



MOTHER NATURE (Poem)

Text type: Poem
Theme: Literature and Poetry
Subthemes: Nature (Poem)

In this unit the students will be able to

- Locate appropriate synonyms and antonyms in a thesaurus.
- Affect meaning through use of synonyms with different connotations and denotations.
- Appeal to the senses through use of figurative language including similes and metaphors.
- Recognize literary techniques such as personification and alliteration.
- Illustrate use of transitive and intransitive verbs.
- Illustrate use of regular and irregular verbs.
- Illustrate use of prepositions of position, time and movement and direction.
- Use active and passive voice appropriately in speech and writing according to the required communicative function.
- Present and explain one's point of view clearly
- Ask, restate and simplify directions and instruction
- Use paraphrasing skills to paraphrase stanzas: Mark thought groups in the stanza. Restate the message in simple prose. Replace poetic words with simple ones.
- Use summary skills to write summary/ précis of simple passages / poems.
- Write an introductory paragraph with a clear central thought

Pre-Reading

- Share your thoughts about the title "Mother Nature".
- Have you read any other poems by Emily Dickinson? If so, what themes or styles do you associate with her work?
- Based on the title and the poet's name, what do you expect this poem might explore or convey?

Mother Nature

by Emily Dickinson

Nature, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere

While-reading

What imagery is created by the description of Nature as "the gentlest mother"?

While-reading

As you read about Nature's "conversation" and "household," what emotions or atmosphere are evoked?

While-reading

Consider the role of the sun going down in the poem. How does it affect the scene and the mood?

While-reading

What significance do you find in the mention of the "timid prayer" of the cricket and the "most unworthy flower"?

While-reading

How does the poetess characterize Nature's relationship with her children, specifically in the lines mentioning the "feeblest" or "waywardest"?

1. Glossary

Given below are the difficult words from the unit. Look at their meanings and use these words in your own sentences.

gentlest	characterized by a mild and kind nature.
impatient	not tolerant of delay or opposition
admonition	gentle reproof or warning.
feeblest	lacking physical strength, especially as a result of age or illness.
waywardest	most difficult to control or manage due to wayward behavior.
aisles	passages between rows of seats in a building, such as a church or theater.
incites	provokes or stirs up a reaction or emotion.
timid	shy or lacking in self - confidence.
minutest	extremely small or insignificant.
rampant	unrestrained or unchecked.
impetuous	acting or done quickly without thought or care.
assembly	a gathering of people for a particular purpose.
suffice	be enough or adequate.
lamps	in the context of the poem, likely refers to celestial bodies or sources of light.
infinite	endless or limitless.
affection	deep love and care.
infinites	more infinite; suggesting an even greater degree of limitlessness.
bending	in the context of the poem, likely refers to a celestial movement or gesture.
sky	the expanse of air over the earth.
silence	absence of sound; stillness.

2. Reading and Critical Thinking Skills

A. Reading Comprehension Questions:

- What is the central theme or message conveyed by Emily Dickinson in "Mother Nature"?
- How does the poet depict Nature's actions during the time when "all the children sleep"?
- Explore the metaphorical meaning behind the line, "Her golden finger on her lip, / Wills silence everywhere." What does it suggest about Nature's role?
- Reflect on the use of nature elements (squirrel, bird, cricket, flower) in the poem. How do they contribute to the overall message?

- v. How does Emily Dickinson portray the duality of Nature's character - gentle mother and enforcer of silence?

Extended Reading

Read the given paragraph and examine different points of view (e.g., first-person, third-person narrative). Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text. Analyse how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

Beacon of Hope

The crisp autumn air nipped at my cheeks as I hurried down the street, a gnawing emptiness in my stomach. I hadn't eaten since breakfast and was running late for my part-time job. Just as I passed a small, run-down cafe, a figure slumped against the wall caught my eye. It was an elderly woman, her face etched with worry, her hands shaking as she clutched a tattered bag. I felt a pang of sympathy, a tug on the heartstrings that I knew meant I should help. But I was already late, and the little money I earned was precious. But as I glanced back at her, the image of my grandmother, frail and unsteady, flashed in my mind. The guilt was like a tight knot in my chest. I couldn't turn away. With a sigh, I dug into my pocket and offered the woman a few coins. "Here, ma'am," I said, "I hope this helps." As her eyes welled up with tears, I felt a warmth spread through me, a feeling that was bigger than the hunger in my stomach or the fear of being late. It was a reminder that kindness, even in small gestures, held a power that could feed the soul.

