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Poetic Techniques: Apostrophe, Allusion, Juxtaposition

Poetic Techniques: Apostrophe, Allusion, Juxtaposition

apostrophe: a poem or statement addressed to an absent person or personified thing

allusion: an indirect reference to something

juxtaposition: placing something next to another to compare, contrast, or provide interest



In a literary technique called **apostrophe**, poems or statements are occasionally addressed to a person who is absent or a thing that is personified. Apostrophe can be identified by the use of nouns of direct address and second-person pronouns. Sometimes an entire poem can demonstrate apostrophe; other times just a piece of the poem will be an apostrophe. Here are four lines from “Death, Be Not Proud”:

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.

—John Donne

An **allusion** is an indirect reference to something. Since allusions are indirect, both the reader and the writer need to be familiar with the thing that is being referred to if the allusion is to be effective. Here, in “The Donkey,” G.K. Chesterton alludes to Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem:

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

Juxtaposition places two things side by side for comparison, contrast, or effect.

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.

—from “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost



Lesson 1

One particular kind of juxtaposition is paradox, or two things that seem to contradict each other.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'll advertise—you know!

How dreary—to be—Somebody!
How public—like a Frog—
To tell one's name—the livelong June
To an admiring Bog!

—Emily Dickinson

A Complete each sentence.

1. An _____ is an indirect reference to something.
2. A paradox is a special kind of _____.
3. A poetic apostrophe is addressed to someone who is not _____ or something that is _____.

B Read the poem. Answer each question.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

—“Death, be not proud” by John Donne



- ☐ 4. How would a reader know that this poem is an apostrophe? _____

- ☐ 5. What allusion is made in the thirteenth line? _____

- ☐ 6. What paradox is in the last line? _____

C Read the poem “Mortality” on page 60 of the LightUnit. “Mortality,” published around 1824, was Abraham Lincoln’s favorite poem.

Write the definition of each word, as it is used in the poem. Use a dictionary.

- ☐ 7. scepter _____
- ☐ 8. miter _____
- ☐ 9. sage _____
- ☐ 10. transient _____
- ☐ 11. dirge _____
- ☐ 12. bier _____
- ☐ 13. shroud _____
- ☐ **D** Begin memorizing the first two verses of “Mortality” on page 60 of the LightUnit. Be ready to recite them in Lesson 2.

Review

E Write the words that complete each clause, beginning with *than* or *as*. Underline the correct pronoun.

14. Young children often look up to and admire those who are a few years older than **them, they**.

15. People long ago had shorter life expectancies than **us, we**. _____

16. The heat bothered Ellie more than **me, I**. _____



Lesson 1

F Rewrite each sentence correctly.

17. Many old-timers they quoted proverbs about the weather, but them proverbs weren't always true.

18. No one objected to him going to bed early.

G Write *who*, *which*, or *that* to complete each sentence.

19. The atmosphere, _____ is full of various gases, protects us from extreme solar heat and radiation.
20. Someone _____ looks for and follows severe thunderstorms in hopes of observing a tornado is called a storm chaser.

H Add commas where needed.

21. Weather influences us every day; for example it affects our clothing and outdoor activities.
22. Before modern technology people observed the sky, plants, and animals for clues to the weather.
23. Because the speed of light is faster than the speed of sound you see lightning before you hear the thunder.

I Put brackets around each adverb clause. Draw an arrow to the word it modifies. Then label the modified word *v*, *adj*, or *adv*.

24. _____ Jonathan was sure that he could find Brandon's house.
25. _____ The angels rejoice when a sinner repents.
26. _____ Adelyn laughed so hard that she could barely talk.

Penmanship

You will be copying a poem for Penmanship.

○ J Using your best handwriting, copy the title and first line of the sonnet.

"I shall be faithful, though the weary years"

I shall be faithful, though the weary years



Spelling – Patterns

Spelling Words

abscess	complimentary	excess	itinerary	sensory
access	contradictory	incessant	mandatory	successor
accessory	coronary	inventory	processor	trajectory
arbitrary	customary	involuntary	secede	unnecessary

Many of the words in this section have the *cess* or *cede* roots, which come from the Latin word *cedere* “to go, move, or withdraw.”

K Write the spelling word that fits each definition. Circle the root that comes from *cedere*.

27. _____ to give up membership in an organization
28. _____ someone who succeeds someone else to a throne, title, or position
29. _____ a nonessential yet handy, convenient, or pretty object or device
30. _____ unneeded; not essential; undesired
31. _____ permission or ability to reach, enter, or get something
32. _____ continuing without pause
33. _____ a collection of pus within inflamed tissue
34. _____ someone or something who processes
35. _____ having more than necessary; immoderate or intemperate indulgence

Most words in this section contain the suffixes *-ory* or *-ary*.

L Write the spelling word that fits each description.

36. _____ something demanded by a rule or by a law
37. _____ having to do with the heart
38. _____ having to do with the senses
39. _____ containing, holding, or expressing conflicting ideas
40. _____ against one's will
41. _____ the path taken by a projectile

M Write the Section 1 spelling words in your notebook.