

## Grade 7 / Week 6

### Standards Covered this Week

- LAFS.7.RL.1.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
- LAFS.7.RL.2.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings, analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- LAFS.7.W.3.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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**Name**

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**Teacher**

### A Note to Parents

Continuing the “New Perspectives” thematic unit, your student will read and analyze Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poem, “We Wear the Mask” this week. Due to this extremely sensitive time, it is understandable if students first think of the medical face masks many of us are wearing in public places. However, Paul Laurence Dunbar’s poem refers to metaphorical masks—strategies we use to hide our true selves from the public. Due to its popularity as a poem to teach in language arts class, there are many resources online that you can find to assist your child in the understanding of this poem.

Here are some *optional* online resources to support or extend your student’s thinking:

- This text is also available through CommonLit, which provides an audio read-aloud, translation, and online annotation features. Students should access CommonLit through their ClassLink.  
<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/fyc-we-wear-the-mask>
- Watch a dramatic performance of “We Wear the Mask” <https://youtu.be/jDwgnWE6jW8>
- Watch Maya Angelou in a powerful, emotionally moving presentation of her combination of Dunbar’s poem with her own [https://youtu.be/\\_HLol9InMlc](https://youtu.be/_HLol9InMlc)

### Day 1, Activity 1: Quick Write

Think about a time when you have pretended to be something that you aren't or when you have hidden your true feelings. Why did you choose to hide yourself or your feelings?

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This week, you'll be reading a poem about hiding one's true self from the world. Keep in mind the many reasons why people would need to or want to do this.

### Day 1, Activity 2: Skills Focus

#### Mini Lesson: Quoting Evidence from Poetry

- We use direct evidence from the text in our writing:
  - To support our ideas or answer a question with specific examples
  - To think more deeply about the text we are reading
  - To help us explain our thinking
- In previous units, you've learned how to quote evidence correctly from fiction or nonfiction.
- Here's how to quote evidence from poetry correctly
  - Signify a **line break** with a /
  - Signify a **stanza break** with a //
  - Add **quotation marks** around the quote: "Words from poem"
  - Cite **line numbers**. In addition, cite the **poet's last name** the first time the poem is quoted: (Williams, lines 5-8)

#### Just to Clarify:

Lines of a Poem	<b>"Afton Water" by Robert Burns</b>	Stanzas of a poem
	[9] How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills, [10] Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills; [11] There daily I wander as noon rises high, [12] My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye. [13] How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below, [14] Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow; [15] There oft, as mild Ev'ning sweeps over the lea, [16] The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.	

#### Sample Paragraph:

The speaker sees beautiful things along the Afton. He says, "There daily I wander as noon rises high. / My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye. // How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below" (Burns, lines 11-13).

#### Notice How I:

- ✓ Signify a line break with a /
- ✓ Signify a stanza break with a //
- ✓ Add quotation marks around each quote
- ✓ Cite the line numbers
- ✓ Cite the author's last name, since this is the first time the poem is quoted in the paragraph

**GUIDED PRACTICE 1:** Quote lines 17-18 from the poem “Afton Water” correctly.

Poem	Sample Paragraph
<p>“Afton Water” by Robert Burns</p> <p>[17] Your crystal stream, Afton, <b>how lovely it glides,</b></p> <p>[18] <b>And winds by the spot where my Mary resides,</b></p> <p>[19] How playful your waters her snowy feet lave,</p> <p>[20] As gathering sweet flowers she blocks your clear wave.</p>	<p>The speaker thinks the river is beautiful. He points out</p> <p>“how _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

**GUIDED PRACTICE 2:** Quote lines 4-5 from the poem “Afton Water” correctly.

Poem	Sample Paragraph
<p>“Afton Water” by Robert Burns</p> <p>[3] My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,</p> <p>[4] Flow gently, sweet Afton, <b>disturb not her dream.</b></p> <p>[5] <b>You stock-dove, whose echo sounds through the glen,</b></p> <p>[6] Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,</p>	<p>The speaker wants Nature to be quiet so his love can sleep. He tells the birds to be quiet, saying, “disturb...</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Now you’ve learned how to quote poetry correctly, you’ll use these skills when you analyze figurative language in the next lesson!

