British Poetry Unit: Metaphysical & Romantic Poets
British Poetry Unit: Metaphysical and Romantic Poets

Overview: This British poetry unit covers the best metaphysical and Romantic poets while addressing all the Common Core State Standards: reading, writing, speaking/listening and language usage. As a group, students conduct research, analyze poetry, create class handouts or PowerPoint presentations and share their findings with their classmates. Students will also write a poetry explication of a poem written by one of the poet’s studied. To wrap up the unit, students will review the poets, poems and poetic elements with a trivia game followed by a multiple choice and written response test. All assignments, rubrics, trivia questions, test questions, teacher notes and teacher keys are included. Note: some of the poems included can be racy (read Marvell’s To His Coy Mistress or Herrick’s The Flea), so this unit is best suited for mature students who can have fun with the poems without being inappropriate. Generally students enjoy reading of love, whether answered or unrequited!

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Learning Activities and Assessment Directions:

* British Poetry Presentation Handout Option #1 (page 4) or Option #2 (page 5) contains all the information the groups will need to complete their presentation effectively. Each group is assigned a poet, a poem, and a poetic concept. The group is responsible to research their topics, select an additional poem by their poet, create a visually pleasing handout (option #1) or create a PowerPoint (option #2) and teach about their poems and poets (including discussion questions). Teacher should decide 1) how long students should have to research, 2) what day the group will be assigned to submit handout to teacher if assigning option #1, and 3) when the groups will present (two groups per day seems to work well). If teacher assigns option #1, students should keep the group-created handout to one page so that two groups can fit on one double-sided page that teacher will photocopy for the class. The Research Topics (page 6) for the students are in large format so they are overhead-friendly.

* Poetry Groups Sign-Up Sheet (page 7) can be used to create student-selected or teacher-selected groups.

* Poetry Presentation Rubric (pages 8 for option #1 or 9 for option #2) should be used by the teacher during the presentations. Teacher may want to share the rubric ahead of time so students are clear about assignment expectations.

* Group Presentation Assessment (page 10) should be used by the students after their presentations to assess their group members and themselves. Teacher should average the students’ group rubrics for an additional grade.

(continued)
* **Poetry Packet** (pages 11-14) contains eight poems that should be handed out when assigning the poetry groups. Each group will teach one of these poems in addition to a group-selected poem.

* **Teacher Notes for poetry packet** (pages 15-17) contain bullet points for the following: poet biography, literary devices for poems in packet, poetic movements/concepts and discussion questions. Teacher may want to add teacher notes information to student presentations if a group’s presentation is underdeveloped. There are endless possibilities for discussion questions--I’ve included a few questions for each poem in the packet as a discussion starter or time filler if needed.

* **Poetry Explication Handout** (page 18) with writing questions and tips should be assigned after the presentations unless students are good at multi-tasking. The handout leads students through the explication writing process. Teacher should assign a due date. The **Poetry Explication Rubric** (page 19) should be used to assess the explications. Teacher may want to share the rubric ahead of time so students are clear about assignment expectations.

* **British Poetry Trivia Questions** (pages 20-22) can be used to review for the test. Most of the 25 questions come from the teacher notes and will be asked on the test. Teacher can read questions to different teams or make overheads with the other questions blocked out with paper if the students need to read along. The **Trivia Questions Teacher Key** (pages 23-25) is included with responses in red.

* **British Poetry Test** (pages 26-28) contains 24 multiple choice/matching questions and four written responses based on two poems that students will read cold; the test can be completed in one class period. The matching/multiple choice questions are based on the poets' biographies, the poems from the poetry packet, as well as the poetic movement/concepts taught in class. The poems for the written responses are challenging but typical of poetry for the Romantic period. The **Poetry Test Teacher Key** (pages 29-32) is included with responses in red. Please email me at openclassroom@yahoo.com if you’d like the test in .doc version to add your own questions (I use Mac Pages but the test is likely compatible with MS Word).

