

Text Complexity Analysis Template

Text complexity analysis					
Created by:	Sharon Bunyan	Event/Date:	TeachFest Connecticut: Summer Academy July 29, 2014		
Text and Author	“The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson	Where to Access Text	poetryfoundation.org		
Text Description					
<p>“The Railway Train” is a poem written by the New England Poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). Emily Dickinson utilizes the literary elements of alliteration, personification, metaphor and allusion.</p>					
Quantitative					
Lexile and Grade Level	8 th grade Common Core Exemplar Poem	Text Length	82 words		
Qualitative					
Meaning/Central Ideas		Text Structure/Organization			
<p>During Emily Dickinson life the railroad lines were the dominate means of transportation in 1875; 60 railroads corporations were operating in the state of Massachusetts with 3701 miles of track, plus in 1871 a railroad commission was established to oversee the corporations and railroad lines.- According to the State Library of Massachusetts.</p> <p>The train (subject) and its movements.</p>		<p>The text structure is 82 words and 4 stanzas. Commas are used to offer a slight pause, dashes to pause with more emphasis, semicolons are used for a pause without a complete breath because the line is directly tied to the one read and lastly, there is the only period in the poem to close with a full stop.</p>			
Prior Knowledge Demands		Language Features			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the literary elements of alliteration, personification, metaphor and allusion. <p>The author's life and works</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU8XijqmT0 http://www.edickinson.org/editions/4/image_sets/804891 (original manuscript) http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/emily-dickinson <p>Historical perspective of the railroad in Massachusetts- http://www.mass.gov/anf/research-and-tech/oversight-agencies/lib/railroads.html</p> <p>Emily Dickinson's Riddle Poetry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> http://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/18/books/the-riddles-of-emily-dickinson.html?pagewanted=1 		<p>Riddle Poem</p> <p>Whimsical, youthful poem that elicits strong images given the use of figurative language.</p>			
Potential Reader/Task Challenges					
<p>The potential reader task challenges will be to examine the poem's stanzas that utilize the elements of alliteration (like, lap, lick, etc.), allusion, personification, plus the presentation of the train as being a positive or negative element in the poem(i.e.-given the words supercilious or docile). Lastly, the potential reader task challenges would be to identify words emphasized by the author and the punctuation used to support her poem.</p>					

Big Takeaway

The majority of Emily Dickinson's works were published after her death. Few poems were published during her lifetime. The poem's original manuscript does not have the title "The Railway Train". This poem is a riddle poem. Students can create their own riddle poems at <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/riddle> to explore the process and elements. The saying "iron horse" is believed to derive from this poem due to her rich use of figurative language. "The Railway Train" can serve as a mentor text for writing: http://writingfix.com/literature_prompts.htm and http://writingfix.com/right_brain/Serendipitous_Personification_Poetry1.htm. Lastly, "The Railway Train" can lead to the three types of writing (argument, inform and explain, plus to tell a story) with the focus on analytical writing given a research project on Emily Dickinson. "Good writing comes from good reading." - David Coleman http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt_2jl010WU

Vocabulary Analysis Template

	Words that demand less teaching time (i.e. the definition is singular and concrete)	Words that demand more teaching time (i.e. words with multiple meanings and/or that are part of a word family)
Words that can be determined in context	<p>Lap Lick Pile Hooting Horrid Chase Punctual Stanza</p>	<p>Stable Peer Shanties Quarry</p>
Words that cannot be determined in context	<p>Prodigious Supercilious Docile Omnipotent Pare</p>	<p>Boanerges Neigh</p>