

BLUE (Poem)

Text type: Poem
Theme: Literature & Poetry
Subthemes: Human Relationships

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.
- locate phrases and idioms
- appeal to the senses through use of figurative language including similes, metaphors and imagery
- Illustrate use of pronouns learnt earlier. Identify, and demonstrate use of relative pronouns. Recognize the rules for using indefinite pronouns. Illustrate use of pronoun-antecedent agreement. Illustrate use of cataphoric and anaphoric references.
- Make and use present and past participles. Identify, recognize the function and use of perfect participles.
- Illustrate the use of gerunds and gerund phrases.
- Illustrate the use of infinitives and infinitive phrases.
- Illustrate use of prepositions of position, time and movement and direction.
- Recognize and use varying intonation patterns as aids in spoken and written discourse to show attitude, highlight focus in meaning, divide speech into thought groups.
- Ask, restate and simplify directions and instructions.

Pre-Reading

- What emotions or themes do you think might be present in a poem titled "Blue"?
- Based on the title and author, what do you anticipate the poem might be about?
- How do you think the narrator's perspective might influence the poem?

Blue

By Brian A. Haycock

She was born pink and soft with all of her toes
 She had my eyes and her mothers nose
 She cried for a moment and then settled down
 The angel of my life with hair of brown

Months went by and we watched her grow
 Something was wrong and we had to know
 The doctor called with concern on his mind
 And told me my angel had been born blind

I cried for a while and then I got mad
 This was not my idea of being a dad
 So from that day forward I started a plight
 To be her eyes in life and her heart of sight

As the years passed by she started to grow
 Into a beautiful child with a need to know
 Each day was spent teaching all that I knew
 Until one day when she asked about blue

I tried to define it but my efforts were in vain
 Only sighted descriptions were the way to explain
 She had no way of knowing what I was trying to say
 And for the very first time I failed her that day

Life went on and as she grew
 She formed her thoughts on what is blue
 Wanting to know just what others could see
 Inside her mind it became reality

While-reading

What details stand out to you in the opening lines of the poem?

While-reading

How does the tone of the poem change when the doctor delivers news about the child?

While-reading

What emotions do you think the narrator experiences, and how are they conveyed in the poem?

Teacher's Point

Teacher will ask students what does the title, themes, how those pictures and images are connected. Finally, students read the text and check if they were right or wrong about the lesson text connections they made!

On her sixteenth birthday our lives got better
 We received good news from a doctor's letter
 He said he could help and that this just might
 Give the eyes of my angel the gift of sight

I will never forget what she asked to see
 When she opened her eyes and first saw me
 She looked at me with her eyes of new
 And asked me to show her the color of blue
 I said, Look at my eyes, for they are blue
 The day you were born they watched over you
 All through the years they never looked away
 They will always be with you and will never stray

She smiled at me and said that she always knew
 About what the meaning was of the color blue
 Through out her life she could always see
 With the eyes of her heart instilled from me

To her the color had a meaning more than just sight
 Blue had a feeling that gave her an insight
 Throughout the years as both our hearts grew
 She told me that Love was the color Blue

While-reading

What significance does the color "blue" seem to hold for the narrator and the child?

Post Reading:

1. Reflect on the narrator's journey from the birth of the child to the moment she gains sight. How does this impact your understanding of the poem?
2. Consider the role of the color blue in the poem. How does it evolve throughout the narrative?
3. What do you think the poem is trying to convey about love and its connection to the color blue?
4. How does the structure of the poem contribute to its overall impact?

Notes:

Narratives are the oldest form of poetry. Long before there was paper to write on or ink to write with, long before the invention of the printing press, people often shared stories as a form of entertainment. These stories were also often used to relate historical events. In the same way that we spread news through newspapers today, oral stories were used to spread news of historical events long ago. In order to help recall details of the events, people began to use rhyme and rhythm to give their stories a musical quality that would allow the story to be remembered and recalled much more easily. Think about how much easier it is to remember the words to a song than it is to recall all of the words of a short story. That is exactly how narrative poems were originally created.