From the window of the cafe, Sarah, the waitress, watched the scene unfold. She'd witnessed countless acts of indifference on this street, people rushing by, blind to the struggles of others. But this young man, with his tired eyes and worn coat, had stopped. He hadn't had to, but he did. The kindness in his gesture was like a beacon of hope, a reminder that even in the darkest of times, compassion could still bloom. Sarah smiled, her heart warmed by the small act of human connection. She knew that kindness, like a ripple in a pond, could spread outward, touching lives in ways both big and small.

B. Antonym, Denotation, Connotation

- i. Provide the antonym for each of the following words:

Gentlest

Impatient

Timid

Rampant

Infinite

- ii. Provide the denotation (literal meaning) for the words below:

Aisles

Assembly

Lamps

Sky

Silence

- iii. Explore the connotations (emotional or associative meanings) of the following words in the context of the poem:

Feeblest

Impetuous

Affection

Minutest

Bending

iv. Choose the antonym for each word:

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| a) Ascend | Rise | Descend |
| b) Expand | Contact | Enlarge |
| c) Conquer | Surrender | Dominate |
| d) Surrender | Modern | Primitive |
| e) Intense | Mild | Fierce |

v. Choose the correct word according to the context of the sentence:

- a) The sunsets, painting the sky in vivid colours, are a ____ sight.

Common	Extraordinary
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- b) His patience seemed to ____ as the wait became longer.

Increase	Decrease
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- c) The river flowed gently, its current ____ and serene.

Turbulent	Calm
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- d) In the desert, the temperatures during the day can be ____ reaching over 100 degrees.

Mild	Extreme
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- e) The politician's speech was filled with ____ promises, but few were fulfilled.

Genuine	Empty
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C. Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which an implied comparison is made between two unlike things that actually have something in common. A metaphor expresses the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. For example, when Shakespeare famously said, "All the world's a stage," he metaphorically equated life to a theatrical performance. Other common metaphors include "a heart of gold" for a kind person or "the apple of my eye" for someone greatly admired.

i. Complete the metaphor:

- a) Time is a ____.
- b) Laughter is the best ____.
- c) The classroom was a ____ of buzzing bees.
- d) His words were a ____ in the storm of confusion.

River

Mountain

Medicine

Weapon

Hive

Forest

Anchor

Lightning

ii. Create a metaphor:

- Compare the feeling of disappointment to a ____.
- Describe a successful team as a ____.
- Portray the night sky as a ____ of diamonds.
- Express the idea of courage using the metaphor of a ____.

iii. Identify the metaphor in the sentence:

- The news spread like wildfire through the small town.
- Her voice was music to his ears.
- The city never sleeps.
- Time is a thief stealing moments from our lives.

News

Wildfire

Voice

Music

City

Sleeps

Time

Thief

D. Personification

i. Identify the personification:

- The stars danced in the midnight sky.
- The wind whispered secrets through the trees.
- The sun smiled down on the beach.
- Time marches on, never looking back.

Stars

Midnight

Wind

Trees

Sun

Beach

Time

Marches

ii. Create personification:

- Give human qualities to the rain.
- Personify a mountain and describe its actions.
- Imagine a conversation between the moon and the stars.
- Depict a river as if it has thoughts and feelings.

iii. Identify the personification in the sentence:

- The old house groaned as if it were in pain.
- The flowers nodded in agreement with the gentle breeze.
- Fear knocked on the door, but courage answered.
- The camera captured the joy of the moment.

