



POETRY COLLECTION

Morning Talk

Immigrant Picnic

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read, you will encounter these words.

chirruped

teased

pipes

Context Clues To find the meaning of unfamiliar words, look for **context clues**, or other words and phrases in nearby text. There are several different types of context clues.

Definition: The word is clearly defined in the text.

Example: Rick was surprised that he liked **ornithology** so much. He did not expect the study of birds to be so interesting.

Contrast: A word or phrase signaling a contrast appears near the word.

Example: Simone's room is **pristine**, but Olivia's room is disorganized and messy.

Synonym: A word with a similar meaning appears nearby.

Example: It is a pleasure to teach these students because they are so insightful and **perceptive**.

Apply your knowledge of context clues and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read.

First Read POETRY

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.

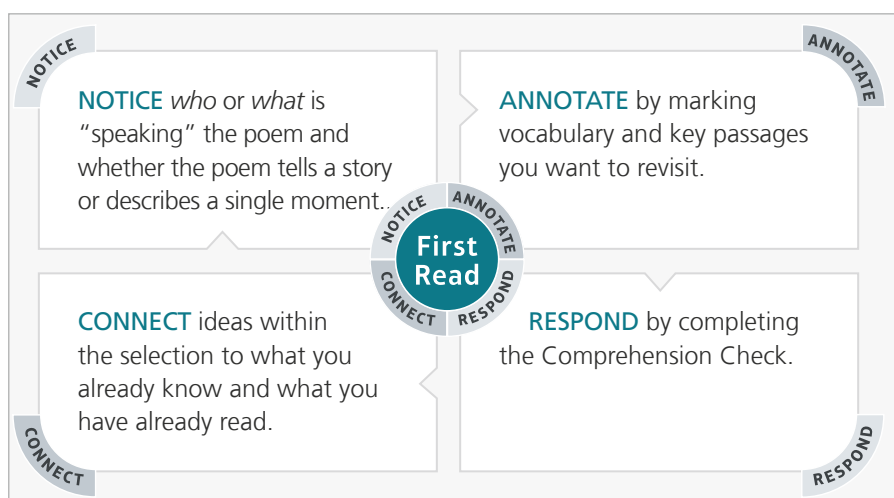
STANDARDS

Reading Literature

By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Language

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.



About the Poets



Roberta Hill Whiteman (b. 1947) is a nationally recognized poet, scholar, and member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Born in Baraboo, Wisconsin, Hill holds an MFA in Creative Writing and a PhD in American Studies. Her doctoral dissertation centered on her grandmother, and inspiration, Dr. Lillie Rose Minoka, one of the first Native American physicians. Hill’s work draws on her experience as a Native American woman and on Oneida history. In addition to two critically acclaimed poetry collections, she has written a biography of her grandmother.



Gregory Djanikian (b. 1949) moved from his birthplace of Alexandria, Egypt, to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, when he was eight years old. He became interested in writing poetry while studying English at the University of Pennsylvania, and is now Director of Creative Writing at his alma mater. He has published six volumes of poetry, which often deal with family, culture, and the ways immigrants to America enrich the English language. He believes that “poetry is a communication between people on the most intense level, even if it’s only between two people—writer and reader.”

Backgrounds

Morning Talk

The songbird commonly referred to as the North American “robin” is actually a thrush. It was named “robin” by the Europeans who settled the Americas because it looks like the European robin. The two birds are not actually related. These facts play a key role in this poem.

Immigrant Picnic

This poem is full of wordplay, including puns and malapropisms, that is both funny and pointed. *Puns* are jokes that play on differences in the meanings of words with similar sounds. *Malapropisms* involve the mistaken use of a wrong word that shares similar pronunciation with the right word—for example, “a hypodermic question,” rather than “a hypothetical question.”

Morning Talk

Roberta Hill Whiteman



"Hi, guy," said I to a robin
perched on a pole in the middle
of the garden. Pink and yellow
firecracker zinnias, rough green
5 leaves of broccoli,
and deep red tomatoes on dying stems
frame his still presence.

"I've heard you're not
THE REAL ROBIN. Bird watchers have
10 agreed," I said. "THE REAL ROBIN
lives in England. They claim
you are misnamed and that we ought
to call you 'a red-breasted thrush'
because you are
15 indigenous."

He fluffed up. "Am I not
Jis ko ko?"* he cried, "that persistent
warrior who carries warmth
northward every spring?"
20 He seemed so young, his red belly
a bit light and his wings, still
faded brown. He watched me
untangling the hose to water squash.

"Look who's talking!" he **chirruped**.
25 "Your people didn't come
from Europe or even India.
The turtles say you're a relative
to red clay on this great island."
Drops of crystal water
30 sparkled on the squash.