**Day 2, Activity 1: Skills Focus**

**Mini Lesson: Analyzing Figurative Language**

Figurative language describes one thing by comparing it to another. Like in this example, figurative language is often not *literally* true. No, it is not actually pouring puppies and kittens from the sky!

All writers use figurative language to make their descriptions come alive. However, poets tend to use it most often. Understanding how to analyze and write about figurative language will make you a better thinker and reader.

In order to fully analyze a quotation with figurative language, we follow the steps below:



4-20  
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“Goody! I was hopin’ to get a new puppy!”

Analyzing Figurative Language
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Describe</b> what the figurative language is comparing.</li> <li><b>Explain</b> how the figurative language develops the meaning of the poem by linking it back to you <b>CLAIM</b>.</li> </ol>

Take a moment to read "A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns

**A Red, Red Rose**

[1] O my Love is like a red, red rose  
[2] That's newly sprung in June;  
[3] O my Love is like the melody  
[4] That's sweetly played in tune.

[5] So fair are you, my pretty girl,  
[6] So deep in love am I;  
[7] And I will love thee still, my dear,  
[8] Till all the seas go dry.

[9] And fare thee well, my only love!  
[10] And fare thee well awhile!  
[11] And I will come again, my love,  
[12] Though it were ten thousand mile.

Now you take the next two lines:

**DIRECTIONS:** Describe what is being compared in the quoted figurative language. Explain how the figurative language develops the meaning of the poem. This means tying your analysis back to the claim.

**MY ACTION STEPS:**

1. I get what this poem is about. (The poet really loves someone.)
2. I find a piece of figurative language I want to talk about. (lines 1 & 2)
3. Now, to analyze the figurative language, I need to:
  - a. Describe what is being compared. (The speaker compares their beloved to a red flower.)
  - b. Explain how it develops the meaning of the poem. (The color red represents love and romance. By comparing the beloved to a "red, red rose," the poet shows the strength of his love for her.)

**Sample Paragraph**

In "A Red, Red Rose" the poet uses figurative language to show how deep the speaker's love for their beloved is. The speaker says, "O my Love is like a red, red rose / That's newly sprung in June" (Burns, lines 1-2). Here, the speaker compares their beloved to a red flower. The color red represents love and romance. By comparing the speaker's beloved to a "red, red rose," the poet shows the strength of the speaker's love for her. **The speaker goes on to say, "My Love is like the melody / That's sweetly played in tune" (lines 3-4).** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Day 2, Activity 2: Brainstorm**

The subject of wearing masks has never before been so popular than it is right now in the time of the Coronavirus. However, masks come in all different shapes and sizes, for many different purposes, and are worn for so many different reasons. In the space below, brainstorm all of the reasons you can think that people wear masks.

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### Day 3: Active Reading

### We Wear the Mask

Paul Laurence Dunbar

**About this Text:** Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) was one of the first African American Authors to reach a national and international audience. Best known as a poet, Dunbar published his first poems at age 16.

#### Skills Focus

In this lesson, you will analyze how the author uses **word choice** and **figurative language** to develop the meaning of a poem.

#### How do we analyze word choice and figurative language?

In order to analyze the effect of word choice and figurative language, we pay special attention to the descriptive words and phrases in a poem. We also notice the figurative language, especially similes and metaphors. Then, we determine what these words and phrases suggest about the speaker or topic of the poem and how they contribute to the author's message.

<b>FIRST READ:</b> Read aloud without stopping all the way through once.	<b>SECOND READ:</b> Read the poem again, stopping to consider the questions below as you encounter them.
<p>[1] We wear the mask that grins and lies, [2] It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, — [3] This debt<sup>1</sup> we pay to human guile;<sup>2</sup> [4] With torn and bleeding hearts we smile, [5] And mouth with myriad subtleties.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>[6] Why should the world be over-wise, [7] In counting all our tears and sighs? [8] Nay, let them only see us, while [9] We wear the mask.</p> <p>[10] We smile, but, oh great Christ, our cries [11] To thee from tortured souls arise. [12] We sing, but, oh, the clay is vile<sup>4</sup> [13] Beneath our feet, and long the mile; [14] But let the world dream otherwise, [15] We wear the mask!</p>	<p><b>Lines 1-5</b></p> <p>A. What does the mask look like?</p> <p>B. <b>Find Evidence:</b> <u>Underline</u> a detail that shows how the people behind the masks feel.</p> <p>C. Why does the speaker say the mask lies?</p> <p><b>Lines 6-9</b></p> <p>What are the people hiding behind the mask?</p> <p><b>Lines 10-15</b></p> <p>A. Lines 10-11 are split by the word "but." How is the part <i>before</i> the word "but" different emotionally from the part <i>after</i>?</p> <p>B. How are lines 12-13 similar to lines 10-11?</p> <p>C. Why do the people "smile" and "sing"?</p>

<sup>1</sup> Here, having a **debt** to pay means having an obligation, or something one must do.