E. Alliteration: In alliteration, words that begin with the same sound are placed close together. Although alliteration often involves repetition of letters, most importantly, it is a repetition of sounds. e.g.

"Fishing Fleet" is an alliteration because the sounds are the same. On the other hand:
"Cheerful cop"

It might begin with the same letters, but it is not alliteration because the sounds are not the same. e.g. alliteration that repeats the 's' and 'l' sounds:

"Sally sells seashells by the seashore."

1. Fill in the Blanks.

- i) The _____ (alliterative adjective) eagle soared through the sky. (e.g., elegant)
- ii) The _____ (alliterative adjective) waves crashed against the shore. (e.g., wild)
- iii) The _____ (alliterative adjective) teacher patiently explained the lesson.
(e.g., thoughtful)

2. Identify and underline the alliterative words in the following sentences:

- "Five feisty felines frolicked in the garden."
- "The busy bees buzzed around the blooming flowers."

3. Vocabulary and Grammar

A. Transitive and Intransitive verbs

A transitive verb is a type of verb that needs an object to make complete sense of the action being performed by the subject. E.g.

The dog / chased / the cat.

(subject / verb / object)

The dog chased.

The verb 'chased' in the above example is a transitive verb that demands an object. As you can see, the second sentence, "The dog chased" does not seem complete. The moment you say "The dog chased", the people listening to you would definitely ask the question, "Chased what?" That explains why 'chased' can be classified as a transitive verb, and it follows the pattern SVO.

An intransitive verb is a verb that does not necessarily require an object to make sense of the action being performed by the subject in a sentence or a context.

The old man felt weak.

(subject / verb / complement)

The verb in the above sentence is 'felt', and it connects the subject to the complement and does not require an object.

i. Identify the verb type (Transitive / Intransitive):

- a) She **ate** the delicious cake.
- b) The cat **jumped** onto the window sill.
- c) He **built** a sandcastle on the beach.
- d) The river **flowed** swiftly.
- e) The music **played** softly in the background.
- f) Sara **bought** a new dress for the party.

ii. Determine the object in the sentences

- a) She reads a book
- b) The wind blew the leaves
- c) He wrote a letter
- d) They painted the fence blue.

iii. Create sentences with both types:

- Write a sentence with a transitive verb.
- Write a sentence with an intransitive verb.
- Write an interrogative sentence using transitive verb.
- Write an interrogative sentence using intransitive verb.

iv. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate preposition:

- She walked ____ the park to meet her friends.
- The cat jumped ____ the table.
- The airplane flew ____ the clouds.
- They sailed ____ the island.
- The hiker climbed ____ the mountain.
- The train travels ____ the tunnel.
- The ball rolled ____ the street.
- He swam ____ the river to reach the other side.
- The kids ran ____ the school bus.
- She placed the keys ____ the table.
- We walked ____ the forest and discovered a hidden lake.
- The river flows ____ the mountains.

vi. Identify the preposition of movement or direction:

- They walked ____ the park.
- The birds flew ____ the sky.
- The car drove ____ the tunnel.
- He jumped ____ the pool.

through

beside

over

under

through

round

into

beside

B- Active and Passive Voice:

Active Voice:

- In active voice, the subject performs the action.
- The structure is **Subject + Verb + Object**.

Example: The cat (subject) ***chased*** (verb) the mouse (object).

Passive Voice:

- In passive voice, the subject receives the action.
- The structure is **Object (Noun) + Auxiliary verb + Lexical Verb + by + Subject (Noun)**.

Example: The mouse (Object-Noun) was (Auxiliary Verb) chased (Lexical Verb) by the cat (Subject-Noun).

C- Practice Exercises:

1. Change the following Active voice sentences to Passive Voice:

- i. The chef prepares a delicious meal.
- ii. She will complete the assignment.
- iii. Someone is painting the fence.
- iv. They have cancelled the event.
- v. The students completed the project.
- vi. The chef prepared a delicious meal.
- vii. The gardener trims the bushes every week.