1. Glossary

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

plight	a difficult or adverse situation.
instilled	to gradually but firmly establish or implant.
insight	the capacity to gain an accurate and deep understanding.
conveyed	communicated or expressed.
symbolize	to represent or be a symbol of something.
evolve	to develop or undergo change over time.
perception	the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.
illuminate	to light up or make clear.
grief	deep sorrow or emotional distress.
perspective	a particular attitude or way of regarding something.

2. Reading and Critical Thinking

- Comments on the initial challenge the narrator faced after the birth of the child?
- How did the narrator attempt to overcome the challenges posed by the child being blind?
- Discuss how the event marked a positive turning point in the narrator's and the child's lives?
- How did the narrator use the color blue to symbolize something meaningful to the child?
- In what way did the child's perception of the color blue change over time?
- Elaborate the rhyme scheme of the given poem.
- Locate phrases in the poem.

3. Vocabulary and Grammar

List of Idioms

Piece of cake, Walk in the park, Whale of a time, Runaway success, Ups and downs, Hard nut to crack, Bitter pill to swallow, Shortcut, Bootstraps, Feet wet

A. Fill in the blanks with the correct idiom from the provided list.

- I told my friend not to worry about the exam; it's just a piece of cake. After all, he's been studying diligently.
- After the intense practice sessions, the basketball team is confident they will come out on top. Winning the championship is not a ____.
- She was feeling under the weather, but her friends encouraged her to attend the party. Surprisingly, she had a ____ time.
- Despite the challenging project, the students pulled together and worked tirelessly. Their efforts paid off, and the project was a ____ success.

- v. Learning a new language can be a double-edged sword. It opens up opportunities but also comes with its _____ challenges.
- vi. The teacher advised the students to hit the books if they wanted to excel in the upcoming exams. Success is not handed to you on a _____.
- vii. The actor took the criticism with a grain of salt and used it as motivation to improve. Constructive feedback can be a valuable _____.
- viii. The class clown finally realized that cutting corners in his assignments was not the way to go. He understood that there's no _____ to success.
- ix. She decided to take matters into her own hands and resolve the issue independently. Sometimes, you have to pull yourself up by your own _____.
- x. The new student felt like a fish out of water in the unfamiliar school environment. It took time, but eventually, she found her _____.

B) Figures of Speech:

Figures of speech are rhetorical devices and expressive uses of language in which the words are not taken in their literal senses. Figures of speech provide emphasis or create other meaningful effects.

- A **euphemism** is a mild, indirect, or vague expression that is substituted for an expression that is deemed offensive or harsh. For example, restroom is a euphemism for toilet. Euphemisms in particular can be used to soften harsh, gross, or offensive language when a writer or speaker wants to keep a consistently polite or respectful tone.
- An **oxymoron** is an expression used when two seemingly contradictory words combine for a specific or meaningful purpose

Shakespeare, for example, one of history's favorite poets and playwrights, who is often credited with being witty, funny, and awfully tragic all in the same piece of work, uses oxymoron to great effect. One of the most famous examples of oxymoron can be found in his play *Romeo and Juliet*, the classic love story that influenced many love stories thereafter.

Read the following excerpt from Act 1, Scene 1, in which the lead character, Romeo, expresses his emotional conflict at not being able to be with the woman he loves, Juliet, because their families are fierce enemies and would not tolerate such a union. Some examples of oxymoron are in red.

Example

- Why, then, O brawling love! O loving hate!
- O anything, of nothing first create!
- O heavy lightness! serious vanity!
- Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!
- Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
- Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
- This love feel I, that feel no love in this.

Activity

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in the given excerpt and analyze their role.

4. Oral Communication Skills

Activity

Poetry Analysis and Oral Presentation

Read the given poem and discuss (in pairs) the theme.

To the Cuckoo

By William Wordsworth

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;
The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

Notes: William Wordsworth (1770-1850), English poet, one of the most accomplished and influential of England's poets, whose style created a new tradition in poetry. He wrote poems portraying nature as something divine and spiritual. "To the cuckoo" is one of his fond memories expressed in words. Through this poem he expresses nature to the depths of nostalgia.