**Common Core State Standards (grades 11-12--can be adapted to grades 9-10):**
* RL1--Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis.
* RL4--Determine the meaning of words or phrases as they are used in a text, analyzing the impact of word choice on meaning an tone.
* W1--Write arguments to support claims in an analysis using valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.
* W2--Write informative texts to examine complex ideas, concepts and information.
* W2a--Organize complex information including formatting and graphics.
* W2b--Develop the topic by selecting the most significant and relevant information.
* W4--Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
* W7--Conduct short, as well as more sustained research projects.
* W8--Gather relevant information from multiple sources; avoid plagiarism and follow citing standards.
* W10--Write routinely over different time frames for a range of tasks.
* SL1a-- Come to discussions prepared; explicitly draw on that preparation to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
* SL1b --Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
* SL5 --Make strategic use of digital media in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
* L1--Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
* L4--Determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.
* L5--Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and in word meanings.
British Poetry Presentations
"There's no money in poetry, but there's no poetry in money, either." - Robert Ranke Graves

For this assignment, your small group will be required to research, produce an informative handout for the class, and teach about a specific British poet, his or her poems and a poetic element. Before beginning the assignment, ensure your group sets goals, deadlines, and establishes roles so that the work is equally distributed. Your presentation will be assessed on the following:

- A one-sided handout with a short biography of the poet highlighting key and interesting facts, one poem, and information about the concept you were assigned to examine. Arrange all of your research in a thoughtful, visually pleasing way and submit to me by the date assigned to your group. Be sure to cite your research; if you need help with your citations, visit: www.easybib.com or www.bibme.org/citation-guide.
- An in depth analysis of two of your poet's poems (one group-selected on your handout and one from your poetry packet). Be sure to identify three literary or poetic techniques (including notable figurative language, diction, imagery, details, etc.) used by your assigned poet and discuss what purpose they serve in the poem—be thoughtful and specific in developing your analysis. Finally, be sure to define any unknown vocabulary words for the class.
- Three thoughtful discussion questions related to your poems; you may want to consider conflicts, themes, stylistic choices, philosophical questions, etc.

Your poet is:

Your assigned poem is:

Your handout should be given to me by: Your presentation date:

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- Three thoughtful discussion questions related to your poems; you may want to consider conflicts, themes, stylistic choices, philosophical questions, etc.

Your poet is:

Your assigned poem is:

Your handout should be given to me by: Your presentation date:
For this assignment, your small group will be required to create and present a PowerPoint about a specific British poet, his or her poems, and a poetic movement. Your presentation should include the following:

- A short biography of the poet highlighting key and interesting facts.
- Key information about the concept your group is assigned to examine.
- An *in depth* analysis of two of your poet’s poems (one group-selected and one from your poetry packet). Be sure to identify three literary or poetic techniques (including notable figurative language, diction, imagery, details, etc.) used by your assigned poet and discuss *what purpose these techniques serve in the poem*—be thoughtful and specific in developing your analysis. Also, be sure to define any unknown vocabulary words for the class.
- Three thoughtful discussion questions related to your poems; you may want to consider conflicts, themes, stylistic choices, philosophical questions, etc.
- Evidence of preparation; your questions should stimulate a thoughtful exchange of ideas.
- Thoughtful arrangement of your research and analysis so that it both enhances your classmates’ understanding and adds interest.
- Citation for your research; if you need help with your citations, visit: [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com) or [www.bibme.org/citation-guide](http://www.bibme.org/citation-guide).

Before beginning the assignment, ensure that your group sets goals, deadlines, and establishes roles so that the work is equally distributed.

Your poet is:  
Your assigned poem is:

Your presentation date:
British Metaphysical/Romantic Poetry Presentations:

**Metaphysical/Cavalier Poets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Concept to examine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Marvell</td>
<td>“To His Coy Mistress”</td>
<td>Metaphysical Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Herrick</td>
<td>“To the Virgins, Make...”</td>
<td>Cavalier Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Donne</td>
<td>“The Flea”</td>
<td>Conceit poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Romantic Poets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet</th>
<th>Poem</th>
<th>Concept to examine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percy Shelley</td>
<td>“Ozymandias of Egypt”</td>
<td>Romanticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Byron</td>
<td>“She Walks in Beauty”</td>
<td>Byronic Hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Keats</td>
<td>“Ode to Melancholy”</td>
<td>An Ode</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wordsworth</td>
<td>“I Wandered Lonely…”</td>
<td>Pastoral Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Browning</td>
<td>“A Dead Rose”</td>
<td>Victorian Poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
British Poetry Presentation Groups:

Andrew Marvell
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

Robert Herrick
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

John Donne
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

Percy Shelley
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

Lord Byron
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

John Keats
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

William Wordsworth
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

Elizabeth Browning
1.  
2.  
3.  
4.
British Poetry Presentation Rubric

Group Members:

