about the **audience** that will read your poem. Imagining an audience can help you shape your purpose.

ASK YOURSELF:

- Who will read or hear my poem?
- What do I expect my audience to know or think about my subject?
- How do I want my audience to feel about my subject?
- How can I make my audience interested in my subject?

EXPLORE YOUR SUBJECT

Before you draft your poem, **brainstorm** the ideas and images you might use to describe nature and the feelings it evokes. Try **freewriting a journal entry**. A freewriting exercise is ideal for planning a poem because it does not involve any self-editing. Afterward, read your journal entry and look for interesting phrases and ideas you can use in your poem.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The drought this year was a killer. The vegetable garden burnt to a crisp. Made me sad. Last year it was the opposite—rain, rain, and rain. Two ruined summers! I wish we had some balance. I remember summer as a time of hot sunshine and the smell of mowed grass.

CONSIDER IMAGES AND LANGUAGE

A lyric poem uses figurative language and sensory details to create clear images and evoke strong feelings.

Personification is a metaphor in which an inanimate thing is treated as if it were a person or animal.

Sensory details appeal to your readers' five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) and help them imagine the scene.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

*... and lawns parched with heat /
Opened their mouths, stretched their limbs ...*

*... For a sip of the liquid ... [taste]
... Evenings abuzz with the whine ... [hearing]
... Yards were littered with anthills ... [sight]*

Planning/Prewriting *continued*

Getting Started

USE MUSICAL EFFECTS

Use the following poetic techniques to help create a musical quality in your poem.

Rhyme scheme:

Rhyme is the repetition of accented vowel sounds, and all sounds following them, in words that are close together in a poem. **End rhymes** occur at the ends of lines.

Internal rhymes are repeated vowel sounds within the same line.

Off rhymes are rhymes that are close but not exact.

Meter: A generally regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry.

Alliteration: The repetition of consonant sounds.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Finally the rains fell, and ground that was dust / Soaked up the droplets; the earth softened its crust.

... For a sip of the liquid ...

... with its colors and ballgames. / Its schoolbooks, its sweaters and warmer pajamas.

Gardens long withered and lawns parched with heat ...

... pools closed for cleaning ...

THINK ABOUT POETIC STRUCTURE

Sonnets have rules about lines and rhyme scheme. Blank verse is unrhymed, but each line must have five stressed beats. Rhyming couplets are pairs of lines that end with words that rhyme.

TIPS:

1. Freewrite in the style of a lyric poet.
2. Look for a distinct rhythm or rhyme scheme.
3. Choose a format that provides structure but does not restrict your writing.

PEER REVIEW Share your ideas with a peer. Ask your partner to share feelings inspired by your description.



In your *Reader/Writer Notebook*, jot down images and words that bring the place or event to life.

- Concentrate on your feelings about the place or scene as you write.
- Include poetic devices and see where they lead you.
- Go back and see what phrases or lines you really like. Then, craft them into lines that rhyme and have a clear meter.

Drafting



WRITING 13A–B Plan a first draft; structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way and develop drafts in open-ended situations that include rhetorical devices to convey meaning.

The following chart shows how to draft a poem in stages.

Drafting Your Poem

THE FIRST STAGE: EXPLORING

- Launch into your **subject** and try to capture it as vividly as possible.
- Remember that the primary purpose of a lyric poem is not to explain something or tell a story but to re-create a vivid experience and suggest a **single, strong emotion**.
- Feel free to shape your poem into lines at this stage. However, if you feel more comfortable simply exploring your subject, don't worry about lines yet.

THE SECOND STAGE: SHAPING

- Delete or replace weak words and phrases. Add words that evoke strong emotions.
- Make sure the opening lines engage your readers in a vivid experience.
- Experiment with the shape of your poem on the page. Arrange the poem into lines and stanzas of appropriate length.

THE THIRD STAGE: FINISHING A FIRST DRAFT

- Read your poem aloud to yourself. Revise passages that sound awkward.
- Review the techniques of sound on page 894. Use these techniques to improve the sound of your poem, particularly its rhyme scheme and meter.
- Work on the shape, sound, and tone of your poem until it feels finished.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: ADVERBS AND ADVERB PHRASES

Poets use fewer words than prose writers to suggest rather than state their meaning. Adverbs and adverb phrases may be used to tell how, when, where, why, or to what extent something happens.

