

**Fun With Poetry In the French Classroom**  
**A Basic Introduction to Poetry Analysis for Levels Four and Five French**

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**Overview**

Apart from the International Baccalaureate Program at Schenley High School, which demands the analysis of poetry in its French curriculum, the French curriculum in the Pittsburgh Public Schools is one of excellence without the in-depth treatment of poetry. At Taylor Allderdice High School, where I have taught for the last 22 years, at the upper level French program, and especially the gifted program in which students prepare for their AP and SAT II exams, the teaching of French grammar has been accompanied by the appreciation of some literature, but not in-depth reading and analysis of poetry.

Twenty-two years ago, when I first arrived at Taylor Allderdice High School, the advanced French program prepared the students mainly for the AP literature exam; poetry reading and analysis was inevitable, and consisted of pure thematic poetry as well as classical poetry found in plays, from varying famous writers like Jean de La fontaine, Ronsard, Molière, Corneille, Baudelaire, Verlaine, etc.

Though many students at Taylor Allderdice High School are comparatively very good in French in the Pittsburgh school district—and certainly compare with the Schenley High School International Baccalaureate Program students in French grammar—there is need for a

curriculum at Allderdice which delves more into literary analysis than the students accomplish now. This would be to complement, but not replace whatever curriculum and/or creative efforts are being used to prepare the students for the AP and SAT II exam. There is ample evidence to indicate that the students who take the AP and SAT II in French are succeeding at a high level. It seems, however, that even for those who are adamant in taking only the grammatical version of these standardized tests, there is a lot to learn in a complementary enrichment curriculum that involves reading and appreciating of poetry.

The fact that all students taking standardized tests in World Languages at Taylor Allderdice High avoid the literature version of the AP belies the foundation, preparations and background that they have acquired in order to facilitate transitions between various levels and concepts in a specific language. Especially in relation to French, most students at Allderdice High go through East Hills elementary School which is a French Magnate School, and to Frick International Studies Magnate (which emphasizes French, Spanish and German). Those who miss going to East Hills and /or Frick go through Linden and Sterett Classical Academies, both of which are World Language Magnate Schools. While at Allderdice, serious language students are normally placed in classes that rigorously provide them with stronger background and prepare them for college level language as well as possible standardized tests.

Granted these students acquire a strong grammatical background in French--and most of them are able to do so--the poetry analysis curriculum will certainly be the only challenge to those who have attained the higher class levels, and most definitely will be an enrichment program, generating interest and curiosity. This challenge, interest and curiosity generated may be a reason for them to take literature in addition to, or instead of, the language version of the AP. Poetry reading and appreciation would add a new dimension to the French content material, and foster not just an understanding of poetry but also a participation in various serious and comical situations that involve “good” and “bad” poetry, and real poetry and prose. Though classical poetry—especially such that is found in major plays-- is not necessarily easy to read and appreciate, it offers situations in which students can have some “fun” while learning. In some of Molière’s social plays, the inclusion of poetry, if not central to the development of the plays, contributed a lot to the festive, cultural and learned atmosphere. In *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, for example, M. Jourdain suddenly finds out that all his life he has been talking in prose, and now he has to learn how to talk in poetic language

like a gentleman. This presents the poetry student today with a poetry analysis situation that existed centuries ago. Similarly, Alceste in the *Misanthrope* is taken to court and loses a case for saying the truth about a poorly written poem.

### **Goals of curriculum**

This curriculum unit has several goals. First of all it seems only logical and sensible to make a blossoming program more interesting and more inclusive. An exclusive mini-curriculum that mainly exposes students to reading and learning about poetry appreciation would certainly add more to the Allerdice High School French language program.

Dealing with poetry is dealing with language at a different level. For students and teachers alike, the reading, teaching and appreciation of poetry is a direct method of mastery of the language involved, if even on a limited level on each occasion that a poem is analyzed. It seems plausible to surmise that there is nowhere else in the use of language that words, forms, images, sounds, and even music, etc., are so carefully incorporated. Especially for students to progress beyond the daily task of grammar or the analysis of plots and characters in short stories and novels is for the students to realize and to put to use the creative abilities that they possess—either for the appreciation only or for writing their own poetry. This unit will certainly raise the cognitive and mastery levels of students of French.

Though poetry can sometimes be very mystifying and difficult to comprehend; may be moody and depressing, and may present topics that are of no interest to the reader, it is also true that a lot of poetry contains material that is contrary to this fact. Above all, in spite of what the contents of a poem may be, and the feelings and reactions individuals may get from reading a poem, it seems that most students of poetry enjoy and actually take delight in applying established poetic terms and mechanics to analyze given poems. In fact, I remember my early years at Taylor Allerdice when the students used to take the AP in French literature and I happened to teach those classes for two different semesters. Even when the students did not fully grasp the meaning and happenings in the poem, they were always excited to try their skills at analysis. This mini curriculum would therefore be a likely course of fun, which is what most high school students are looking for these days.

Lastly, I believe that if the curriculum raises the students' language aptitude, and there is excitement in reading and appreciating

poetry, that will normally lead to a few students electing to explore the AP syllabus in literature. The school already prides itself in many students achieving highly in the language version of the French AP test, and a repeat of the 1980's impressive scores in AP French Literature would be a highly valued complement of a currently very successful city school foreign language program.

### **Specific Objectives of Curriculum**

The specific objectives of the curriculum will be realized in the students' abilities to do certain activities related to reading and appreciating poetry.

The students will be able to define poetry, types of poems, a poem and related basic terms that are used in poetry analysis

Students will be able to use these terms to analyze the structure, the physical as well as the metaphysical aspects of given poems

Students will be able to respond to a read poem by expressing their reaction in their own logical and sensible terms or those learned in the poetry curriculum.

Students will raise their proficiency level in reading, speaking, and writing, and will successfully and confidently appreciate poetry

### **Rationale and Background:**

Students' learning and achievement is at the heart of all activities, lesson plans and curricula of responsible teachers. It seems, however, that over the years—with the change of district and building administrations—things gradually change, including the contents and manner in which curricula is taught. As a matter of fact, the change or the lack of a physically available curriculum that can be passed from one teacher to another for the instruction of gifted students beyond the third level course at Allderdice may be the main reason why a teacher may not be able to teach students and provide them with tools to take either the literature or language aspect of the AP. In this context, my colleagues who have taught the upper levels the years since the 1980's have done an excellent job of preparing the students for the language AP. But in some cases, the teachers have had no choice other than to do grammar—given the preparedness of the students at that level to read poetry and other difficult material. So if a specific curriculum were written for the upper level gifted classes in which poetry and other AP literature material readings were included, students would

probably find the situation a given, and would have to deal with it accordingly. In fact, for the first time in many years while-- we were in the process of selecting textbook for gifted students for the next few years—the World Language supervisor indicated there might be a curriculum writing project for gifted student classes above level 2 this fall.

