

ELA: Grade 7, Lesson 14, "The Railway Train"

Lesson Focus: This lesson will focus on connotative analysis of vocabulary and tone in the poem to begin to understand Emily Dickinson's view on trains.

Practice Focus: Students will use vocabulary, context, and figurative language to understand Emily Dickinson's view of trains.

Objective: Students will analyze the words, phrases and the structure of the poem in order to identify the how the speaker feels about trains.

Academic Vocabulary: prodigious, supercilious, omnipotent, boanerges

TN Standards: 7.RL.KID.1; 7.RL.CS.4, 7.RL.CS6

Teacher Materials:

- The Teacher Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 14

Student Materials:

- Paper, pencil, surface to write on
- The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 14 that can be found on www.tn.gov/education

Teacher Do	Students Do
<p>Opening (1 min)</p> <p>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee's At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today's lesson is for all our 7th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the fourth in this week's series.</p> <p>My name is ____ and I'm a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I'm so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</p> <p>If you didn't see our previous lesson, you can find it at www.tn.gov/education. You can still tune in to today's lesson if you haven't seen any of our others. But it might be more fun if you first go back and watch our other lessons, since today we'll be talking about things we learned previously.</p> <p>Today we will use the language in the poem to better understand Emily Dickenson's view of trains! Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper, pencil, surface to write on• The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 14 that can be found on www.tn.gov/education <p>Ok, let's begin!</p>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson's content.</p>
<p>Intro (3 minutes)</p> <p>This has been a week of mystery hasn't it? We've been working hard to use clues that Dickinson has given us to not only attempt to figure out what the poem is about, but to</p>	<p>Students recall that the rise of the railroad affected many areas of people's lives. It helped to expand manufacturing, improved</p>

<p>also figure out what she is saying about trains as they are beginning to be used for both carrying goods and people across the country. In our previous lesson, we read an informational text about the rise of the railroad in the mid-1800s to early 1900s to gain knowledge about the time period Emily Dickinson lived in, and how the railroad impacted the United States. We learned the railroad significantly changed the way the economy developed and how people traveled. The railroad could transport both goods and people over long distances in a much shorter time than wagons and horses. It helped the United States expand manufacturing and travel.</p> <p>Today, we are going to analyze how the words Dickinson uses in her poem to describe the train impact our understanding of her perspective about trains. We will also think about how she uses the poem’s structure to make the whole piece sound like a train! We will begin with me showing you what that looks like, and then there will be time for you to practice on your own with my support. Finally, I will assign you independent work you can complete after the video ends. [Pause.]</p> <p>Alright, let’s get started!</p>	<p>transportation of goods, and made it possible for people to travel long distances in shorter periods of time. The train replaced horses and wagons.</p> <p>Students prepare to follow the gradual-release trajectory, understanding that they will be doing more listening at first and more “doing” toward the end of the lesson.</p>
<p>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud (10 min)</p> <p>Today we are going to reread “The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson. Just like before, we’ll have a little different focus. This time, we’re going to focus on the first two stanzas of the poem for a few minutes. Let’s reread them together. Remember the first two stanzas have that pattern of da-dum, da-dum, the iambic pentameter. [Demonstrate with clapping.]</p> <p>[Show Slide 1.]</p> <p>I like to see it lap the miles, And lick the valleys up, And stop to feed itself at tanks, And then, prodigious, step</p> <p>Around a pile of mountains, And, supercilious, peer In shanties by the sides of roads; And then a quarry pare</p> <p>Now, remember as we talk today, make sure you continue to take notes. The questions and answers you should focus on and include in your notes will be posted on a slide.</p>	<p>Students read aloud the first two stanzas with the teacher.</p> <p>Students follow along, comprehending the text. They use teacher think-alouds and tips to support their comprehension,</p>

[Show Slide 2] I'll show you what I mean. Here in the first stanza, we see the word "prodigious".

Question 1: What does the word "prodigious" mean? What action is the word describing? [Pause for think aloud.] Hmm, I think we have to read the whole phrase again to figure this out. "And then, prodigious, step / Around a pile of mountains." Well, she is describing how the train steps around the mountains. But I know she doesn't mean that literally since trains aren't living things with feet like horses. So, she is saying something about the train going over the mountains. Mountains are very tall and can be gigantic and wide, so it would have been harder for horses and wagons to travel through them. Wagons would either have to stop at the mountain, or they would have to go around the mountain, which could take weeks longer. But, for a train, it would be much easier, like we learned in the article in the previous lesson. It has more power, and people could create tunnels for the train to go through the mountain instead of around it. So, it would be like if the train did have legs and could just walk over the mountains. It would have to be gigantic to do that. Let me read the line again: "And then, prodigious, step / Around a pile of mountains." Oh, I got it now! Prodigious must mean enormous, like the size of the step and the size of the train! Yes, that makes sense. Trains are much larger than the horses and wagons that people used before. Please be sure to write down the word "prodigious" and its meaning – enormous. [Pause.]

Did you notice how I reread the lines that had the vocabulary word in it? Did you notice I restated what the line was about? Then I imagined the literal meaning of prodigious and realized the author must have meant something more than that meaning. I also used what I know about mountains and the way to travel before the train was invented to dig deeper for the meaning of prodigious in this line. [Pause.]

