Emily Dickinson's Poetry
Emily Dickinson (1830 - 1886)

A Life Apart
- private person
- only 7 poems published while alive, rest after her death

Amherst, MA
isolated/rarely left, after father's death

Her Talent is Recognized
criticized for punctuation, rhythm but noticed talent

Reading Informative Texts

Dickinson's Legacy
Left instructions to destroy poetry but it was published anyway.
1955 - Poetry published

The Belle of Amherst

Literary Analysis
- exact rhyme
- slant rhyme

Reading Strategy
- analyze images

clarifi
abstract meaning
being implied
ex: glove + prove

fat + cat
ex) glove + above
similar but not exact
Important Literary Terms

**Poetry**

- **alliteration**
- **personification**
- **internal rhyme**
- **slant rhyme**
- **rhyme scheme**
- **symbol**
- **metaphor**
- **paradox**
- **stanza format**
- **meter**

**Stressed/Unstressed**

- Stressed
- Unstressed

**Foot**

- ____
- ____
- ____
- ____

**Meter**

- Stressed/unstressed
- iambic
- trochee
- dactyl
- anapest

**Phonic Devices**

- consonance
- assonance
- alliteration
- **repetition of sound**

**Rhyme**

- **rhyming words** that fall within a line
- **rhyming sounds** that do not exactly match
- **rhyme scheme**

**Figure of Speech**

- **metaphor**
- **personification**
- **symbol**

**Patterns**

- **stanza**
- **couplet**
- **quatrain**

**Characteristics**

- **human characteristics**
- giving inanimate objects (vocal)
“Because I could not stop for Death”
Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death –
He kindly stopped for me –
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility –

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring –
We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain
We passed the Setting Sun.

Or rather – He passed us
The Dews drew quivering and chill.
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My Tippet – only Tulle.

We paused before a House that seemed
A Swelling of the Ground –
The Roof was scarcely visible
The Cornice – in the Ground –

Since then – ’tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses’ Heads
Were toward Eternity –
"I heard a fly buzz – when I died"
Emily Dickinson

I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –
The Stillness in the Room
Was like the Stillness in the Air –
Between the Heaves of Storm –

The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –
And Breaths were gathering firm
For the last Onset – when the King
Be witnessed – in the Room –

I willed my Keepsakes – Signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable – and then it was
There interposed a Fly –

With Blue – uncertain – stumbling Buzz –
Between the light – and me –
And then the Windows failed – and then
I could not see to see –
There's a certain slant of light,
On winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives us;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything,
'Tis the seal, despair,-
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death.
My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.
The Soul selects her own Society,
Then - shuts the Door -
On her divine Majority -
Present no more.

Unmoved - she notes the chariot's - pausing -
At her low Gate;
Unmoved - an Emperor is kneeling
Upon her Mat.

I've known her - from an ample nation -
Choose one -
Then - close the valves of her attention -
Like stone:

Ret A p. 425 #4 - #6
4A. chariots = kneeling Emperor
4B. uncaring/indifferent
5A. "shuts the door" shuts soul
   up away from others
5B. solemn; picky; opinionated
private
6. strong bonds w/friends; quality over quantity
The Brain—is wider than the Sky—
For—put them side by side—
The one the other will contain
With ease—and You—beside—

The Brain is deeper than the sea—
For—hold them—Blue to Blue—
The one the other will absorb—
As Sponges—Buckets—do—

The Brain is just the weight of God—
For—Heft them—Pound for Pound—
And they will differ—if they do—
As Syllable from Sound—
There is a solitude of space
A solitude of sea
A solitude of death, but these
Society shall be
Compared with that profounder site
That polar privacy
A soul admitted to itself --
Finite infinity.
Water, is taught by thirst.
Land -- by the Oceans passed.
Transport -- by throe --
Peace -- by its battles told --
Love, by Memorial Mold --
Birds, by the Snow.
Grammar Lesson (p. 430)

GERUNDS

• gerund: verb form that ends in -ing and is used as a noun
• function as subjects, direct objects, predicate nominatives
• & objects of prepositions

Examples
Subject - Writing requires discipline.
Direct Object: Dickinson left her writing in her dresser.
Object of Preposition: She learned about writing by practicing.

Practice: Identify each gerund below and tell how it is used in the sentence.

1. We paused before a House that seemed / A Swelling of the Ground .

2. Writing was Dickinson's passion.

3. Parting is all we know of heaven.

4. Her favorite activity was cooking.

5. Dickinson avoided traveling great distances.
**ANSWER KEY**

Practice: Identify each gerund below and tell how it is used in the sentence.

1. We paused before a House that seemed / A **Swelling** of the Ground -. **predicate nominative**

2. **Writing** was Dickinson's passion. **subject**

3. **Parting** is all we know of heaven. **subject**

4. Her favorite activity was **cooking**. **predicate nominative**

5. Dickinson avoided **traveling** great distances. **direct object**
TPS-FAST Analysis Method for Poetry

T - Title: consider literal and metaphoric meanings

P - Paraphrase: go through and summarize each stanza in your own words

S - Speaker: consider the narrator or persona of the poem—is he/she an observer or a participant? How "emotionally close" is the speaker? Is he/she experiencing this event right now, or reflecting back on it later?

F - Figurative Language (look for at least three patterns - similes, metaphors, repetition, sound devices, rhyme, opposites, or particular patterns of words)

A - Attitude: what is the speaker's attitude toward the subject of the poem? In short, what is the tone?

S - Shift: where does the poem change? why might this turning point be significant?

T - Theme: a complete statement that expresses the meaning of the poem and highlights two techniques the poet uses to express that meaning...e.g., In the poem "insert title," [the poet] uses ___device #1_____ and ___device #2_______ to suggest (that) ___poem's meaning__________.
Think / Pair / Share

Answer questions #1 through #6. Be prepared to share your answers.
1. *me, away, and day* = slant rhymes

2. Stanza One
   - light (a)
   - noons (b)
   - heft (a - slant)
   - Tunes (b-full)

Stanza Two
   - use (a)
   - scar (b)
   - difference (a-slant)
   - are (b-full)

Stanza Three
   - any (a)
   - Despair (b)
   - affliction (c)
   - Air (b-full)

Stanza Four
   - listens (a)
   - breath (b)
   - Distance (a-slant)
   - Death (b-full)

2b. repetitive, musical quality

3. Yes - both discuss the nature of the soul as the innermost core of our being

4. "There is a solitude ..." "The Soul..." "The Brain..." human consciousness as boundless
   4b. "...Slant..." "I heard a fly..." human consciousness limited by mortality
   4c. self presented through poems is engaged with the world BUT always aware of eternity and human mortality

5. uses image of house below ground

6a. each line presents an image
   6b. each stanza presents an image
   6c. images use **concrete objects** to illustrate **abstract ideas**