Decentralization of the Pittsburgh School District management and supervision practices and site-based budgeting policies in the 1990's facilitated a high degree of independence in pedagogy and other instructional decisions that were strictly discouraged in the 1980's preceding the PRISM (Pittsburgh Research in Instructional Scientific Methodology) years. These PRISM years had seen the revival of fundamental teaching techniques and procedures, especially the educational philosophies of Madeleine Hunter. PRISM had required every single teacher in the district—old and new—to spend eight weeks at a refresher school run at Schenley High School. The uniqueness of the PRISM years, however, was characterized by the practice and adherence to uniformity in instructional procedures and dissemination of exactly the same content area material at the same level in all the city schools. With the decentralization of management and curriculum supervision, the district suddenly had four assistant superintendents, each of whom was responsible for a geographical area having high schools, and two more assistants, one for elementary and the other for middle schools. The new concepts in administration and supervision that were to be introduced under these four district regions were hardly implemented when new budget problems and new school administrators decided to do otherwise. But individual instructors teaching the same subjects at different schools had become independent and relaxed enough to choose what texts and programs would determine their curricula. It is, therefore, not surprising that while all the high school gifted classes in the 1990's started Capretz's *French In Action*, only Brashear is still following the program at the eve of the search for “new “ instructional material for this group. Taylor Allderdice dropped Capretz and has been using Le français vivant for levels two and three, and instructor's choice of items for grammar review and reading and comprehension material for levels four and five, when students decide to and take the AP exam. It is at this level that a mini or full curriculum can be introduced to encourage more literature reading to facilitate a literature program here.

Many content areas including foreign languages may also be seeing the effect of what education researchers note as falling standards in students' learning because of the introduction of several factors into children's homes and social lives which tend to interfere in their learning

process. For many years, television was the major obstacle, followed to some extent by family instability and the students' extra-curricula activities including jobs. Through the eighties and especially in the 1990s, home entertainment has put a stranglehold on a moderate percentage of students who are not able to resist programs and activities on cable and regular television programs, as well as electronic games and the internet. This means that many more students are putting less and less quality time into their studies, which means that they avoid most things which are demanding unless they must do it. In this view, whenever students find an opportunity to do one of two things, they choose the easier one because that will allow them more free time to do other (normally non-school) activities. Logically, therefore, if there were a French literature AP curriculum written and taught just like the grammar is taught in the other French classes, the teaching would facilitate students' understanding of poetry and encourage them not only to read and appreciate poetry, but also to take the AP exam in literature.

Let me revisit some of the concerns I highlighted last year when I rationalized on writing a mini-curriculum on comedy as a means to encourage more students into reading and probably into taking the AP in literature. The first is that over the years, the teaching of language, and literature in particular, has been so watered down that even some teachers are believing that certain standardized tests such as the AP are too difficult for the students in the public school system. I had, in a rather surprising turn of events, heard a German teacher complaining about how the grammar AP's are biased in favor of "native speakers." This observation actually suggests a more alarming look at the situation than has been the usual case. By "unusual", I am referring to the fact that most students who have usually avoided taking the AP test in literature, have taken the grammar—just like other subjects. Even as I heard the French teacher concur, I wondered even more whether it is actually the unfairness of the test dropping the individual students' standards that ought to be blamed for producing the negative appraisal. I remember very clearly that only in the eighties students were having scores of 4's and 5's in the French literature AP.

In my opinion, any student who has taken the AP in English, history, biology, etc., has probably had the same level of anxiety, experienced same frustrations and dealt with similar difficulties as in the foreign language grammar AP. To say, therefore, that this grammar is biased in favor of only the native speakers is to imply that the literature which the students have avoided for almost two decades is in a class of

difficulty all by itself—one which is simply too difficult to tackle. This is not true.

Again, as I thought about a curriculum to enhance the instruction of French classics, there are several questions that need to be answered in relation to students and poetry as an aspect of the French literature AP. Why have the programs implemented by the Board to enhance students proficiency not translated into their appreciation of literature though they have been performing well in grammar? Are the students intentionally avoiding the AP because of reading difficulties—and thus difficulties in analyzing poetry? Especially concerning poetry, can we assume that students look at poetry with awe—even when it is in their own language—and that is the reason why their interest has to be cultivated in every way possible? I am betting on the last, and that is why I hope to walk students through the “fun” aspect, as Vendler calls the analysis and appreciation of poetry.

Lastly, a poetry curriculum which is successfully implemented will be a realization of the proficiency goal set by the Pittsburgh Board of Education. In other words, a student who is able to take a poem and tear it apart, using the French method of “explication de texte” will be considered proficient in many respects. In fact, the classroom procedure would include oral discussions in which individual students would get up in class and using all the analytic procedure, say their feelings about a poem and use technical terms to explain the poem.

## **CURRICULUM DESIGN**

This curriculum is designed to be used at Taylor Allderdice High in French 4, 5, and 6 classes, where most preparation for the Advanced Placement Test takes place. Since this is intended to be a course to entice students who would otherwise most likely opt to take the grammar AP test, the most promising class in which to introduce it would be level four, where serious preparations for the test begins, and there is most probably still time for the student to decide and then work.

In order to thoroughly learn what poetry, poetic terms and analytical tools are, and to analyze some poems by Ronsard, de la Fontaine, Voltaire, Hugo, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and to also look at extracts of classical poems as found in plays by Molière, the curriculum will be designed for a two week period.

## **Material Content of Curriculum**

### ***French Poetry Analytical Terms***

Analytical terms will be a fundamental aspect of the curriculum. Without these terms, the appreciation, or analysis –what Vendler calls the fun part—will not be achieved. Jean Sarrailh's *Explication de Texte*, Andre Hurtgen's *Tous les poèmes pour le cours avancé*, and James Redfern's *A Glossary of French Literary Expression* all provide more than enough analytical terms and definitions needed for poetry appreciation at the high school level and for AP exam preparation. In addition, Helen Vendler, though not completely in cadence with traditional critics of one or two decades ago, offers some new words and approaches which could easily be translated and used in poetry appreciation in French.

Some authors also enlighten students of poetry on what makes poetry and other aspects of poetry. While Poetry is generally described as “the expression of emotions recollected in tranquility”, poets and critics have a lot of different remarks about poetry as well as poets. Through his characters, Molière criticizes poems and poets; Mallarmé observes that “Un poème est un mystère dont le lecteur doit chercher la clef” ( A poem is a mystery of which the reader has to find the key); Valéry notes that “Un poème doit être une fête de l'intellect” (A poem must be a feast of the intellect) and Giono says of the poet: “Le poète doit être un professeur d'espérance” (the poet must be a teacher of hope).