Poet:

Handout includes biography of the poet highlighting key and interesting facts, poem and information about assigned concept  ____/20

In-depth analysis/explanation of two poems with unknown vocabulary defined  ____/20

Identification of three literary or poetic techniques and thorough discussion of what purpose they serve in the poem  ____/20

Three discussion questions that stimulate a thoughtful exchange of ideas  ____/15

Handout is carefully arranged and visually appealing  ____/15

Research is cited and properly formatted  ____/10

Total:  ____/100

Comments:

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### British Poetry PowerPoint Presentation Rubric

Group Members:

Poet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation includes biography of the poet highlighting key and interesting facts, as well as key information about assigned concept</td>
<td>______/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation offers in-depth analysis/explanation of two poems; unknown vocabulary words are defined</td>
<td>______/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation identifies three literary or poetic techniques with thorough discussion of what purpose they serve in the poem</td>
<td>______/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation includes three discussion questions that stimulate a thoughtful exchange of ideas</td>
<td>______/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint is carefully arranged and visually appealing</td>
<td>______/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PowerPoint includes a properly formatted works cited page</td>
<td>______/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total: | ______/100 |

Comments:
Group Project Assessment

Reflect on your experiences during this group project and assess your group members and yourself using the following scale:

0-- not helpful at all
1-- a little helpful
2-- somewhat helpful
3-- mostly helpful
4-- extremely helpful

Member #1      Name:_________________________

Planning 0 1 2 3 4
Execution 0 1 2 3 4
Overall Cooperation 0 1 2 3 4

Member #2      Name:_________________________

Planning 0 1 2 3 4
Execution 0 1 2 3 4
Overall Cooperation 0 1 2 3 4

Member #3      Name:_________________________

Planning 0 1 2 3 4
Execution 0 1 2 3 4
Overall Cooperation 0 1 2 3 4

Member #4      Name:_________________________

Planning 0 1 2 3 4
Execution 0 1 2 3 4
Overall Cooperation 0 1 2 3 4

Member #5      Name:_________________________

Planning 0 1 2 3 4
Execution 0 1 2 3 4
Overall Cooperation 0 1 2 3 4

Comments:

“Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” – Vince Lombardi
“To His Coy Mistress” -- Andrew Marvell

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day;
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserv'd virginity,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none I think do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

“To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time” -- Robert Herrick

GATHER ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying:
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may go marry:
For having lost but once your prime
You may for ever tarry.

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The Flea -- John Donne

MARK but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deniest me is;
It suck'd me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be.
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead;
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pamper'd swells with one blood made of two;
And this, alas! is more than we would do.

O stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea, more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is.
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,
And cloister'd in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it suck'd from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself nor me the weaker now.
'Tis true ; then learn how false fears be;
Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

Ozymandias of Egypt -- Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear --
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
She walks in Beauty -- Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that’s best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow’d to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair’d the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o’er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o’er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Ode on Melancholy -- John Keats

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf’s-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss’d
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow’s mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty--Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil’d Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy’s grape against his palate fine;
His soul shalt taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.
I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud -- William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed---and gazed---but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

A Dead Rose -- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

O Rose! who dares to name thee?
No longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet;
But pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat,---
Kept seven years in a drawer---thy titles shame thee.

The breeze that used to blow thee
Between the hedgerow thorns, and take away
An odour up the lane to last all day,---
If breathing now,---unsweetened would forego thee.

The sun that used to smite thee,
And mix his glory in thy gorgeous urn,
Till beam appeared to bloom, and flower to burn,---
If shining now,---with not a hue would light thee.

The dew that used to wet thee,
And, white first, grow incarnadined, because
It lay upon thee where the crimson was,---
If dropping now,---would darken where it met thee.

The fly that lit upon thee,
To stretch the tendrils of its tiny feet,
Along thy leaf's pure edges, after heat,---
If lighting now,---would coldly overrun thee.

The bee that once did suck thee,
And build thy perfumed ambers up his hive,
And swoon in thee for joy, till scarce alive,---
If passing now,---would blindly overlook thee.

The heart doth recognise thee,
Alone, alone! The heart doth smell thee sweet,
Doth view thee fair, doth judge thee most complete,---
Though seeing now those changes that disguise thee.