Part of Speech

Adverb—a word used to modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb

Adverb phrase—a prepositional phrase that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb

Example

Finally the rains fell [modifies *fell*; tells when]

Gardens *long* withered ... [modifies *withered*; tells how]

Endlessly pouring ... [modifies *pouring*; tells to what extent]

... Staggered with rain days, *from time to time*.

[adverb phrase modifies *staggered*; tells when]

... Yards were littered *with anthills and unfinished projects*.

[adverb phrase modifies *littered*; tells how]



Develop a first draft of your poem, following the stages outlined in the chart above. As you write, try to use adverbs and adverb phrases to tell how, when, where, why, or to what extent something happens.

Revising

When you revise, you evaluate the content, organization, and style of your poem. Your goal is to determine if you’ve achieved your purpose and vividly expressed your subject to the intended audience. The questions, tips, and strategies in the following chart can help you revise and improve your poem.

POEM		
Ask Yourself	Tips	Revision Strategies
1. Do the opening lines engage the reader?	▶ Highlight engaging language in the opening lines.	▶ If necessary, add language to make the opening more engaging.
2. Does the poem use imagery and sensory details to describe a particular place or event in nature?	▶ Circle any images or details that describe or suggest a place or event in nature.	▶ If necessary, add images and details to help readers picture the scene or event in their minds.
3. Does the poem use musical effects and other poetic devices?	▶ Highlight the techniques and poetic devices used in the poem. Label each technique in the margin.	▶ Revise passages as necessary to add musical effects or other poetic devices.
4. Is the poem coherent? Can your reader follow it from beginning to end?	▶ Bracket words, phrases, or lines that are difficult to grasp.	▶ Rewrite difficult passages to improve your poem’s coherence.
5. Is a consistent voice used throughout the poem?	▶ In the margin, write down a single word or short phrase that identifies the feeling associated with or expressed by the poem. Underline words or phrases in which the feeling or tone is “off.”	▶ Replace underlined words and phrases to improve the consistency of your poem’s feeling or tone.
6. Does the poem suggest rather than state a single strong feeling inspired or evoked by the subject?	▶ Place stars next to words, phrases, or lines that suggest the speaker’s feelings.	▶ If necessary, add words, phrases, or lines that hint at a single strong feeling in your poem. If you suggest more than one feeling or contradictory feelings, delete or revise as necessary.



PEER REVIEW Work with a partner to review the evaluation questions in the chart above. Then, determine where you and your peer need to improve your poems. Remember that the purpose of your poem is to invoke a place or scene in nature and suggest a single strong feeling about it. As you and your partner discuss your poems, be sure to discuss the feelings each poem inspires.



WRITING 13C Revise drafts to clarify meaning and achieve specific rhetorical purposes, consistency of tone, and logical organization.

ANALYZE A STUDENT DRAFT

Read this student poem, and notice the comments on its strengths as well as suggestions for improvement.

Summer's Promises, Past and Present

by Elayna Markovna, Vargas High School

- 1 Finally the rains fell, and ground that was dust
Soaked up the droplets; the earth softened its crust.
Gardens long withered and lawns parched with heat
Opened their mouths, stretched their limbs to compete
- 5 For a sip of the liquid so rare, so complete, with
Fond hopes of absorbing enough to inspire
New flowers and fruits, a late summer's attire
Before fall arrived with its colors and ballgames.
Its schoolbooks, its sweaters and warmer pajamas.
- 2 10 Do you remember the rains of last year?
Endlessly pouring, the skies never clear,
The rivers swelled up and spilled over their edges
The creeks rose from their beds and lapped at the hedges,
Evenings abuzz with the whine of winged insects,
- 15 Yards were littered with anthills and unfinished projects.
Air conditioners were quiet, and pools closed for cleaning,
Ballparks were unused, on their scoreboards were zeroes.
The stands standing empty, no cheers for no heroes.

Elayna opens her poem with a **clear image** of rain falling after a long dry spell. The **emotion suggested** by the first two lines is one of relief.