Group Discussion

Discuss the poem and share your thoughts based on key themes, symbols, and emotions conveyed in the poem or a specific aspect of the poem.

Presentations

- Each group spokesperson will present their group's analysis to the class, including their thoughts on the poem's themes, symbolism, and emotions.

Reflections

- One or Two Students can conclude the activity by reflecting on what they've learned about the poem and about poet's love for nature.

TYPES OF SENTENCES: Simple, Compound, and Complex

Using a variety of sentence types also makes for more interesting reading.

CLAUSE: A clause is the basic unit of grammar. Typically a main clause is made up of a subject (s) (a noun phrase) and a verb phrase (v). Sometimes the verb phrase is followed by other elements, e.g objects (o), complements (c), adjuncts (ad). These other elements are sometimes essential to complete the meaning of the clause:

[S] Sarah [V] smiled.

[S] Jahan [V] doesn't feel [C] well.

- A **simple sentence** has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

e.g. *Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing.*

Citizens must act.

- A **compound sentence** has two or more independent clauses, joined by coordinating conjunctions, and no subordinate clauses.

e.g. *Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing, and citizens must act.* (two independent clauses joined by and)

- A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

e.g. *Because old growth forests in the United States are fast disappearing, citizens must act now.* (Because old growth forests in the United States are fast disappearing = subordinate clause beginning with subordinating conjunction; citizens must act now = independent clause)

Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger. (that have existed for thousands of years = subordinate clause beginning with relative pronoun; Forests . . . are in danger = independent clause)

- A **compound-complex sentence** joins two or more independent clauses with one or more subordinate clauses.

e.g. *Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger, and citizens must take action.* (Forests are in danger and citizens must take action = independent clauses; that have existed for thousands of years = subordinate clause)

Note: Make use of all these types of sentences. Don't string together a long series of simple sentences, but, on the other hand, don't always write compound and complex sentences. Try beginning with a simple sentence, or try following several long compound and complex sentences with a simple one. It can have a surprisingly forceful effect.

Activity

Read the given passage and identify the four types of sentences in it.

Because America seemed to provide limitless natural resources, until the second half of this century we spent them freely. We mined for minerals, diverted rivers, and cut down trees, many of which had been growing for thousands of years before the first settlers arrived. Over the years, America's wilderness has given way to prosperous cities, and skyscrapers have replaced giant old trees. America has succeeded. But now we are paying the price.

Activity

Identify the function of the underlined dependent clauses.

- When my father called from Pakistan. Mother threw down her knitting and hurried to answer the phone
- The prom, which is usually held in May, was delayed by the late snowstorm.
- Whoever adjusted my seat must have been tall.

Activity

True or False- All of the following are independent clauses.

- Sherry smiled.
- The Russian impressionist collection, with all their dramatic colors and themes.
- To have been loved is to have known joy and pain

Activity

Underline the complete subject in the following sentences.

- My cousin Andy, a shy man, was given the chance to make a public speech last summer.
- The office will be closed on Thursday.
- Get ready!

Activity

Identify the given sentences as Complex and Compound.

Sentences	Complex	Compound
They finished practice early, and they went for ice cream.		
Your mom cleaned your room while you were out.		
They practice yoga, and they like to meditate.		
After the end of the movie, Juliette wanted more popcorn.		
I would love to help, but I have work to do.		
Before you answer the door, look who it is through the window.		
Do you want an ice cream sundae, or do you prefer some cake?		
Phil has studied hard because the test is tomorrow.		
Camden wants to exercise, yet he is reading a book.		
We should leave for the movie since you are here.		
They hurried through supper, so they could have dessert.		
She can't write her story unless her pencil is sharp.		

A. Kinds of Pronouns:

- i. Replace the underlined word with the correct pronoun:
- Sarah gave Sarah's book to Sarah.
- ii. Identify the type of pronoun used:
- The cat groomed itself.
- iii. Change the sentence using a relative pronoun:
- The person is talking. _____ is my friend.
- iv. Complete the sentence with an indefinite pronoun:
- _____ of the students passed the test.
- v. Choose the appropriate demonstrative pronoun:
- I prefer _____ sweater.
- vi. Identify the reflexive pronoun:
- The children washed _____ before dinner.
- vii. Change the sentence using an interrogative pronoun:
- She went to the store. _____ did she buy?
- viii. Convert the sentence using a possessive pronoun:
- The car belongs to John. It is _____.
- ix. Replace the noun with the correct personal pronoun:
- The teacher praised the student. _____ deserved it.
- x. Select the correct reciprocal pronoun:
- Jane and Mary are best friends; they know each other very well.

