

6-11-2012

Imitism: Learning Imagism through Imitation

Nicole Trackman

Imitism: Learning Imagism through Imitation

Abstract:

Students will learn the components of Imagism through works of William Carlos Williams and D.H. Lawrence. As authors, students will demonstrate their understanding of this poetic movement through an imitation of either Williams' poem "This is just to Say" or Lawrence's poem "Green".

Common Core Standards:

- RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
- RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
- RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
- RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Procedure:

1. Begin class with some background discussion on Imagism:
 - It began as a strand of Modernism in 1912.
 - It was a short movement that ended in 1917.
 - Ezra Pound defined Imagist poetry in three tenants:
 - I. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
 - II. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

- III. As regarding rhythm; to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.
- Pound explains that an image is, “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.”
2. Handout William Carlos Williams’ poem “This is Just to Say”. Ask students to read it silently, and then ask a student to read it to the class.
 3. Lead a discussion on “This is Just to Say”. Focus on:
 - Who is he speaking to? How do we know? Discuss tone.
 - Look at stanza breaks/ line breaks and lack of punctuation and how it creates the tone.
 - Is the speaker truly asking forgiveness? Some believe that this was actually a note that Williams left to his wife when he ate her plums.
 - What literary devices are employed? Look specifically at concrete imagery.
 - How does this poem fit into the Pounds tenants of Imagism?
 4. Handout D.H. Lawrence’s poem “Green”. Ask students to read it silently, and then ask a student to read it to the class.
 5. Lead a discussion on “Green”. Focus on:
 - Who is he speaking about? How do we know? Discuss tone.
 - Look at stanza breaks/ line breaks.
 - What literary devices are employed? Look specifically at Lawrence’s use of metaphor. The poem begins with the “apple-green dawn” and the second stanza begins with her opening her green eyes. This creates a metaphor comparing her to the dawn. Look also at the simile in the second stanza. Lawrence compares her eyes to “flowers undone”.
 - The poem is from Lawrence’s collection *Look! We Have Come Through!* This collection details the early months of his relationship with Frieda Weekly.
 - How does this poem fit into the Pounds tenants of imagism?
 6. Using Pound’s tenants of imagism, students are asked to write an imitation of either “This is just to say” or “Green”.
 - Students who chose to write an imitation of “This is Just to Say” must consider who the speaker is addressing and maintain the tone of Williams’ poem. The imitation should stay consistent with the use of enjambment and lack of punctuation.
 - Students who choose to write an imitation of “Green” must consider what the speaker is describing, create the metaphor and maintain the tone of

Lawrence's poem. The imitation should stay consistent with the line and stanza breaks.

7. Students will bring their imitations to the next class. In groups of three, students will share with each other, provide feedback and discuss how/ if the poems utilize Pound's tenants of imagism and if they are successful imitations. Groups will choose one poem to share with the class.

Materials:

This Is Just To Say

by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Green

by D. H. Lawrence

The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal between.

She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen.

