

# Team Oral Interpretation

**Instructions:** As a team, you are going to present your given poem as an oral interpretation presentation to the class. You are to analyze the poem carefully to determine how best to communicate a full meaning of the poem, using voice articulation, inflection, and volume; facial expression; body language; and pacing.

1. Read the poem thoroughly, and
2. SSTV it:
  - Describe the **speaker**. Write down any inferences you can make from within the text. Consider what can infer about personality, age, situation, etc.
  - Summarize the **story/subject**: what is literally happening in this poem? What is the speaker talking about?
  - Analyze the **tone** (and use specific textual evidence to prove it!) What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject?
3. Mark up the poem for presentation. See list above for focus.

# Anthem for Doomed Youth

By Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

# Ars Poetica

By Archibald MacLeish

A poem should be palpable and mute  
As a globed fruit,

Dumb  
As old medallions to the thumb,

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone  
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless  
As the flight of birds.

\*

A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs,

Leaving, as the moon releases  
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,  
Memory by memory the mind—

A poem should be motionless in time  
As the moon climbs.

\*

A poem should be equal to:  
Not true.

For all the history of grief  
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.

For love  
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean  
But be.

## **Jazz Fantasia**

Drum on your drums, batter on your banjos,  
sob on the long cool winding saxophones.  
Go to it, O jazzmen.

Sling your knuckles on the bottoms of the happy  
tin pans, let your trombones ooze, and go husha-  
husha-hush with the slippery sand-paper.

Moan like an autumn wind high in the lonesome treetops,  
moan soft like you wanted somebody terrible, cry like a  
racing car slipping away from a motorcycle cop, bang-bang!  
you jazzmen, bang altogether drums, traps, banjos, horns,  
tin cans — make two people fight on the top of a stairway  
and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch tumbling down  
the stairs.

Can the rough stuff . . . now a Mississippi steamboat pushes  
up the night river with a hoo-hoo-hoo-oo . . . and the green  
lanterns calling to the high soft stars . . . a red moon rides  
on the humps of the low river hills . . . go to it, O jazzmen.

## **Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night**

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieve it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

# Drowning in Wheat

By [John Kinsella](#)

They'd been warned  
on every farm  
that playing  
in the silos  
would lead to death.  
You sink in wheat.  
Slowly. And the more  
you struggle the worse it gets.  
'You'll see a rat sail past  
your face, nimble on its turf,  
and then you'll disappear.'  
In there, hard work  
has no reward.  
So it became a kind of test  
to see how far they could sink  
without needing a rope  
to help them out.  
But in the midst of play  
rituals miss a beat—like both

leaping in to resolve  
an argument  
as to who'd go first  
and forgetting  
to attach the rope.  
Up to the waist  
and afraid to move.  
That even a call for help  
would see the wheat  
trickle down.  
The painful consolidation  
of time. The grains  
in the hourglass  
grotesquely swollen.  
And that acrid  
chemical smell  
of treated wheat  
coaxing them into  
a near-dead sleep.

# I, Too

By [Langston Hughes](#)

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

# If We Must Die

By [Claude McKay](#)

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursèd lot.  
If we must die, O let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!  
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

# Ozymandias

By [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.”

## **Dreams**

Hold fast to dreams

For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams

For when dreams go

Life is a barren field

Frozen with snow.

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