### ***Poets and Poems to be Analyzed***

The selection of poets and consequently poems is not based on any special preferential parameters. The basic approach in choosing the authors and items has been to pick out poets whose names tend to be popular like Jean de la Fontaine, whose fables seem to be a household item in every culture, and represent the Medieval era; Ronsard, whose romantic poems of courtship are characteristic of Renaissance attitudes and practices; Molière, whose plays in verse praise, and mock at, poetry; Hugo who observed and sympathized with, or resonated with, human nature, and suffering; Baudelaire, who dealt with nature and human beauty and correspondences ; Mallarmé for whose poems we have to find a key to open up their secrets; Paul Verlaine who stacked mood with environment, and Léopold Sédar Senghor whose observation of history, culture and ancestry made him an incomparable literary figure universally. Other poets of negritude are Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Paul Dadié.

## Strategy and Methodology

Literary analysis is very important for the understanding of both poetic and prose literature. But in the analysis, whether for personal enjoyment or for educational purposes, as is the case in the writing of this curriculum, the process in appreciating poetry goes beyond that of prose. In his *Teaching French*, p. 169, Robert L. Politzer observes that many literature scholars and linguists believe that the very essence of literature may be defined by its use of special structure and vocabulary—and this is the case in poetry—and that the very possibility of appreciating a literary work depends very often on recognizing the departures it makes from the structure and vocabulary of normal, everyday speech patterns. So the very first thing that we take with us into the methodology in poetry analysis is the recognition of the special structure and vocabulary that make poetry, and which we have to explain.

In her book *Poems. Poets. Poetry*, Helen Vendler presents a different, though not uncommon, approach, to poetry analysis. Her major analytical approach consists of scrutinizing poems as a presentation or representation of life, private and public; an observation of arranged life; an intimation of the experience or lack of pleasure. Furthermore, suggests the appreciation of poetry within these contexts: establishing a social identity; history and regionality; attitudes, values and judgements, as well as the making or construction of self. It's after this content-oriented approach that she then validates the regularly used technical approach to poetry appreciation. The technical aspects of poetry analysis, according to Vendler, are rhythm, rhyme, structure, images, argument, poignancy, and wisdom. Obviously, it is not possible to have a complete poetry analysis or appreciation—if only the contents or only the technical properties are investigated. A true and complete appreciation most, of necessity, contain both aspects, and that is why the French approach—*explication de texte*—as comprehensive as it is, is the more appropriate methodology for teaching and reading poetry.

Jean Sarell notes that in American high schools, and universities literary analysis and appreciation, to which the French refer as “*explication de texte*” is so scarcely done that there is hardly any suitable word that exists for it in English. In the French system, however, this is a refining process for students taking literature, and many of them are absolutely frightened about the whole process. He believes, however, that the process can be made more humane and friendly by starting out asking individual students the basic and fundamental questions whether they “like” or “do not like it (the poem).” From this common ground,

individuals will then be able to start to “explain” by unconsciously applying some analytical terms while “analyzing” the poem.

Sarell’s suggestion is to start with something which will bring forth a basic reaction. This is certainly in line with Professor Alan Kennedy (Curriculum seminar leader for Reading and teaching Poetry) whose approach incorporates asking individual students what/how they feel after they have read a poem. I believe, though, that to be sure of getting a meaningful response from most questioned students, the assigned reading has to be comprehensible to them—otherwise, the answer will all be, “I did not understand it.” Logically, therefore, it would be productive to initially choose poems which are easy to understand and even to diagram, or at least to arrange a group of chosen poems in order, beginning with the least difficult. This strategy will encourage students to at the very beginning to express their reactions because they are not lost in the mystifying and daunting aspects of reading and comprehending poetry, and have to look for the key to open and let them in. After a few lessons of reading and responding to “easy” poems, more poems in ascending degree of difficulty will be introduced. Typically, the ascending degree of difficulty will be from the teacher’s point of view, and students may have to be guided through the reading as well as prodded through the analysis.

In the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development’s *Strategic Teaching and Learning: Cognitive Instruction in the Content Areas*, Richard Beach proposes ideas for strategic teaching in literature, which mimic Vendler’s idea about finding oneself in the process of reading, understanding and appreciating poetry. This also parallels Alan Kennedy’s “reaction” approach. Beach suggests the use of “guided response activities in which students respond to literary text according to a series of sequential activities”. Like in the process of self-discovery or reaction to situations, these activities involve various response strategies such as connecting, describing/exploring, interpreting and judging. To Beach, these are different from answering traditional textbook or worksheet questions “in that students are continually relating their inferences to an emerging hypothesis or set of ideas.” He believes that these inference strategies are organized according to certain heuristic patterns, which facilitate students appreciation of literature—because students are incidentally learning a set of heuristics for exploring and extending their responses to a literary work. “For example, by initially describing their perceptions of a poem, then connecting those perceptions to their own autobiographical experiences, and then using those experiences to interpret a poem, a student is learning to employ a describe/connect/interpret heuristic (p. 136). This

methodology will be incorporated into the normal “explication de texte” approach in as much as it facilitates the process. This inference processes which, according to Beach, are most productive in individual responses to poems include four of the aspects already listed: engagement or empathy for the situation or character; description based on individual perception; connection to responder’s life experience, and interpretation driven by the feelings and reactions of the reader.

The basic methodology in the French system of poetry analysis is the “explication de texte” approach. Students of literary orientation have the main analytical terms and learn them to the point that they are well acquainted with their meanings and associated examples. Upon reading a poem, they already have in mind what main ideas and steps are involved in the literary analysis of a poem. This approach is also used in the AP exams. Though the student of French literature will have studied many poetic terms which are elements of a larger group of analytical terms, the whole analysis and process are usually facilitated by the use of terms which in most cases correspond to the English terms suggested by Vendler as “Poems as Pleasure” in chapter 3 of her book. In this chapter, the variables to be used for analysis include “rime,” (rhyme) “rythme,” (rhythm) “structure,” (structure) “ton,” (poignancy) “moralité,” (wisdom) “fond,” (argument). The lesson includes two other terms—“new language” and “finding yourself”, both of which can also be incorporated into the analytical process in French poetry. Most commonly used French analytical terms which have not been mentioned by Vendler include: “narrateur”—word which calls on the reader to take note of which person is telling the story in the poem; though “ironie” can be an aspect of “moralité”, finding the ironical in French literature has a pivotal place in the development and winding down of the whole plot—and includes the structure and theme in a poem.

### **Normal Class procedure and summary of Methodology**

For each class period and for each poem read, the class session will follow a structured process. First of all, there will be the interactive period between teacher and students, a procedure which is intended to accomplish several goals for the class session. First of all, it is important that every student read assigned poetry before coming to class, and be ready to share reactions with the class. The teacher will therefore begin each class by requesting five students as has already been mentioned to say something concerning the assigned poems. Since this will either be a voluntary or teacher-chosen participant process, it certainly will encourage

most, if not all, of the students to complete the reading assignment before getting to class.