B. Present and Past Participles Used as Adjectives:

- i. Identify the present participle:
- The _____ child is playing in the park.
- ii. Choose the correct past participle:
- The cake was _____ perfectly.
- iii. Replace the adjective with a present participle:
- The breeze felt _____ against my face.
- iv. Identify the past participle:
- The treasure was _____ by the pirates.
- v. Complete the sentence using a past participle:
- The door was left _____.
- vi. Choose the appropriate present participle:
- The _____ flowers bloomed in the garden.
- vii. Replace the adjective with a past participle:
- The story is _____ and captivating.

viii. Identify the present participle:

- The _____ dog chased its tail.

ix. Complete the sentence using a past participle:

- The letter was _____ and sent.

x. Choose the correct past participle:

- The building was _____ during the earthquake.

C. Gerund Phrase:

i. Identify the gerund phrase:

- _____ is my favorite activity.

ii. Complete the sentence with a gerund phrase:

- She enjoys _____.

iii. Replace the underlined words with a gerund phrase:

- I am interested in the exploration of space.

iv. Identify the gerund phrase:

- _____ can be challenging for some people.

D. Infinitive Phrase:

i. Identify the infinitive phrase:

- _____ is his ambition.

ii. Choose the correct infinitive phrase:

- We hope _____.

iii. Replace the underlined words with an infinitive phrase:

- The decision was to postpone.

iv. Complete the sentence with an infinitive phrase:

- She likes _____.

E. Prepositional Phrase:

• Complete the sentence with a prepositional phrase:

i. We went _____.

ii. The answer is _____.

iii. _____ the house is a garden.

iv. He arrived _____.

v. They are _____.

vi. _____ the bridge, there is a river.

vii. She is afraid _____.

viii. They walked _____.

ix. The picture is _____ fireplace.

- Complete the blanks with Gerund , infinitive and prepositional phrases.

In the bustling city, people often find themselves rushing from one place to another, trying to balance the demands of work and personal life. To effectively manage these challenges, individuals strive ____ clear boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal time. This involves learning ____ prioritize tasks and delegate when necessary, allowing ____ a more focused and efficient workday.

Additionally, individuals are encouraged ____ engage in regular self-care practices, such as exercising and taking breaks, which contribute ____ fostering a positive mindset. These activities can serve ____ effective tools ____ alleviate stress and promote overall well-being. By dedicating time ____ pursuing hobbies and spending quality moments with loved ones, people can create ____ fulfilling and meaningful life outside ____ the workplace.

In the pursuit ____ personal and professional growth, it is essential ____ continuously seek opportunities for learning. Whether it's acquiring new skills or expanding existing knowledge, this proactive approach helps individuals ____ stay adaptable and resilient in an ever-changing environment. Embracing ____ mindset that values both personal development and professional success can lead ____ achieving a harmonious and fulfilling life.

Remember, the journey towards ____ balanced and fulfilling life involves ____ combination ____ strategies, from setting clear boundaries ____ embracing continuous learning. By incorporating these practices, individuals can navigate ____ complexities ____ modern life while nurturing ____ well-being and personal growth.

5. Writing Skills

A. Writing narrative poems

In order to write a narrative poem, first read the given poem BLUE with the following questions in mind:

- Who are the characters in the poem?
 - What are the characters doing, or what is happening?
 - Why are these events happening?
 - How are the characters affected by the action or events?
 - What can be learned from the poem?
 - Where can we find narrative poetry in our daily lives?
 - Comment on the theme of the poem.
- Follow the questions to Write your own Narrative poem
 - Summarise the given poem.
 - Paraphrase the poem "BLUE" following the conventions.

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.