



APPLY AND PRODUCE

ACTIVITY 4 A Poem Brings You to Your Senses



90 min

GOAL To learn how to read a poem. Examine the structure of poetry. Learn about simile and metaphor.

In this activity, you will:

- Read and listen to a poem with a view to interpreting what is being communicated by the poet.
- Indicate lines from the poem that demonstrate the ideas being communicated.
- Examine how poems are organized.
- Learn about simile and metaphor.

Poet Billy Collins knows how he wants you to read a poem. In fact, he wrote the following poem about it.

Task A: What to Do When You Arrive

Before reading, it will be useful for you to know that a “color slide” is a photo transparency. Light can be projected through it to cast a photo on a screen. In the digital age, color slides have been replaced by computer programs and projectors!

12 Begin by listening to the reading of Introduction to Poetry on the media resource page, reading along silently as you listen to the speaker. Then read it aloud a few times yourself.

9 Introduction to Poetry *by Billy Collins*

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
And watch him probe his way out,

Or walk inside the poem's room
And feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to water-ski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