Yes, and the heart doth owe thee
More love, dead rose! than to such roses bold
As Julia wears at dances, smiling cold!---
Lie still upon this heart---which breaks below thee!
Teacher Notes for Poets, Poems, Poetic Concepts, and Questions

“To His Coy Mistress”

**Notable poet information**
* Marvell: 1621-1659
* Wrote Greek and Latin poetry by age 16
* Was Milton's assistant and advocate; helped get Milton out of jail
* Believed in tolerance
* Was a metaphysical poet

**Notable poetic features**
Hyperbole, understatement, allusion to religion, irony, imagery, similes, metaphors, pun

**Metaphysical poetry points**
Witty, inventive use of language
Figures out the world through discussion
Far fetched similes/metaphors; gross hyperboles
Emotional
Argumentative
Immediacy
Not lyrically smooth

**Poem questions**
* What are the poet's most persuasive techniques?
* Does the speaker appeal to emotion, intellect or both?
* Where does the poet's tone shift? For what purpose?
* What theme(s) are evident?

Cavalier poetry points
Not religious
Carpe Diem themes
Short, pointed
Witty
Not stylistically elaborate
Idolizes a higher lifestyle

“The Flea”

**Notable poet information**
* Donne: 1572-1631
* Was named founder of the metaphysical poets
* Wrote about true religion as well as sensual love
* Was jailed a short time for eloping
* Wrote his own sermon a few weeks before he died

**Notable poetic features**
Pun, metaphor, extended metaphor, conceit, surprising imagery, repetition

**Conceit Poetry**
Witty, includes a far-fetched metaphor comparing two dissimilar things

**Poem questions**
* What are some of the poet's persuasive techniques?
* What is the conceit in this poem?
* In what ways is this poem representative of metaphysical poetry?
* What other surprising comparisons can you draw about love?

“To the Virgins, to Make...”

**Notable poet information**
* Herrick: 1591-1674 (83!)
* Heavily involved in the church
* Never married; woman in his poems were probably imaginary

**Notable poetic features**
Metaphor, personification

(continued →)
“Ozymandias”

Notable poet information
* Shelley: 1792-1822
* Rebelled against conservatism and political injustice
* Married Mary Wollstonecraft, the writer of *Frankenstein*, after his first wife drowned herself
* Drown after his small boat sank

Notable poetic features
Irrision, alliteration, symbolism, imagery

Romanticism poetry points
Emotional
Imaginative
Embraces freedom
Focuses on individual/solitary
Spontaneity
Worship of nature
Fascination with the past

Poem questions
* What is Shelley suggesting about art in this poem? Government?
* What might the statue represent?
* What theme(s) are evident?
* In what ways is this poem representative of Romantic poetry?

“Ode to Melancholy”

Notable poet information
* Keats: 1795-1821
* Studied to be a doctor, but preferred poetry to medicine
* Lost his mother, then brother to tuberculosis, then died of the same at 26

Notable poetic features
Personification, alliteration, allusion, imagery

Ode
Longer poem
Serious in nature
Usually praises a specific person, place or event
Formal style
Predictable stanzas

Poem questions
* In what ways is this poem representative of Romantic poetry?
* Would you consider this a pessimistic poem or one that embraces the realities of lie?

“She Walks in Beauty”

Notable poet information
* Byron: 1788-1824
* Rebelled against conservative values
* Had many affairs with men and women (maybe even with his half sister and cousin!)
* Was a close friend of the Shelles
* Died of a cold

Notable poetic features
Juxtaposition of light and dark, similes

Byronic Hero
A rebellious loner male
Rejects society
Talented
Finds it difficult to get over his past, especially lovers

Poem questions
* According to the poem, what type of woman does the speaker admire?
* How does this poem reflect the Byronic Hero?
* In what ways is this poem representative of Romantic poetry?
“I Wandered Lonely…”

Notable poet information
* Wordsworth: 1770-1850
* Born to a wealthy family; attended boarding school
* Was orphaned at 13 and moved in with his uncles
* Loved nature and the outdoors; interested in the “common man”

Notable poetic features
Personification, juxtaposition, imagery

Pastoral Poetry
Admires individuals, commoners
Freedom
Nature
Contrasts the bliss of country life with corruption of city life

Poem questions
* How does nature affect the poet’s soul?
* What impact does nature have on you?
* In what ways is this poem representative of Romantic poetry?