The second and more involved process in the teaching and reading of each poem will involve the detailed analysis of the read poem by a student who has been chosen by teacher through a set method. Since most poems to be analyzed are not longer than a page at the most, the poem analyst will first read out the poem loudly. Then the basic analysis will progress, with the student following a methodical process of breaking down the poem. In the process, a basic procedure of the “**explication de texte**”, the **genre** or type of poem is established, and can include, but not be limited to “**sonnet, vers libre, élégie, lyrique, poème romantique**”; the analysis continues with the determination of the “**narrateur**”, which in most cases is actually the author or writer of the poem, but in some cases is a character; “**le fond**” relates to the basic theme and its development. “**La rime**” in the French poem is intricate than in English. First of all, a rime is either **masculine or feminine**, depending on the ending of the corresponding sound; if the riming sound ends in a silent “e”, then the rime is considered feminine; if it ends in any other letter or a pronounced “e”, then it is masculine. “**Le rythme**” is also very important in explication de texte, and is decided by many characteristics which are explained in the other lessons. **Le ton**, which like in English is the tone or mood of the poem, is also defined in the later. In most poems, “**ironie**” and “**moralité**” also play an important part, and the irony in the story told in the poem may be related to the morale that the poem is teaching. A poem may have both, one or the other, or none at all, but that question has to be answered in the process of the explication de texte. While these are the major terms that drive the explication de texte, individual poems do contain other poetic characteristics, such as allegorie, anaphore, etc., that are important for the explication de texte. These words are also defined in the appendix, and each and everyone will be dealt with when it is an aspect of the poem being analyzed. With this in mind, a teacher teaching the reading and analysis of poetry will have the students follow this process, making sure that all the important words listed in this section guide the analysis.

## **Standards**

The Pittsburgh Board of Education has established “Standards” for each area content area taught in the school district. The proficiency standards in foreign languages or world languages, as they are preferably called now, range from the novice-low level to the advanced level. Though the rubric stresses mostly oral proficiency, the fact that the grammar and vocabulary

are included is proof that written and other skills are important. In fact, to be able to respond orally correctly at any of the levels, a student will need writing, listening, pronunciation, and reading skills. Consequently, these standards reflect an inclusive prescription of language skills requirements or prerequisites.

Students preparing to take the AP—whether the language or literature version—are most definitely students who have met the advanced level requirements as specified in the oral proficiency rubrics (though I have met students who could write beautifully but find it very difficult to open their mouths and say something in French). This means that students involved should be able to communicate with any audience at any given time; they should have enough vocabulary to narrate, describe, discuss, summarize, compare and contrast, while at the same time using paragraph-like discourse 60% of the time in all frequently used tenses. It also means that students involved will be acquiring more vocabulary and linguistic skills at and beyond the Pittsburgh Board of Education advanced level of the oral proficiency, as they read, discuss, act out, and analyze the chosen classic poems.

Each daily lesson plan will have goals and student objectives that include the realization of these proficiency standards. The teaching and learning methodology which requires the students to respond to poetry reading—based on personal feelings as well as guided-response guidelines—provides the bases for the fulfillment of the Pittsburgh School District’s standards in world languages.

## **Sample Lesson Plans**

### **Day One: Defining Poetry and Related Appreciation Terms**

#### Lesson Goals

The goal of the lesson is basically to introduce the students to poetry from the French perspective, while not eroding the student’s concepts about poetry as learned in an English class. In fact, it will be unconscionable not to look at certain general descriptions of poetry and poems in English, and to discuss, compare and contrast, and even contradict the concepts. The aim is to lead students to a level where they can comfortably start to see and read poems in critical manners using the basic concepts that define poetry as well as the ideas that relate to the author or poet. In this session, names of poets to be read will also be introduced.

## Lesson Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to recognize names of selected poets whose poems will make up the unit. In addition, they will be able to state some basic poetic terms which are critical to the understanding of the basic poetry concepts and analysis. Students will also be able to list commonly encountered poetic themes in daily life settings. In addition to being able to define basic terms relevant to appreciation, the student will be able to relate those terms to prescribed standards to be fulfilled.

## Materials Needed

In order to fulfill the envisioned goals, and realize the stated objectives, these materials will be used to aid the teaching and learning process. Teacher will provide list of basic terms which are critical in the understanding and appreciation of poetry as well as the poet. Equally important will be a list of poets whose selected poems will be analyzed. A third outline will delineate the standards that have to be met in this lesson.

### *The List A: Introductory Poetry Words*

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. La poésie | 6. Le narrateur |
| 2. Le poème  | 7. Le thème     |
| 3. Le poète  | 8. Le fond      |
| 4. Le vers   | 9. la ligne     |
| 5. L'auteur  | 10. La strophe  |

### *List B: Poets and Poems Included*

1. Jean de la Fontaine and his Fables
2. Hugo and his Meditative Poems
3. Baudelaire and Unison, and the Sadness in Life
4. Léopold Sédar Senghor and the celebration of Negritude
5. Ronsard and the Sonnets of love or lack of love
6. Mallarmé and view on Life
7. Paul Verlaine and Sadness in Living
8. Aimé Césaire and Bitterness about Colonization and Repression
9. Rimbaud and the Indifference in of nature
10. Extracts for Molière's *Le Misanthrope* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*
11. Leon Damas

## 12. Paul Dadié

### Procedure

Since it is the very first day of classes and students do not yet know what exactly the course contents entail and what the directions, expectations and objectives of the course will include, class activities will be mostly teacher-directed. Following the use of a combination of methodologies—engagement, reaction, self-finding, and brain-storming exercises—teacher will systematically progress through lesson, engaging, and challenging students on contextual word definition and determination of functions. These words are the same that have already just been provided to students.

In the process, teacher will ask each student his or her definition of, or opinion about, each of the words on the list, as well as their feelings or reactions to seeing, or to hearing the word said. Moreover, students will be required to say how they feel or imagine upon their own utterance of those words.

To avoid a long, drawn-out and tedious process, teacher will first ask questions to a limited number of volunteers, five volunteers per word. If there are not enough volunteers, then teacher will ask certain students who have not volunteered to respond to relating questions. In case of no volunteers at all, teacher will select students randomly to respond.

After students have each spoken, giving definitions, their feelings and reactions to sounds of words uttered, it will be the teacher's turn to go through, and establish varying, and the "most acceptable" definitions of given words in terms of poetry appreciation and analysis, for the class. Students will be finally provided with same list to recapitulate definitions on their own, as part of this day's homework.

### Assignment

First, students will be expected to complete the vocabulary sheet recapitulation.

Secondly, students will be required to look up meanings of words used for the basic schema of poems. The new words, each of which are pivotal in the process of poetry appreciation include *mesure*, *versification*, *le schema des rimes* and all its characteristics

### **Day 2: Immersing Students in Schematic Terms**

## Goals

On the second day of class, the goal is mainly to continue to immerse students in the use of poetic terms for analysis. While some of these words are actually cognates which are familiar to those students who might have done some poetry appreciation in the English class, they may be totally strange and new to some. The aim, therefore, is not simply to have words defined in a barren field or a vacuum, but to have students react to seeing or hearing them. It will entail the application and modeling with these words in context. In fact, according to André Hurtgen, whose notes on pp1-5 are the essentials of this lesson on versification, “Une bonne appréciation de poésie française exige naturellement la compréhension des règles de versification.” But the irony in understanding this versification rule in French is that it entails the mastering of rules which sometimes tend to explain how concepts do not necessarily operate to produce exact results in both languages. Not surprisingly, therefore, la mesure—which actually denotes “meter” in English poetry, is basically the process in the determination of the stress syllable in a poetic line or verse. In English poetry, the beat is mostly based on the accentuation of word syllables, while in French it is not—because French is not an accentuated language. So while in English the accent is determined by each word itself, and each word has a stress which does not change, French as a language does not have accentuation on words. However, there is a stress based on the length of a rhythmic group. This stress or accentuation always falls on the last syllable in a rhythmic group.