<sup>2</sup> **Guile** (*noun*): clever but sometimes dishonest behavior that one uses to deceive others

<sup>3</sup> "Mouth with myriad subtleties" may refer to the many expectations for "respectful" speech, such as calling someone *sir* or *ma'am*.

**AFTER THE FIRST READ:** What is the main idea or "gist" of this poem?

**THIRD READ:** Use the questions below to return to the poem and consider the text again.

1. Why do people usually wear masks?

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2. The speaker in this poem uses “we” instead of “I.” What does this indicate about the speaker’s experience?

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3. **Lines 6-7:** From whom do the people wearing the mask conceal their true feelings?

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4. Quote two details from the poem that show what the people do to hide their true feelings. Be sure to cite the poem properly.

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5. What message, or theme, does the poem express about how people react to a disappointing world?

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6. The poet Paul Laurence Dunbar was African American. This poem was published in 1896: 31 years *after* the end of slavery and 68 years *before* the Civil Rights Act made it illegal to treat people unfairly based on their race. Critics believe the “we” in this poem refers to African Americans. Why might African Americans have felt the need to “wear the mask” during Dunbar’s lifetime?

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## Day 4: Text-Dependent Questions

### Step 1

**Directions:** Answer the multiple choice questions below.

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which statement *best* expresses the theme of this poem? **[RL.2]**
  - A. Some people hide their suffering behind pretend happiness.
  - B. Masks that are meant to be fun can be upsetting or inappropriate.
  - C. It is foolish to believe other people and the way they present themselves.
  - D. People would rather live in a happy dream world than face the harsh truth.
2. How does the poet develop the theme? **[RL.2]**
  - A. by describing the masks in a creepy, threatening way
  - B. by giving examples of the things in life that lead to suffering
  - C. by having the speakers describe how hard it is to live an honest life
  - D. by contrasting the image people present and the way they really feel
3. Lines 6-9 suggest that people wear the mask because — **[RL.4]**
  - A. other people live in a happy fantasy.
  - B. others are not smart enough to understand their pain.
  - C. they do not want others to know how they are suffering.
  - D. each person thinks he or she is the only one who feels unhappy.
4. When the speaker says “oh great Christ, our cries / To thee from tortured souls arise,” how does this help to develop the poem’s theme? (Lines 10-11) **[RL.2]**
  - A. These lines show the religious beliefs of the people who wear the mask.
  - B. These lines show how deeply the people who wear the mask are hurting.
  - C. These lines show that the people who wear the mask feel God is with them.
  - D. These lines show that the people who wear the mask pretend to be religious.
5. The speaker says, “We sing, but oh the clay is vile / Beneath our feet, and long the mile.” (Lines 12-13) What is the *most likely* interpretation of these lines? **[RL.4]**
  - A. The people dislike the journey, so they sing a happy song to make themselves feel better.
  - B. The people’s lives are difficult, but they pretend to feel joy when others can see.
  - C. The people are on a gross and muddy road, but they still enjoy traveling together.
  - D. The people have to travel a very long way, and the song helps them pass the time.



## Day 5: Your Personal Mask

The following assignment is intended to prepare students for creating their own personal identity masks that answer the question, "Who am I?" Creating the actual mask is *optional* (if you do, please consider sending a picture of your mask to your teacher!). However, respond to the questions below as if you were brainstorming what would go on a mask that represents you.



### Handout

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# Mask-Making Preparation Worksheet

1. What aspects of your identity would you like to present to others?

Biographical information:

Experiences and accomplishments:

Hopes and fears:

Likes and dislikes:

2. What labels or adjectives would you like others to use when they think about you?

3. What are some aspects of your identity that you might not present to others and why do you choose to keep them to yourself? (These are ideas you might include on the inside of your mask)