“A Dead Rose”

Notable poet information
* Browning: 1806-1861
* Oldest of 12
* Was frail, sickly most of her life (strong mind/weak body)
* Married poet/playwright Robert Browning
* Moved to Italy, which helped improve her health
* Died in her husband’s arms

Notable poetic features
Imagery, symbolism, personification

Victorian Poetry
Written during the reign of Queen Victoria
Darker, harsher than the Romantics
Realistic, interest in social justice
Female writers begin to gain popularity

(continued →)
Poetry Explication

A poetry explication is an original poetic analysis in which the reader makes sense of a poem by seeking meanings and patterns in words, syntax, images and other notable literary features. Explications are generally short (three paragraphs should suffice) and do not include a formal, concluding paragraph. You will craft an explication for a poem written by one of the British poets studied during this unit (the poem can be one we read in class or one you discovered on your own); use some (or all) of the elements listed below to help develop your explication.

For the introductory paragraph, consider:
1. What is the poem’s main idea? This will be your thesis.
2. What does the title of the poem tell the reader? Does it have more than one meaning?
3. Who is the speaker? Why does he or she feel compelled to share? Describe his or her voice.
4. What conflicts does this poem present? Themes?
5. What happens in the poem? Where? How and when are conflicts resolved?

For the next two paragraphs of your explication, follow the poem line by line and pick out the key ideas and literary elements. Use smoothly integrated quotes as evidence for your analysis. Remember that a formal conclusion is not needed, but ensure that the closing line(s) comment about the poem’s last line or the poem overall. Consider:

6. What form does the poem take (sonnet, blank verse, free verse, etc)? For what effect?
7. What tone is evident? Does the speaker’s tone shift? What words help create this tone?
8. What interesting word choices, syntactic choices, and/or figurative language choices are used? What do these stylistic choices add to the poem?
9. Are there patterns throughout? What do they emphasize?
10. How does the poem end? For what effect?

Tips:
* Be sure to title your explication
* Always refer to the the poet as “the poet” or “the speaker”, never by his or her first name
* Write your explication in the present tense; although the poet has passed away, his or her work is still alive
* When quoting poetry lines, use slashes to show a line break
* Ensure that the explication is written in a formal style with a confident, objective tone
* Take care in introducing your quotes, as well as explaining how your quotes clarify your analysis
* Double check your work for spelling or grammar errors

For an example of a poetry explication and more explication writing tips, please visit The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/poetry-explications/

Due Date:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction/Thesis</td>
<td>Introductory paragraph presents knowledgable thesis and is developed by the discussion and analysis of some or all of the following: conflict(s), theme(s), speaker’s motivation, action and/or title</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Two (or more) body paragraphs develop thesis by the discussion and analysis of some or all of the following: poetry form, diction, syntax, literary elements, and/or patterns</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cohesion/Transitions</td>
<td>Explication is cohesive and developed using examples from the poem. Quotes are smoothly integrated and explained as evidence for your analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style/Tone/Conventions</td>
<td>Explication is written in a formal style with a confident, objective tone. Explication is free of spelling and grammar errors and is properly formatted</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concluding Statement</td>
<td>The closing line(s) comment about the poem’s last line, capture the ending or sum up the poem overall</td>
<td>10</td>
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British Poetry Trivia Questions

Poets
100 This poet rebelled against conservative values, married the writer of *Frankenstein* and died by drowning

200 This brooding poet had an affair with his half sister and was close friends with the Shelleys

300 This religious poet wrote many of his poems to imaginary lovers

400 This poet lost his mother, then brother to tuberculosis, and then died of the same before he was 30

500 This poet wrote a Greek and Latin poems by age 16 and helped save Milton from rotting in jail

Poems
100 This poem uses scare tactics as a way to persuade a young mistress to be his partner

200 This poem assures the poet’s mistress that if time were no object, he wouldn’t be impatient with her shyness

300 This poem offers a startling comparison between a woman and a star-filled sky

400 This poem suggests that even though beauty fades, our emotional attachments are timeless

500 This conceit poem requests that a mistress should succumb to her lover because a creature has already brought them together
Poetry Characteristics and Movements
100 This type of poetry pays homage to a higher lifestyle, includes themes of carpe diem, and is written in a short, direct manner

200 This type of poem uses witty language with far fetched similes or metaphors and is not lyrically smooth

300 This type of poetry highlights the individual and the contrast between the innocence of country life versus the corruption of the city

400 This is longer type of poem, usually of a serious nature, utilizes an elevated style and predictable stanzas

500 This literary device is a clever, startling extended metaphor

Literary Periods and Elements
100 This literary time period was generally realistic in nature and dealt with social justice

200 This literary movement stressed imagination, freedom, nature and emotion

300 This phrase refers to a rebellious loner male who finds it difficult to overcome events is his past

400 “And now like amorous birds of prey” is an example of what literary device?