2. Change the following Passive voice sentences to Active Voice:

- i. The cake was baked by Mary.
- ii. A new song is being sung by the choir.
- iii. The report has been written by the manager.
- iv. The cake was baked by Mary.
- v. A new song is being sung by the choir.
- vi. The report has been written by the manager.
- vii. The door was opened by John.

3. Identify whether the given sentence is in *active (A)* or *passive (P)* voice.

- i. The teacher explained the lesson.
- ii. A beautiful song was sung by the choir.
- iii. They built a sandcastle on the beach.
- iv. The mysterious novel was written by the author.
- v. Someone is painting the fence.
- vi. They have cancelled the event.
- vii. The letter has been written by Sarah.

4. Oral Communication skills

A. Direction Dialogue Activity:

Activity

Divide the class into pairs. Each pair will consist of a person asking for directions (Seeker) and a person giving directions (Guide).

Part 1:

Seeker's Role:

- The seeker is given a scenario where they need to ask for directions (e.g, finding a local landmark, a specific street, or a public facility).
- The Seeker formulates questions to ask the Guide for direction. Encourage using polite phrases like "Excuse me "and" can you please tell me..."

Seeker's Role:

- The Guide provides clear and concise direction to the Seeker.
- Emphasize the use of directional language (e.g., "turn left, "go straight. "cross the street").
- Encourage the Guide to ask follow-up questions to ensure the Seeker understands.

Part 2:

Guide's Role:

- The Seeker asks for directions based on the new scenario.
- Use the experience gained in the first to improve communication.

Debrief and Rotation:

- After each round, have a brief class discussion about the challenges faced and successful communication strategies.
- Rotate pairs so that each student gets the opportunity to practice both asking for and giving directions.
- Encourage feedback within pairs on how the communication could be improved.

B. Complete the given sentences giving and asking for directions (follow the given examples):

The knowledge of directions is important to complete any long or short journey. When we are in a place where we are not familiar with the locations at some point during the trip, there are chances of getting lost even if we have a map. So it is required to have knowledge of asking and giving directions in English so that we can reach our destination. It's also a great idea to give directions yourself to tourists or foreign travellers. In this article, some words and phrases are given that can help you in learning how to give directions and ask for them.

We can ask for directions very politely to someone using the following phrases.

- Hey, can you help me, please?
- Good evening, sir/ma'am. May I ask for some help?
- Excuse me, ma'am! Could you please help me?

In the same way as we learnt about asking for directions, sometimes we need to guide someone who may ask us for directions. For that, some common phrases are given below that will help you in giving directions.

- Pass the city centre road by going straight.
- Go along that road.

C. Complete the given sentences using the conventions of Politeness and Gratitude:

- i. Thank you so much for
- ii. I really appreciate
- iii. Thanks a lot!
- iv. I'm grateful for
- v. Could you please

5. Writing Skills

Summary Writing

A. Steps to Write a Poem Summary:

- Understand the theme, tone, and main ideas expressed in the poem.
- Pinpoint key literary devices, metaphors, symbols, and emotions conveyed in the poem.
- Break the poem into stanzas and summarize the main message or feeling of each.
- Mention any rhyme scheme, rhythm, or unique structural elements that contribute to the poem's impact.
- Identify and articulate the central themes or messages the poet is conveying.
- Describe the emotional tone of the poem - whether it's celebratory, melancholic, reflective, etc.

Teacher's Point

- Provide a list of common directional vocabulary and phrases to assist students.
- Encourage students to use gestures or draw simple maps to enhance communication.
- Highlight the importance of using polite language and expressing gratitude after receiving directions

- B. **Activity:** Read the poem given below and summarize according to the steps of writing summary of a poem.

The Road Not Taken *by Robert Frost*

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.



Further Reading Activity Read another poem by Emily Dickenson and critically analyse it in a group discussion

Teacher's Point

- Guide students to produce legible work that shows the correct spelling of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization. Also help them recall and practice construction of sentence patterns and structures learned in earlier classes.