For most of the stanza, Elayna uses a **regular rhyme scheme—rhyming couplets**. Line 5, however, does not rhyme with the one before or after. In each nine-line stanza, one line ends with a word that does not rhyme. By using this structure, Elayna alters the traditional format. Similarly, in lines 8 and 9, she uses an **off rhyme**—*ballgames* and *pajamas*.

Although Elayna's images of the quiet air conditioners and unused ballparks are interesting, she could replace the *be* verbs with more interesting **active or vivid verbs**.

LEARN HOW **Use Active or Vivid Verbs** The lines in lyric poetry tend to be short, so they must express ideas, images, and feelings succinctly and vividly. The use of *be* verbs can make writing weak. Elayna replaced the *be* verbs with vivid action verbs to make the poem stronger and more memorable.

ELAYNA'S REVISION TO STANZA 2

Air conditioners ^{sat} ~~were~~ quiet, and pools closed for cleaning, /
Ballparks ^{untrampled,} ~~were unused~~ on their scoreboards ^{hung} ~~were~~ zeroes.

ANALYZE A STUDENT DRAFT *continued*

- 3 The best of both worlds, neither drought nor all flood,
20 A balance of green grass, fresh tomatoes, and mud,
Summer that's summer with heat and sunshine,
Staggered with rain days, from time to time.
That's how I remember them, my summers of youth
From memories and photos untinted by truth.
25 The earliest summers are the ones I'll love best.
Never invoking concern, never causing me stress,
To such cheerful ignorance, I'd return, I confess.

Elayna uses **repetition** of words and sounds to create an interesting effect. She **rhymes** *flood* and *mud*. She uses **alliteration**—at least three words begin with the letter *b*. She repeats the word *summer* to emphasize its importance.

The closing lines **evoke a clear feeling of nostalgia**. Elayna uses the first-person pronoun *I* and states how she feels. She could be more subtle and more lyrical, though, by **evoking emotion** rather than stating a feeling directly.

LEARN HOW **Evoke Emotion in a Lyric Poem** Elayna has developed her poem effectively, using repetition, sensory details, and musical effects to help readers feel nostalgic for summer. The last few lines are a little too obvious, however. The poem would be more effective if Elayna continued to suggest nostalgic feelings rather than stating them directly.

ELAYNA'S REVISION TO STANZA 3

The earliest summers are the ones I^{to} love best.
Never invoking concern, never causing ~~me stress~~^{duress},
If only the summer could be one's lifetime address!
~~To such cheerful ignorance, I'd return, I confess.~~



Use the feedback from your peers and teacher as well as the two “Learn How” lessons to revise your poem. Evaluate how well you have incorporated poetic devices, re-created a specific place or moment in nature, suggested a strong emotion, and considered your audience.



WRITING 13D-E Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling; revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

Editing and Publishing

Now that you have drafted and revised your poem, edit the poem to be sure that it is free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors. You don't want mistakes to distract your readers from focusing on what's important—the experience your poem creates for them.

GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: PUNCTUATING ITEMS IN A SERIES

Use commas to separate a list of items in a series. The items may be words, phrases, or clauses. The last item in a series is usually preceded by the conjunction *and* or *or*.

The lines in a lyric poem are generally short, vivid, and musical.

[Commas separate the series of words in the sentence.]

Three ways to brainstorm a poem include freewriting a journal entry, imagining a favorite place, and looking at photographs.

[Commas separate the series of phrases in the sentence.]

Make sure that your poem hints at a feeling, make sure that you use interesting images, and make sure that your lines contain a clear rhyme scheme.

[Commas separate the series of clauses in the sentence.]

An alternative style is to omit the comma that precedes the last item in the series. However, Elayna's teacher prefers the use of this final comma, often called a serial comma. As Elayna edited her poem, she checked the punctuation of the series of phrases in the last line of the first stanza. She added a comma after *sweaters* to comply with her teacher's preference for punctuating a series.

Its schoolbooks, its sweaters, and warmer pajamas.

PUBLISH YOUR WRITING

Share your poem with an audience.

