

Why Read Literature?

Reading poetry is a special experience. When you read poems, you put your mind, your voice, and all of your senses to work to get the full meaning. To help you understand and remember poems, set different purposes for your reading. Review the three purposes you might set before reading the poems in this unit.

1

Read for the love of literature.

The coldest temperature ever recorded on Earth was in Antarctica, -128.6°F ! Read how the poet Robert Service takes this very serious subject and turns it into a humorous tale of two men in the freezing cold in **"The Cremation of Sam McGee,"** page 708.

Did you know that a seal is born already knowing how to swim? It's true! Read a description of how a seal swims in William Jay Smith's concrete poem **"Seal,"** page 720.

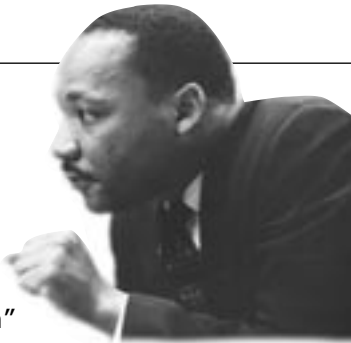


2

Read to be inspired.

Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired many people with his "I Have a Dream" speech. More than 250,000 people gathered near the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., to hear him speak. To read how one person was inspired by the life of Dr. King, read Raymond Richard Patterson's poem **"Martin Luther King,"** page 730.

Animals prepare for winter in a number of different ways. A single squirrel preparing for winter may gather up to 10 bushels (large baskets) of food. Also, a very rare type of tree frog actually spends the winter frozen on land, only to thaw when spring comes. Read about how one woman is inspired by animals to prepare for winter in **"Winter,"** page 714.



3

Read for information.

Babe Ruth is credited with the invention of the modern baseball bat. He was the first player to order a bat with a knob on the end of the handle. At that time, bats were always made from wood. Today, bats are made out of either wood or metal. To learn more about the differences between wooden and metal bats, read **"Bat Attacks?,"** page 763.



Take It to the Net

Visit the Web site for online instruction and activities related to each selection in this unit.

www.phschool.com

How to Read Literature

Use Strategies for Reading Poetry

Reading poetry is like solving a mystery. The poet provides you with clues in the form of words and phrases. Studying the clues carefully helps you put pieces together to form a complete picture. Use these strategies to help you in your poetic detective work.

1. Interpret figurative language.

Just as carpenters use special tools when they build, poets use figurative language to add meaning to poems. Figurative language is language that is not intended to be taken literally. It sets up comparisons that help readers see things in new ways or form a vivid mental picture of something. When you come across figurative language, think of what the writer is trying to show you through the comparison being presented. Notice how the figurative language below helps you experience the biting cold.

Talk of your cold! through the parka's fold
it stabbed like a driven nail.
—from "The Cremation of Sam McGee"

2. Read lines according to punctuation.

Punctuation in poems indicates when to pause or stop reading:

- Keep reading when a line has no punctuation at the end.
- Pause at commas, dashes, and semicolons.
- Stop at end marks, like periods, question marks, or exclamation points. See the example on the right.

3. Paraphrase

If you are unsure of the meaning of a line or passage in a poem, try putting it in your own words.

- Look up any words that you do not know and replace them with familiar synonyms.
- Use language you use in everyday speech in place of formal language.
- Reread the passage to see if your new interpretation makes sense when read with surrounding text.

4. Use your senses.

Poets often include details that appeal to your senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. Use these descriptive words to paint a mental picture that helps you visualize the setting and action of a poem.

As you read the selections in this unit, review these strategies for reading poetry. Use the suggestions to help you interact with the text.