"Indigenous!" he **teased**
as he flew by.

* **Jis ko ko** (jihs koh koh) Iroquoian name for "robin."

Mark context clues or indicate
another strategy you used that
helped you determine meaning.

chirruped (CHHR uhpt) v.

MEANING:

Mark context clues or indicate
another strategy you used that
helped you determine meaning.

teased (TEEZD) v.

MEANING:

Immigrant Picnic

Gregory Djanikian

It's the Fourth of July, the flags
are painting the town,
the plastic forks and knives
are laid out like a parade.

- 5 And I'm grilling, I've got my apron,
I've got potato salad, macaroni, relish,
I've got a hat shaped
like the state of Pennsylvania.

- I ask my father what's his pleasure
10 and he says, "Hot dog, medium rare,"
and then, "Hamburger, sure,
what's the big difference,"
as if he's really asking.

- I put on hamburgers and hot dogs,
15 slice up the sour pickles and Bermudas,¹
uncap the condiments. The paper napkins
are fluttering away like lost messages.

"You're running around," my mother says,
"like a chicken with its head loose."

- 20 "Ma," I say, "you mean cut off,
loose and cut off being as far apart
as, say, son and daughter."

- She gives me a quizzical look as though
I've been caught in some impropriety.
25 "I love you and your sister just the same," she says,
"Sure," my grandmother **pipes** in,
"you're both our children, so why worry?"

- That's not the point I begin telling them,
and I'm comparing words to fish now,
30 like the ones in the sea at Port Said,²
or like birds among the date palms by the Nile,³
unrepentantly elusive, wild

1. **Bermudas** sweet onions grown on the island of Bermuda.

2. **Port Said** (sah EED) city in northeast Egypt.

3. **Nile** river in northeast Africa, considered the longest in the world.

NOTES

Mark context clues or indicate
another strategy you used that
helped you determine meaning.

pipes (pyps) *v.*

MEANING:

"Sonia," my father says to my mother,
"what the hell is he talking about?"

35 "He's on a ball," my mother says.

"That's roll!" I say, throwing up my hands,
"as in hot dog, hamburger, dinner roll. . . ."

"And what about roll out the barrels?" my mother asks,
and my father claps his hands, "Why sure," he says,

40 "let's have some fun," and launches
into a polka, twirling my mother
around and around like the happiest top,

and my uncle is shaking his head, saying
"You could grow nuts listening to us,"

45 and I'm thinking of pistachios in the Sinai⁴
burgeoning without end,
pecans in the South, the jumbled
flavor of them suddenly in my mouth,
wordless, confusing,

50 crowding out everything else.

4. **Sinai** (SY ny) triangular peninsula in Egypt.

Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read. Review and clarify details with your group.

MORNING TALK

1. According to the speaker, what have bird watchers agreed?
2. According to the robin, where did the speaker's people come from?

IMMIGRANT PICNIC

1. On what day does the picnic take place?
2. What type of food is the speaker thinking of at the end of the poem?

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from one of the poems. Briefly research that detail. In what way does the information you found shed light on an aspect of the poem?

Research to Explore These poems may spark your curiosity to learn more. Briefly research a topic that interests you. You may want to share what you discover with your group.



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TIP

GROUP DISCUSSION

Try having group members read each poem aloud. Discuss how the oral reading changes the poem's impact.

WORD NETWORK

Add interesting words related to American identity from the text to your Word Network.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

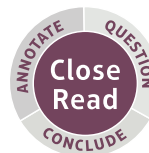
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it, and manipulate time create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Language

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 9–10 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Close Read the Text

With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your first read. **Annotate** details that you notice. What **questions** do you have? What can you **conclude**?



Analyze the Text

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

Notebook Complete the activities.

- 1. Review and Clarify** With your group, reread lines 45–50 of “Immigrant Picnic.” What recognition is the poet making when he compares words to nuts? Explain.
- 2. Present and Discuss** Share with your group the passages from the texts that you found important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the text, the questions you asked, and the conclusions you reached.
- 3. Essential Question: *What does it mean to be “American”?*** What have these poems taught you about American identity? Discuss this question with your group.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Vocabulary

chirruped teased pipes

Why These Words? The three concept vocabulary words are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add another word that fits the category.

Practice

Notebook Use a dictionary to confirm the definitions of the three concept vocabulary words. Write a sentence using each of the words. Be sure to use context clues that hint at each word's meaning.

Word Study

Multiple-Meaning Words Some words in English have multiple meanings, or more than one distinct definition. For example, the word *pipes*, which appears in “Immigrant Picnic,” has several different meanings. Write the meaning of *pipes* as the poet uses it. Then, write another definition of the word. Finally, find two other multiple-meaning words. Write down the words and two of their definitions.