## Objectives

After today’s lesson, students will be able to define and explain the preliminary words dealing with poetry analysis. These terms include words as basic as le poème. In addition, they will be able to state, by name, the poets that we are covering in the curriculum. Finally, students will be able to recognize more basic poetry terms dealing with meter, structure, rhyme rhythm, or aspects that the French classify as “la versification” and also be able to apply these terms in the context of “versification”.

## Materials Needed

If possible, teacher can provide each student with a copy of Hurtgen’s *Tous Les Poèmes pour le cours avancés*. If this is not possible, teacher can either copy the pages dealing with “versification” or make original

notes based on pages one through five, which can be given out to students. If any other material on “versification” can be found to accompany this, it would make a good complement. If not, these notes are certainly sufficient for the lesson.

### Procedure

On day 2, with the given objectives stated above in mind, teacher will first review the first group of words related to understanding and analyzing poetry. A daily review of previously covered material like this is necessary for the understanding of the whole material content and process of poetry appreciation. First, students will be asked questions on these main words which prescribe the process of the “explication de texte”. Students will be expected to give examples where possible.

After the review of the previously discussed terms, teacher will then lead the class in the process of discovering the French versification method. “Verisification” by itself simply means the process of determining the basic structural and end-sound effects on a specific poem. This section will be emphatically learned by practice. In addition to examples which Hurtgen has provided to demonstrate similarities and differences in defining and applying of the words related to versification—mesure, rime, rythme, etc., teacher will provide some more examples. After the initial activity of introduction, teacher will provide practice to include reading poetry lines and indicating where the rhythmic group stress falls; determining the rhyme patterns, and all its qualities, as well as determining the primary determining characteristics of rhythm.

### Assignment

For reinforcement of lessons learned, students will be expected to complete an assignment for the following day to include definition and application of the important terms learnt up to that point, as well as the methodic approach to mastering the “explication de texte” process in the analysis of poetry. The assignment will request students, first, to know the newly learned terms. Secondly, the assignment will require students to apply the terms by analyzing two poems.

### **Day Three: Reinforcement of the “Application de texte” process in poetry analysis.**

### Gaols

The goals of the lesson are to familiarize students with the fundamental terms in the process of poetry analysis and make it part of their daily vocabulary as well as ease them into the process using these fundamental terms

### Objectives

After this lesson, the students will be able to explain what “explication or analyse de texte” is. In addition, they will be able to state the basic process in the explication du texte, which involves stating whom the author is (auteur); who the narrator in the poem is (narrateur); what the essence of the poem is about (fond or theme); what type of poem it is (genre); explain the “schema” of the poem, involving all the features of the “rimes” (croisées/embrassées/plates; feminines/masculines; pauvres/suffisantes/riches), and the rhythm; state what the ironie and moralité in the poems are; explain the difference between the determination of meters in the reading poetry in French as opposed to reading poetry in English.

### Materials Needed

Copies of Jean de la Fontaine’s poems *Le Chene et le Roseau* and *La Mort et le Bucheron*; supplementary list of poetry terms from days 1 and 2 (to supply students who might have lost theirs, or forgotten theirs at home); teacher notes based on pp1-3 of Hurtgen explication of analysis (previously discussed with, and given to, students).

### Procedure

After a quick review of word definition and the method of application, class will also review the notes on poetry analysis. After this, teacher will read out loud each of the two poems to be analyzed.

The first activity will be for the students to determine what **type** of poetry that is. While some of la Fontaine’s poems are sonnets, most of them are fables in various poetic forms and structures. Next, students will determine whether the **narrateur** in the poem is same as the **auteur** or a different voice altogether. It’s always important to establish le **fond** or the essence of the poem, as it helps the progress of the analysis in many ways. Teacher will then require the students to determine the **mesure** based on the teacher’s voice as he reads the poem for a second time. In French poetry, incidentally, the meter is a major attribute of the **rhythm structure, and tone**, so students will also be asked to determine or guess

rhythm and tone based on the teacher's out-loud reading. The **rimes** will then be analyzed to determine if they are structurally **plates, embrassées or croisées; féminines or masculines** by gender, and **pauvres, suffisantes, or riches** in quality. Lastly, students will be asked to uncover the **ironie** and **moralité** in each of the poems, as these two may sometimes be related. If they are not related, students will have to show how each stands by itself; on the other hand, if the **ironie** happens to relate to the **moralité** lesson that the author wants to establish, then students will be obliged to show that connection.

In both poems there are ironic situations or outcomes. In *Le Chêne et le Roseau*, the oak tree discovers the improbable, as the storm uproots it, but the reed weathers the situation by bowing down in the storm and then getting back up after it. The morality is for each individual to know that size and strength do not determine endurance and adaptability. In *Le Bûcheron et la Mort*, the irony is less strident, as the complaining wood cutter reverses his wishes and decides to live a suffering life than to die; the related morality teaches people two things, viz, to be satisfied and be thankful with whatever condition they are born in, and to not wish for a worse situation simply because they cannot stand the one they are in.

#### Assignment

Students will be given a list containing the rest of terms that are used in analyzing French poetry. These terms will be discussed the two following days (days four and five) in context with selected poems. Students will be asked to go over the first part of the list and acquaint themselves with the words, some of which are English cognates.

#### Day Four: Getting Acquainted with Poetry Analytical Terms

Now that the fundamental aspects of appreciating poetry has been covered, the teaching and learning process advances into more involved aspects of poetry analysis. The implication of a higher level of analysis here is not so much about the level of difficulty as is about the addition of information and terms to use for poetry analysis.

#### Goal

The goal of this lesson is to introduce students to more analytical terms which they can use for more in-depth analysis and appreciation. These words simply add on to the previously learned terms and duly complement them in the process of analysis.

## Objectives

After the lesson, students will be able to recognize and define these words in poetic context, and apply them the appreciation of given poetry by themselves and in conjunction with previously learned analytical terms.

## Materials Needed

Two main items needed here are a list with rest of needed analytical terms and selected poems to use as examples as the meanings and uses of terms are discussed. If the teacher can provide the class with a set of Hurtgen's *Tous Les Poèmes*, making of a list from scratch will not be necessary because these words and processes are all discussed here, and this will serve as an excellent textbook.