500 “Mark but this flea, and mark in this” is an example of what literary device?
**Grab Bag**

100 This poem depicts, among other things, the passage of time as illustrated by a statue crumbling in the desert.

200 This nature-loving poetry died from catching a cold at the age of 80.

300 This poem suggests that, despite our best efforts, we all succumb to sorrow.

400 “The lone and level sands stretch far away” is an example of what literary device?

500 This poet was very well educated, although he never received a degree, had 12 children and died days after writing his funeral sermon.
British Poetry Trivia Questions--TEACHER KEY

Poets
100 This poet rebelled against conservative values, married the writer of *Frankenstein* and died by drowning  SHELLEY

200 This brooding poet had an affair with his half sister and was close friends with the Shelleys  BYRON

300 This religious poet wrote many of his poems to imaginary lovers  HERRICK

400 This poet lost his mother, then brother to tuberculosis, and then died of the same before he was 30  KEATS

500 This poet wrote a Greek and Latin poems by age 16 and helped save Milton from rotting in jail  MARVELL

Poems
100 This poem uses scare tactics as a way to persuade a young mistress to be his partner  
"TO THE VIRGINS..."

200 This poem assures the poet's mistress that if time were no object, he wouldn't be impatient with her shyness  
"TO HIS COY MISTRESS"

300 This poem offers a startling comparison between a woman and a star-filled sky  
"SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY"

400 This conceit poem requests that a mistress should succumb to her lover because a creature has already brought them together  
"THE FLEA"

500 This poem suggests that even though beauty fades, our emotional attachments are timeless  
"A DEAD ROSE"
Poetry Characteristics and Movements
100 This type of poetry pays homage to a higher lifestyle, includes themes of carpe diem, and is written in a short, direct manner
   CAVALIER POETRY

200 This type of poem uses witty language with far fetched similes or metaphors and is not lyrically smooth
   METAPHYSICAL POETRY

300 This type of poetry highlights the individual and the contrast between the innocence of country life versus the corruption of the city
   PASTORAL POETRY

400 This is longer type of poem, usually of a serious nature, utilizes an elevated style and predictable stanzas
   AN ODE

500 This literary device is a clever, startling extended metaphor
   CONCEIT

Literary Periods and Elements
100 This literary time period was generally realistic in nature and dealt with social justice
   VICTORIAN POETRY

200 This literary movement stressed imagination, freedom, nature and emotion
   ROMANTICISM

300 This phrase refers to a rebellious loner male who finds it difficult to overcome events is his past
   BYRONIC HERO

400 “And now like amorous birds of prey” is an example of what literary device?
   METAPHOR

500 “Mark but this flea, and *mark* in this” is an example of what literary device?
   PUN
Grab Bag

100 This poem depicts, among other things, the passage of time as illustrated by a statue crumbling in the desert
   OZYMANDIAS

200 This nature-loving poetry died from catching a cold at the age of 80
   WORDSWORTH

300 This poem suggests that, despite our best efforts, we all succumb to sorrow
   ODE TO MELANCHOLY

400 “The lone and level sands stretch far away” is an example of what literary device?
   ALLITERATION

500 This poet was very well educated, although he never received a degree, had 12 children and died days after writing his funeral sermon
   DONNE
British Poetry Test

Part I-Poetry Multiple Choice and Matching

For the following questions select the best answer.