Analyze Craft and Structure

Poetic Structures The basic structures of poetry are lines and stanzas. A **line** is a group of words arranged in a row. A line of poetry may break, or end, in different ways.

- An **end-stopped line** is one in which both the grammatical structure and sense are complete at the end of the line. It may include punctuation, such as a comma or period. Example: *How do I love thee?/ Let me count the ways.*
- A **run-on, or enjambed, line** is one in which both the grammatical structure and sense continue past the end of the line. Example: *I love thee to the depth and breadth and height / My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight / For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.*

A **stanza** is a group of lines, usually separated from other stanzas by space. Like a paragraph in prose, a stanza often expresses a single idea. The ways in which a poet organizes a poem into lines and stanzas affects how a poem looks and sounds and even what it means.

Practice

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
to support your answers.

Working on your own, use the chart to analyze the stanzas and line breaks in these poems. Record and share your observations.

MORNING TALK	IMMIGRANT PICNIC
Summarize the action of each stanza.	Which stanzas set the scene? Explain.
What type of line breaks appear in stanzas 1, 2, 3, and 5? Explain.	In which stanza does the first incorrect use of an English expression appear? How does the stanza length change? Why?
How do the line breaks in stanza 4 differ from those in the rest of the poem? Why?	How do the last lines of stanzas 11 and 12 break? How do the line breaks reinforce the actions and feelings that are expressed?



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Author's Style

Word Choice Poets may draw on informal types of language to make scenes, settings, and characters come alive. **Idioms** are informal expressions in which the literal meanings of the words do not add up to the actual meaning. For example, the idiom “raining cats and dogs” does not mean cats and dogs are falling from the sky. It means it is raining very hard. In “Immigrant Picnic,” the speaker’s family members attempt to use idioms in their new language. Their mistakes create humor and are an important part of the poem.

Examples of Common English Idioms

SENTENCE	MEANING OF THE IDIOM
Grilling hot dogs and hamburgers is not rocket science .	<i>Grilling is not very difficult.</i>
First they told him he wasn’t born here; then to add insult to injury , they told him he wasn’t really a robin.	<i>They made the situation worse.</i>
When it comes to understanding what <i>indigenous</i> means, they completely missed the boat .	<i>They failed to understand.</i>

Read It

Work individually. Use this chart to define idioms that are either used or referred to in the poems. If the idiom is not used correctly, correct it. Then, rewrite the idiom in formal language that means the same thing.

IDIOM	CORRECTION IF NEEDED	REWRITE IN FORMAL LANGUAGE
Look who’s talking! (from “Morning Talk”)		
the flags / are painting the town (from “Immigrant Picnic”)		
like a chicken with its head loose (from “Immigrant Picnic”)		
He’s on a ball. (from “Immigrant Picnic”)		

STANDARDS

Language

Interpret figures of speech in context and analyze their role in the text.

Write It



Notebook Write at least three idioms with which you are familiar. Explain what each one means. Then, use each idiom in a sentence.



Speaking and Listening

Assignment

With your group, organize a **panel discussion** to discuss the poems. Panel members should ask and answer questions to clarify and politely challenge one another's ideas. Choose one of the following topics:

- ☐ **Poetry Comparison** Compare and contrast the two poems. Discuss the attitudes of the speakers, each poet's use of language, and the message or insight each poem conveys. Which poem is more positive in its message?
- ☐ **Poetry Ranking** Rate the two poems on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being ineffective and 5 being extremely effective. Then, share your ratings, and discuss your reasons for making them.
- ☐ **Poetry Definition** What is a poem? Is it simply a string of words set up in lines and stanzas, or is there more to it? Propose and discuss various definitions of poetry, using the two poems as examples.

Discussion Plan Once the group has chosen the focus for the panel discussion, work individually to gather ideas about the topic and the poems that you would like to work into the conversation. Jot down your ideas in the chart.

POEM	INSIGHTS TO SHARE	SPECIFIC PASSAGES TO CITE
Morning Talk		
Immigrant Picnic		

Participation Plan As you participate in the panel discussion, do not read your notes aloud, but use them to remind yourself of insights you had earlier. Speak clearly, using language that is appropriate for an academic setting. Make sure you understand one another's points by summarizing them before contributing your own ideas. Ask follow-up questions respectfully.

EVIDENCE LOG

Before moving on to a new selection, go to your Evidence Log and record what you learned from "Morning Talk" and "Immigrant Picnic."

STANDARDS

Speaking and Listening

- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.