Instead of finding complete poems—in case students cannot afford individual copies of Hurtgen, only needed sections (verses, and may be only certain lines in specific poems) will be needed as examples.

Though the complete list of terms for analysis appear in Hurtgen in alphabetical order, it is not necessary to follow that order to acquaint students with the terms they need. On the contrary, it is more sensible to sort out the words and arrange them in the order that gradually completes the definition of a poem as a structure and then as an aesthetic creation with imaginative aspects. To that effect, the list given out to students will be in two sections, the first list for day four, and the second list for day five.

### List of Poetry Terms to be Studied, Discussed and Applied on days Four and Five

	Day Four (Structural Terms)	Day Five (Aesthetic Terms)
1	Alexandrain	Allégorie
2	Césure	Allitération
3	Coupe	Anaphore
4	Décasyllabe	Antithèse
5	Enjambement	Apostrophe
6	Forme	Assonance
7	Hémistiche	Catachrèse
8	Octasyllabe	Classisme
9	Période	Correspondances
10	Poème	Élégie

11	Poète	Hyperbole
12	Quatrain	Lyrisme
13	Quartet	Métaphore
14	Rejet	Métonymie
15	Strophe	Négritude
16	Tercet	Onomatopée
17	Vers	Oxymoron
18		Période
19		Périphrase
20		Personnification
21		Prosopopée
22		Romanticisme
23		Surréalisme
24		Symbole/Symbolisme
25		Synecdoche/Synecdoque

### Procedure

After a quick review of previous terms and application practice, teacher will go through each of the seventeen new terms today, providing examples of the application of these new terms, by using either as little as a single line of a poem or as much as a whole poem.

Are students using notes provided by teacher? Then these notes should have each chosen example included. At the high school level where students have come to expect the teacher to do almost everything for them, making complete notes for this lesson will not be uncommon. However, if the students have the text, then teacher can direct students through the explanations therein, and simplify the definitions by offering more examples than those in the text.

### Assignment

To make students more conscientious of, and acquainted with, these new words, teacher can provide several parts of different poems, one whole poem, or a few poems, and ask students to identify aspects of poems that correspond to the structural terms specified.

The second assignment will require students to shift from their engagement with structural aspects and start immersing themselves in the study of terms that apply to the aesthetical definition of terms—list B.

### **Day Five: The Aesthetic Terms in Poetry Analysis**

Having provided four daily lesson plan samples, the first four days, I will mainly provide lesson guides as from day five—including mainly the lesson contents, goals and objectives of each lesson. This approach will be used throughout the remaining part of the curriculum unit.

#### Day Five goals

The goal of this lesson is to acquaint students with terms used for poetry analysis in a non-structural or physical aspect of the poem. On the contrary these terms are associated with the linguistic values, the imaginative concepts, the metaphysical attributes, and just the aesthetic nature of the poem.

#### Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to appreciate poetry by looking at aspects other than the physical structure of the poem itself. In other words, the linguistic values, social attributes, ideas and periods, etc., are the aspects that define or describe poetry and feed human minds with ideas and images that facilitate the retention and remembrance of those specific poems. Students will, of course be able to recognize as well as define these words in the context of poetry analysis and appreciation.

### **Day Six: Jean de la Fontaine and Fables of morality**

By day six, presumably, every student in class ought to be comfortable with terms associated with poetry analysis and appreciation. Students have to be reminded always to be able to do the explication de texte in the complete fundamental approach, and beyond when there is more to say about a given poem.

#### Goals

The goals of the lesson include the introduction of the author Jean de la Fontaine and his life to the student, as well as the examination of the type of poetry he wrote and the aims of those poems. One of our goals today is also to analyze two of La Fontaine's poems using all the possible methods that have been discussed in the methodology section

#### Objectives

After the lesson, students will be able to state who La Fontaine was, say what type of poems he wrote, and the basic reasoning behind his writing. In addition students will be able to analyze two of his poems using both the structural and the aesthetic attributes of a poem for the analysis. In the process of analysis, students will increase their vocabulary, which will contribute to the fulfillment of the district's standards. This poem is also a good material from which students will appreciate and note rhythm and movement in French poetry as determined more by punctuation marks than the English meter system. The student will also be able to identify the morale of the fable, which though not explicit nor stated separately by the author as in other poems, is clear in the last part of the conversation between the two insects.

#### Materials Needed

Short and precise notes and information on the life of La Fontaine, mostly showing that he redid the works of Aesop (Greek fable writer) and Phèdre (Latin fable writer) polishing these fables, and making them teaching and moralistic, will be distributed to the class. Copies of Jean de la Fontaine's poems *La Cigale et la Fourmi*, and *Le Corbeau et le Renard* will also be given to students. If available, Hurtgen's text will be provide all the information. Teacher will also hand out a vocabulary list that covers all the words which are presumed to be new to the class. These materials should have been given out the day before so that students acquaint themselves with the words before class begins today.

#### Procedure

The first activity in class is for the teacher to establish an identity for the fable writer Jean de La Fontaine. It is enough to know that he was born in bourgeoisie family, and that he later on became a writer of moralistic fables, mostly polishing up the works of other authors, by rewriting them in an entertaining, moralistic and teaching manner.

It is also important to establish the definition of a fable, which basically means a story in which animals and inanimate objects are given life and made to talk, or personified. The differences between La Fontaine's fables and most others include the facts that most of La Fontaine's fables are in poetry form with entertaining conversations

between animals and objects and have the morale embedded within the conversations of the characters, or clearly stated at the end of the poem by the author. Though this information is provided by teacher to students in a hand-out, it is absolutely necessary for the teacher to go over some notes with students, or to just deliver a short lecture on the life and nature of writing of La Fontaine.

Before reading each poem, teacher will go over the vocabulary with the class. In the first poem, the first thing is to establish the English names of the two insect characters, the cicada and the ant ( la cigale et la fourmi). Other words that seem to be above level three French in the district will also be defined by teacher, and if students still show a lack of knowledge of other words, teacher should provide the meaning.

The poem will then be read out loud by the teacher, the first time slowly, and the second time normally. Following the engagement, reaction, self-finding approach, students will be asked to respond to the reading. If commentaries by students provide a valid point of view, teacher will emphasize it; if not, a short discussion should be carried out to resolve the situation.

The next step will be for the teacher to lead the class through an appreciation of the contents of the poem, during which the genre, fond, the narrateurs (personages), rimes, rythme, and morale are all discussed and established.

The last part of the appreciation will include the critical look at the linguistic values and other aesthetic aspects of the poem. In *La cigale et la Fourmi*, for example, the use of the word “bise” instead “vent du nord” gives the reader a sense of both the sound, force, as well as other negative impact that this wind would bring. This expression is the *métonymie*. The many words which characterize the ridiculously funny exchange between the two insects provide the basis for the ---of personification, ironie, etc.