1. What might the statue of Ozymandias represent in the poem with the same name?
   a. Time destroys
   b. Vanity is pointless
   c. Government is vain
   d. All of the above

2. Which of the following is a characteristic of a poetic conceit?
   a. It is far-fetched metaphor
   b. It is an elaborate comparison between dissimilar things
   c. It utilizes wit
   d. All of the above

3. What is the conceit in “The Flea”?
   a. The speaker’s arrogance
   b. A fleabite is like mating
   c. A flea is like a pregnant woman
   d. All of the above

Poets--Matching

A. Andrew Marvell          B. Robert Herrick          C. John Donne
D. Percy Shelley           E. Lord Byron              F. John Keats
G. William Wordsworth      H. Elizabeth Browning

4. This poet had a secret marriage, wrote about secular and religious subjects, used surprising contrasts, and was obsessed with death to the point that s/he preached his/her own funeral sermon

5. Rebellied against politics, embraced atheism, married the writer of Frankenstein and died when his boat sank

6. Had relationships with many including a cousin and a half-sister, was a rebel, and died of complications from a cold

7. This poet enjoyed long walks, found truth in nature and the common man

8. This poet was Milton’s assistant and advocate; was a champion of tolerance and acceptance

9. This poet lived to be 83, worked for the church, never married and was rumored to have made up the women in his poems

10. This poet was sick much of his/her life but was mentally strong; moved to Italy where s/he died in his/her partner’s arms

11. This poet, who studied to be a doctor, lived to only 26; his/her mother, brother and this poet died of tuberculosis

(Continued)
Poems--Matching
A. “To the Virgins, to Make…”  B. “To His Coy Mistress”  C. “She Walks in Beauty”  
D. “Ode to Melancholy”  E. “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”  F. “A Dead Rose”

12. This poem asks the reader to see the miracle in nature
13. This poem suggests that a “mellow” woman exceeds a bright, “gaudy” woman
14. The theme of this poem is that love is eternal, even though life is not
15. The theme of this poem is life is short, so hurry and enjoy your youth
16. This poem illustrates an emotion as being more powerful than beauty, joy and pleasure
17. This poem illustrates that although beauty fades, memories are emotionally powerful

Poetic Concepts--Matching
A. Metaphysical Poetry  B. Cavalier Poetry  C. Romanticism  
D. Byronic Hero  E. An ode  F. Pastoral Poetry  
G. Victorian Poetry

18. This poetry uses witty language, stresses immediacy, is emotional, and is not lyrically smooth
19. This poetry highlights rebellion, distaste for society, hides an unsavory past, and passion
20. This poetry presents a pure, yet idealized, quality of life in nature
21. This poetry is emotional, imaginative, stresses freedom, embraces nature and individuality
22. This poetry is darker in nature; realistic, with an interest in social justice
23. This poetry praises a specific person, place, or event; it is serious with predictable stanzas
24. This poetry uses witty language, includes themes of carpe diem, and is written in a short, direct manner

(Continued)
Part II-Poetry Essay Questions

Directions: Read the two poems below and answer two of the three following questions for each poem on a separate sheet of paper. Responses should be a paragraph in length.

A. “The Good-Morrow” by John Donne

I WONDER by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? were we not wean’d till then?
But suck’d on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers’ den?
’Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be;
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, ’twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone;
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown;
Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mix’d equally;
If our two loves be one, or thou and I
Love so alike that none can slacken, none can die.

Questions:

1. Discuss whether this poem is a metaphysical or Cavalier poem using two characteristics and examples to justify your response.

2. What is the conceit in this poem? Support your response.

3. Select two literary devices Donne uses and discuss how they reinforce Donne’s theme in this poem.

B. “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” by William Wordsworth

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne’er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Questions:

1. In what ways is this poem typical of romantic poetry? Use two characteristics and examples to support your response.

2. Could this be considered a pastoral poem? Why or why not?

3. Select two literary devices Wordsworth uses and discuss how they reinforce Wordsworth’s theme in this poem.
British Poetry Test

Part I—Poetry Multiple Choice and Matching

For the following questions select the best answer.

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Poets—Matching

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G. William Wordsworth  H. Elizabeth Browning

4. C This poet had a secret marriage, wrote about secular and religious subjects, used surprising
   contrasts, and was obsessed with death to the point that s/he preached his/her own funeral sermon

5. D Rebelled against politics, embraced atheism, married the writer of Frankenstein and died when his
   boat sank

6. E Had relationships with many including a cousin and a half-sister, was a rebel, and died of
   complications from a cold

7. G This poet enjoyed long walks, found truth in nature and the common man

8. A This poet was Milton’s assistant and advocate; was a champion of tolerance and acceptance

9. B This poet lived to be 83, worked for the church, never married and was rumored to have made up the
   women in his poems

10. H This poet was sick much of his/her life but was mentally strong; moved to Italy where s/he died in
    his/her partner’s arms