- Publish your poem in a classroom anthology.
- Submit your poem to your school's literary magazine.
- Send your poem to a print or online journal that publishes student poetry.
- Present your poem to the class or to another group of people by reading it aloud in an expressive voice. Present illustrations or artwork as you read the poem.



As you edit your poem, identify and correct any errors. Make sure that you have correctly punctuated any items in a series. Then, publish your poem in places where fans of poetry are likely to enjoy it.

Listening & Speaking Workshop

Evaluating a Presentation

Evaluating a presentation involves much more than merely pointing out someone's mistakes. In order to fairly and effectively evaluate a presentation, you must first be an active listener. As an active listener, you are able to gather information and make impartial judgments about the oral presentations you hear. When active listeners evaluate presentations and offer constructive criticism to speakers, everyone benefits.



Complete the workshop activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

SPEAK WITH A PURPOSE

PROMPT

Use **active listening skills** to **evaluate an oral presentation**. Offer verbal and nonverbal feedback, including constructive criticism and specific suggestions for improvement.



TEXAS KEY TRAITS

A STRONG EVALUATION . . .

- considers both content and delivery
- asks questions based on the listener's notes
- offers the speaker constructive feedback
- makes specific suggestions for improvement



LISTENING AND SPEAKING 24A–B Listen responsively to a speaker by framing inquiries that reflect an understanding of the content and by identifying the positions taken and the evidence in support of those positions; assess the persuasiveness of a presentation based on content, diction, rhetorical strategies, and delivery.

Active Listening

An active listener does not sit passively and let a speaker's words go in one ear and out the other. Active listeners pay attention, avoid distractions, and think about what they hear. The chart below includes techniques for active listening.

TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

WHAT DO I DO?	HOW DO I DO IT?
Draw on prior knowledge and experience.	As you listen, ask yourself these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this information apply to me? • What do I already know about this information? • Do I think this information is true? Why or why not?
Pay attention and think.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to identify the speaker's main point and purpose for speaking. • Make predictions about where the speaker's ideas are going, and pay attention if your predictions are wrong. • Think of questions as you listen. Wait for the speaker to address them, and be prepared to ask them later. • Be aware of your reactions to the speaker's comments.
Take notes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jot down key words, phrases, and questions you have. • Paraphrase or summarize the speaker's main points.
Give feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show that you are engaged by nodding or smiling. • In a polite voice, ask questions or request clarification of points.



Listening & Speaking Online

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML12-900

Evaluate a Presentation

CONSIDER THE CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF A PRESENTATION

After listening actively to a presentation, review your notes and then answer the following questions about the content and delivery of the presentation.

- How well did the speaker present the main idea?
- How clearly did the speaker organize the key points?
- How well did the speaker support the points with evidence?
- How appropriate was the speaker's choice of language?
- How appropriate was the speaker's voice and attitude?
- How appropriate was the speaker's body language (gestures, facial expressions)?
- How much did you enjoy the presentation?
- What, if anything, would you change about the presentation?

GIVE AN ORAL EVALUATION

Use your answers to the questions above to prepare a fair evaluation of the presentation. Consider these tips as you decide how to focus your evaluation.

- **Give positive feedback:** Identify two or three things the speaker did really well. For example, did he or she have an intriguing main idea? Did he or she express great enthusiasm for the topic?
- **Give constructive criticism:** Identify one or two things that you think the speaker can improve. Perhaps he or she needs to offer more up-to-date statistics as evidence.
- **Offer specific suggestions:** Don't be vague. Tell the speaker exactly how to improve the presentation. For example, if you were distracted by the speaker's tendency to say "um" a lot, suggest that he or she spend more time rehearsing the presentation.

When you give your evaluation, make eye contact and use a friendly tone of voice. Remember that your evaluation is a personal response rather than a final judgment, and the presenter is a classmate who deserves your respect and understanding.



As an Active Listener Listen attentively to a presentation. Take notes and ask questions. Summarize the speaker's ideas in your mind and on paper. If you need clarification, ask for it. Tune out distractions and give the speaker your full attention.

As an Evaluator Review your thoughts about the delivery and content of the presentation. Decide which elements deserve praise and which need improvement. Make a short list of points you want to make, and share them with the speaker in a direct, friendly way.