This process will be followed with the next poem, *Le Corbeau et Le Renard*. This poem has a lot of similarities with the first one, and the appreciation process should not be any different. It is, however, necessary to look for structural characteristics as well as aesthetic aspects which may not have been identified in the first poem. Lastly, the morale here is actually clearly and cleverly stated by the author through one of the characters. The fox tells the confused and embarrassed crow to know that every flatterer lives at the expense of those who listen to him. And it has the crow’s piece of cheese to prove that. This development introduces the

student to an aspect called “morale intégrée”, which simply means that the morale is integrated in the development of the story, not stated separately at the end by the author.

### **Goals and Objectives for the Remainder of the Curriculum Unit**

Having provided samples of lesson plans from day one through seven, I am going to suggest a general course to include possible goals and objectives that the teacher will want to achieve with the students for the remaining one week.

The teacher’s goals in reading and teaching each poet is to effect the students’ understanding of, and acquaintance with, the author as a person, his or her background and how the writer’s life experience might have influenced the writing. In addition, and more importantly, the teacher has to guide the students through a thorough, realistic and goal-oriented analysis, applying the discussed methodological processes involving engagement, self-realization, and the fundamental steps in explication de texte. The individuality of each poem will, of course, determine the direction of analysis including the exhaustion of applicable literary terms in the analytical process, and at the conclusion of each reading and analysis, the students would have been made aware of every relevant aspect of literary appreciation occurring in, and having impact on, the poem.

Following the teacher’s goals, the objectives will require students to be able to fully analyze each poem that is assigned for appreciation by teacher, and to be cognizant of, and able to apply, all the methods of appreciation—engagement, self-realization, fundamentals of explication de texte. Following this approach, after each reading, students will be able to state their personal reactions—verbally or in writing; respond to engaging questions from instructor, and then do a complete basic “analyse” or “explication de texte” involving the rational and literary application of these terms: genre, narrateur, fond, rythme, rimes, moralité, ironie. Students will also be able to discover and expose on their own various other literary elements that characterize the poem and complete the analysis. Finally, it is important for the teacher to make sure that the goals and objectives of each lesson also fulfill the standards in speaking and writing as prescribed by the Pittsburgh Board of public education. In fact, these standards can normally be met without the ado of poetry analysis, but the teacher will have to make students conscientious of specific objectives and standards in each lesson.

## **Materials Needed for the Rest of the Unit**

For the rest of the curriculum unit, these, and other materials will be needed. For books, Hurtgen's *Tous Les poèmes...* will continue to be the main source and guide. In addition, Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Le Misanthrope*; *Modern French poets* by Wallace Fowlie, ed.; *Introduction to French Poetry* by Stanley Applebaum, ed.; *Black Poets in French* by Marie Collins, ed.; *Littéraire Africaine* by Francis Fouet and Régine Renaudeau, editors; *Glossary of French Literary Expressions* by James Redfern; *Explication de Texte* by Jean Sareil, will all be the various sources of selected poems as well as guides to appreciation and analysis.

## **Basic Procedure**

To prepare for the following day's lesson, teacher should assign readings the previous day. If texts are available, the authors, poems, and pages of the text should be clearly stated. In addition, available necessary complementary materials should be handed out and students advised as to how to use such material. A worksheet with specific questions to accompany students' established procedure in analysis should be given each student daily.

Since full analysis is now expected of the students, instructor has to make sure that the assignments are clearly understood, and students know all the aspects of analysis expected of them. Real reading should be done at home by students, and classroom reading will mainly be for "reaction" as well as needed explanation. Class time will therefore be mainly for analysis and appreciation, with teacher mostly clarifying or explaining difficult situations or aspects which are not obvious to students.

## **Days Eight and Nine: Ronsard and Sonnets of Love**

Love is a major theme for teenagers and young people, and a lot of the characters at this age experience rejection in love and react in various ways. In the classic setting, there is either a Romeo and Juliet whose strong affinity for each other is disrupted by their families, or unrequited love situation in which mostly the male is the victim who persists in this courting process, in an agonizing manner which is usually obvious in the poems he writes for the lady. Ronsard is a victim of rebuffed courtly love by a lady he calls Hélène in a lot of his sonnets. His sentiments, persuasions, style are obvious in these poems which the teacher may want to read with, and teach to, students: *Comme tu vois la Branche, A Hélène*,

and *Je Vous Envoie un Bouquet*. In addition, the teacher can analyze another poem which has a topic of interest for today's society and teenagers. Ronsard's poem *Faire Rafrachir Mon Vin de Sorte*, is controversial in that it not only praises the effect of wine on him, but also implies the "positive" effect that he experiences under the influence of other narcotics while in the process of working (mostly writing). While drug "problems" probably had no major impact on Ronsard's society, it is of major concern in today's society and will have a lot of reaction from students.

Since Ronsard has quite a few sonnets, I think this is the proper time to discuss not only the French sonnet, but what is considered a good poem by an authority such as Molière. In his *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Monsieur Jourdain is schooled in many ways to bring him up to the level of a gentleman. In a very comic manner, he learns about good poetry, though he rejects what his teacher teaches him and prefers to read his bad poetry to the woman he is courting. This would not only be a lesson to lighten up the mood of students, but one to seriously teach them some ideas in a funny setting. In like manner, they can learn more about what makes good courtly poetry in the scenes where Alceste is taken to court and loses for saying the truth about a noble man's poor sonnet to a lover.

### **Days Ten: Baudelaire, Human Nature, Human Aspects and the Wonders of Nature**

Baudelaire is a poet who loves the aesthetical and mythical composition of nature and life. His admiration of nature and how it is intertwined with human life and daily existence is found in his *Correspondances*. His *Harmonie du Soir* is the admiration of the beauty of the evening which is harmonious with other aspects of nature, the environment and people. Yet his criticism of the negatives of human nature is smarting and sometimes demeaning. His *Au Lecteur* ("To the Reader") is about human incompetence, evil, laziness, short-comings and short-sightedness, and he does not exempt himself from this lowly life of laziness and deceit, as he addresses the reader "mon semblable"—"my type". Like Ronsard, he has sonnets, but mostly ones that laud beauty and nature, and his *La Beauté* is one such poem. Contextually, these poems offer many goals for the teacher as well as objectives for the students. Likewise, his approach to writing poetry, including the metaphysical interfacing of nature and human life, and of course the sonnets on nature and beauty should be goals for teaching.

### **Day Eleven: Victor Hugo and Poems of Care and Meditation**

A prolific writer in prose and poetry alike, Victor Hugo captures the minds of his readers with his topics as well as the style. Care and meditation on the occasion permeate his poem *Demain dès l'Aube*, in which he plots out a journey to the grave of a loved one. The poem is characterized by a stringent structure which prescribes each important step of the journey to a section. Even as its meditative nature is apparent in the way in which the character is planning the journey, the rhythm is also evident in the way the thoughts transcend into the physical progress in the journey as well. *Mors* is a rather depressing poem which personifies death as a ruthless and pitiless reaper, cutting down people with a sharp scythe. These two poems will certainly provoke a lot of student engagement and response, and teacher can plan for explication de texte in the traditional method, but also provide for possible curiosity response and questions from students, especially from reading the second poem.