11. F This poet, who studied to be a doctor, lived to only 26; his/her mother, brother and this poet died of
    tuberculosis

(Continued)
### Poems--Matching TEACHER KEY

A. “To the Virgins, to Make…”  B. “To His Coy Mistress”  C. “She Walks in Beauty”  
D. “Ode to Melancholy”  E. “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”  F. “A Dead Rose”  

12. E This poem asks the reader to see the miracle in nature  
13. C This poem suggests that a “mellow” woman exceeds a bright, “gaudy” woman  
14. B The theme of this poem is that love is eternal, even though life is not  
15. A The theme of this poem is life is short, so hurry and enjoy your youth  
16. D This poem illustrates an emotion as being more powerful than beauty, joy and pleasure  
17. F This poem illustrates that although beauty fades, memories are emotionally powerful  

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22. G This poetry is darker in nature; realistic, with an interest in social justice  
23. E This poetry praises a specific person, place, or event; it is serious with predictable stanzas  
24. B This poetry uses witty language, includes themes of carpe diem, and is written in a short, direct manner  

(Continued)
Part II—Poetry Essay Questions TEACHER KEY—possible responses

Directions: Read the two poems below and answer two of the three following questions for each poem on a separate sheet of paper. Responses should be a paragraph in length.

A. The Good-Morrow by John Donne

I WONDER by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be;
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room an everywhere.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone;
Let maps to other, worlds on worlds have shown;
Let us possess one world; each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;
Where can we find two better hemispheres
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mix'd equally;
If our two loves be one, or thou and I
Love so alike that none can slacken, none can die.

Questions:

1. Discuss whether this poem is a metaphysical or Cavalier poem using two characteristics of the movement and examples to justify your response.

   Metaphysical. This poem is clever with the poet using infantile words “wean’d”, “suck’d”, and “childish” to capture the early days of love with his partner. The poem is not lyrically smooth; stanzas not formulaic (rhyme scheme: abcbccc dedeefghghiii). The poet is emotional discussing his true love with their “two loves as one [and]...love so alike that none can slacken, none can die.”

2. What is the conceit in this poem? Support your response.

   The two lovers are new world explorers who “possess one world” with “two better hemispheres”.

3. Select two literary devices Donne uses and discuss how they reinforce Donne’s theme in this poem.

   Donne’s theme of true, mature love is evidenced through his use of uneven rhyme scheme at the beginning of the poem used to capture the playfulness and unpredictability of young love; the diction is his first stanza (“wean’d”, “suck’d”, and “childish”) further captures this notion. As the poet’s love deepens, the two become one with complex metaphors of their love as “discoverers” with “maps” and “hemispheres”.

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B. Composed upon Westminster Bridge by William Wordsworth

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

Questions:

1. In what ways is this poem typical of romantic poetry? Use two characteristics and examples to support your response.

   **Nature is glorified** with the “beauty of morning” and the sleeping city “open unto the fields, and to the sky” with the “river glid[ing] at his own sweet will”. **Freedom is stressed** with a feeling of openness followed by a “calm so deep”. The poet is **emotional** with the calmness created by the morning scene causing him to exclaim, “Dear God!” and make his heart to “lie still!”.

2. Could this be considered a pastoral poem? Why or why not?

   This poem has elements of a pastoral poem, even though it is set in a city. **Nature is glorified** with the “beauty of morning” and the sleeping city “open unto the fields, and to the sky” with the “river glid[ing] at his own sweet will”. The day ahead seems full of possibility, and **free of the corruption** pastoral poems champion. Finally, the poet is alone enjoying the **solitude**.

3. Select two literary devices Wordsworth uses and discuss how they reinforce Wordsworth’s theme in this poem.

   Wordsworth’s theme of the grandeur of nature is evidenced through his use a **simile and personification** to show the city wearing morning “like a garment”. The poem is rich with **imagery** of his surroundings, including buildings that “open unto the fields, and to the sky;/ all bright and glittering in the smokeless air”. Finally, Wordsworth’s **rhyme scheme** is a predictable sonnet (abbaabbacdcdcd) as to create a calm for the reader that the poet is experiencing.
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Andrew Marvell. 1821. The Granger Collection, New York.


Vedder, Elihu. The Questioner of the Sphinx. 1863. From Dover’s 120 Great Orientalist Paintings.


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