### **Days Twelve and Thirteen : Poets of African Descent, and Négritude**

The last two days of the curriculum unit is to expose students to four writers of African background with comparatively similar writing styles and same theme. Though Léopold Sédar Senghor was born in Sénégal, Aimé Césaire in Martinique, Léon Damas in French Guiana, and Bernard Dadié in Cote d'Ivoire, they all had the experience of French colonization and rule; they had the experience of living in France as blacks at a time when the French, though better in race-relations than the USA then, was practicing assimilation and blacks in most cases were still looked upon as inferior.

Senghor, Césaire, and DuBois who published *The Soul of Black Folks* a hundred and fifty years ago, are often mentioned as the forefathers of Négritude, a theme and concept that delves into blackness and its beauty; African ways and their naturalness as opposed to the sterile and artificial ways of the West; the yearning for freedom from colonialism and white rule and oppression as well as from slavery, etc. The desire to have, and the appreciation of, the physical and cultural freedom transcend into their poetic styles, as they mostly use free verse, as opposed to the stringent rules in poetry writing. This style also stresses and affirms simplicity, which is an aspect of naturalness ( though at times a reader may encounter the incomprehensible aspects of nature and metaphysics in sometimes difficult, obscure and enigmatic poems).

Suggested poems to be read and analyzed are Césaire's long poem *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal*, a masterpiece of 70 pages in which he

compares and contrasts the “civilized “ Western society and the “natural” African society, which he clearly prefers, pays homage to, and identifies with. Characteristic poems of *négritude* by Léon Damas include *La Complainte Du Nègre*, *Solde*, and *Si Souvent*. Senghor’s *Femme Noire* is in praise of the beauty, strength, naturalness, motherliness, etc., of the black woman—the African woman in general, but it is symbolic of the chastity and wholesomeness of the black race, and Africa as the cradle and origin of this strength, innocence, and beauty that has been raped by colonizers. His *Aux Soldats Nègro-Américains* is a welcome chant to black American soldiers who served in the World Wars and were instrumental in driving out Germans either from France or Africa. In them, he sees the strength, pride, and all the abilities of the black race. Dadié thanks God for making him black—not white—in his *Je Vous Remercie Mon Dieu*; in his *Frère Blanc*, he asks his white brothers to unmask, live together with blacks like real brothers, forgetting about prestige and empire. Teacher will have to determine specific goals and objectives for each of the two days available.

#### **Day Fourteen: Evaluation**

In a way, there has been a considerable amount of daily evaluation taking place, as teacher assigns work, receives completed work, engages students and gets responses from them. Above all, the daily explication du texte has strongly founded the students’ knowledge in, understanding of, and ability in, the analysis process. With each new poem or author discussed, one more analytical term has either been learned or reinforced. The major activity on the last day of the curriculum unit will be a comprehensive evaluation involving various aspects of material content and explication du texte. The first part of the evaluation will consist of testing for the recollection and comprehension of material content, wherein students will demonstrate that they not only read each assigned poem, but also understood it. In this section, teacher can make one word or phrase completion questions; identification of poem questions; identification or description of characters, etc. In the second section, evaluation will probe students on their understanding of terms used in poetry analysis. This can be in the form of completion of sentences started by teacher with the appropriate term, or writing a short phrase in French to define the term. The third section, which is related to both the first and second sections, integrates the comprehension of content and the application of terms. A term like “comparaison”—simile-- may refer to a simple situation in a particular poem or the whole poem itself, and the students will be expected to point this out, going from the term to the poem or from the poem to the term. The very last section of the evaluation will require

students to analyze two poems, one of which will be a sonnet. In addition to the basic format of analysis, students will be required to answer questions about the effect of certain punctuations and other terms on a given poem.

## **Bibliography**

### **Teacher Resources**

Appelbaum, Stanley, ed. Introduction to French Poetry. New York: Dover Publications, 1969. This is a dual version text which can be used if teacher is in doubt only. It has a collection of poems in both French and English.

Bauer, Camille. Graded French Reader. Lexington, MA: DC Heath and Co., 1987.

A collection of French poetry and prose with varying degrees of difficulty in reading and comprehension, this is also a possible source of reading as well as critical material that teacher can use.

Collins, Marie, ed. Black Poets in French. New York: Rutgers University, 1972.

Collins' book is an excellent source for selected readings with short and precise notes on authors' backgrounds.

Fouet, Francis and Régine Renaudeau. Littéraire Africaine: Le Déracinement. Dakar, Sénégal: Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1980.

This is an Excellent source for student reading material as well as teacher instructional and critical ideas. It contains abstracts and full texts on all important African writers recognized by 1980, and provides very rare critiques and notes on each of them.

Fowlie, Wallace, ed. Modern French Poets. New York: Dover Publication, 1992.

Like Appelbaum's book, Fowlie's provides a dual version to encourage faster and more comprehensible reading. Though it contains a few of the authors being studied, teacher should use or allow the use of this text only in situations that cannot be helped.

Hurtgen, André. Tous les poèmes pour les cours avancés. New York and London: Longman, 1988.

More than Marie Collin's book, this is a text with selections of poets from all backgrounds and countries, and also has samples of analyzed poems.

Beach, Richard. "Strategic Teaching in Literature," in Jones, Beau Fly et al. Strategic Teaching and Learning: Cognitive Instruction in the Content Areas. Alexandria, VA and Elmhurst, IL: ASCD and NCREL, respectively, 1987.

This is basically a methodology text for teachers.

Politzer, Robert L. Teaching French: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics. Lexington, MA: Xerox, 1965.

This is mainly a source for pedagogic material. Though it mostly provides instructional guides on linguistics, the book touches on literature, and can be of help in a situation where there is real need for material.

Redfern, James. A Glossary of French Literary Expression. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1970.

Redfern's is an excellent literary reference source. It not only provides more than the required and necessary words for poetry analysis, but also points out pitfalls involving words that are spelled alike in French and English but do not have any relations at all.

Sariel, Jean. Explication de Texte. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.

This is a complete literary appreciation text, not limited to poetry alone. It is replete with samples of appreciation and criticism, using all and more of the terms that are needed for high school level analysis. It is an excellent text for both the teacher and students if it can be afforded.

Stone, Donald. Handbook for French Composition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

It is more of a writing guide than a poetry analysis text, but the instruction and information on writing is equally useful, both to the students and the instructor.

Vendler, Helen. Poems. Poets. Poetry: An introduction and Anthology. Boston: St. Martins, 2002.

An excellent text which offers "new" ways of appreciating poetry, Vendler's book provides countless samples and approaches to poetry analysis in English.. Instructors can readily apply these methods in other languages.

Woodridge, Susan Godsmith. Poemcrazy. New York: Three Rivers press, 1996.

**Suggested Student Texts**

Collen's Black Poets in French , Hurtgen's Tous Les Poèmes Pour les Cours Avancés, and Vendler's Poems, poets and Poetry.