[Show Slide 3.] Question 2: What does the use of the word "prodigious" suggest about Dickinson's point of view about trains? [Pause.] "Prodigious" is a sophisticated word to use, and it's important to know that Dickinson didn't just use a word like big or huge. It seems like Dickinson is a bit in awe of the train, right? I can picture her standing next to it, like some of the pictures we saw in the article last time, and just thinking, "Wow. This machine is incredible. It's so much more powerful than our horses! It's like a giant!" I think the word "prodigious" shows Dickinson is impressed by the train because of its size, power, and ability to do things that horses

<p>can't. Did you notice how I considered how the author could have used different words to help me focus on why she would use a specific word? Here again, I used a mental picture of Dickinson standing next to the train to help me think about her point of view about the trains. You can use similar strategies when you encounter unfamiliar words. Really think about to figure it out. Don't just skip the words you don't know!</p>	
<p>Guided Practice (11 min)</p> <p>Alright, are you ready to try now? Let's work together on the next part. Let's go to Stanza 2. Read in your head as I read aloud.</p> <p>[Show Slide 4.]</p> <p>Around a pile of mountains, And, supercilious, peer In shanties by the sides of roads; And then a quarry pare</p> <p>What do you think supercilious means in this second stanza? [Pause.] What can you do to infer the meaning of "supercilious?" [Pause.] Yes, we can reread the line. Let's do that. Together, now: "and, supercilious, peer / In shanties by the sides of roads." What action is the word describing? [Pause.] Correct, "supercilious" describes how the train peers, or looks into, the shanties, the run-down shelters. What is Dickinson saying about how the train "feels" when it is peering into the shanties? [Pause.] So many possibilities, right? Is it curious? Sad? Concerned? Let's use another strategy. Do you see a word you know inside of "supercilious?" [Pause.] Yes, there is the word, super, which makes me think of the word, superior. Do you know that word and its meaning? [Pause.] True, "superior" means better than something else. So, maybe "supercilious" has to do with being or feeling better than something else. Let's read the line again: "and, supercilious, peer / In shanties by the sides of roads."</p> <p>Question 3: What does Dickinson mean when she says the train peers at the shanties in a supercilious manner? Go ahead and write your response. [Pause.] Great! The train thinks it's so much better than anything else that it can just look into peoples' houses as it steams along the track. It acts disdainful, or snobby. That might make sense, right? The train is this new technology so it would seem much fancier than the shabby homes it passes. And recall from our previous lessons how elaborate the passenger trains at the</p>	<p>Students follow along and think and act as instructed, gradually gaining confidence and competence. Students answer questions posed by teacher.</p> <p>By the end of this section, students will realize that Dickinson has mixed feelings about the train, communicated through words like "prodigious" and "supercilious."</p> <p>They will also recognize that the first 3 stanzas follow an iambic pentameter rhythm, which mirrors a train's movement, while the rhythm of the last stanza reflects the train slowing down and coming to a stop at the train station.</p>

time could be, with their sleeping compartments and dining cars.

If the train were a person, what would Dickinson say about that person being supercilious? [Pause.] I agree. That person probably isn't acting like a nice person if they think they are better than everyone else, or maybe they are conceited.

Now, how would you feel about someone when you combine supercilious with the thought of that person looking into shanties? [Pause.] Yes, I can think of a few words; rude and stuck up come to mind. Now let's take it back to the train then. Write your response to: What do you think supercilious means in this second stanza? [Pause.]

[Show Slide 5.] **Question 4: What does the second stanza reveal about Dickinson's perspective about the train? Write your response.** [Pause.]

I would say that it's definitely not something positive right? She may think that the train may be new, shiny, and powerful, but it reminds her not everyone benefits from it, like the people who live in shanties. But, you may be thinking, wait a minute. Wasn't Dickinson just saying earlier in the poem how impressed she was with the train when she used the word prodigious? Yes, she does seem to have two different ideas about the train in this poem.

[Show Slide 6.] **Question 5: Dickinson describes the train as "prodigious and supercilious." What do these word choices suggest about her attitude toward the train? Write down your ideas.** [Pause.]

There are several ways to answer this question. It seems like she sees the train as some big, new, overbearing thing that thinks it's the best thing ever. It is true that the train brought faster ways to transport people and goods, and that it could go through mountains instead of over them. She might be saying we need to be careful with new technology because we may overlook certain things just because it can do amazing things. Still, it does seem that overall, she admires the train.

Remember this poem was written at a time where the train was a brand new technology. Before the train, horses were the main mode of transportation. Just imagine a major mode of transportation moving from a nice quiet little horse to this

large, noisy steam engine. Some people might not like that, but others would be excited.

[Show Slide 7- project entire poem with the da DUM da Dum sound again (except last stanza), read entire poem.] **Let's read the entire poem again. This time, I only want you to listen to the rhythm.**

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks,
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop-docile and omnipotent-
At its own stable door.

Good. The last stanza sounds totally different doesn't it? Let's talk about that for a minute. The first three stanzas are written in something called Iambic Pentameter. In other words, it has a beat like this.

[Teacher uses claps and says the da DUM da Dum sound to illustrate.] [Teacher then rereads first three stanzas while clapping to show stressed and unstressed syllables.]

I like to see it lap the miles,
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And stop to feed itself at tanks,
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<p>To fit its sides, and crawl between, Complaining all the while In horrid, hooting stanza; Then chase itself down hill</p> <p>What images come to mind when you hear the first three stanzas read the way that I read them? [Pause.] Awesome, it could be a heartbeat, or a clock huh? Like it has a rhythm. Now listen to the last stanza.</p> <p>And neigh like Boanerges [bo-a-nare-jes]; Then, punctual as a star, Stop-docile and omnipotent- At its own stable door.</p> <p>Wow, what words do you see in this final stanza that make you slow down when you read it? [Pause.] Great, words like Boanerges and omnipotent and even stop. They just don't fit the same rhythm do they?</p> <p>[Show Slide 8.] Question 6: How does this change in structure add to the image of a train, and the message of the poem? Record your ideas on your paper. [Pause.]</p> <p>Great! The first three stanzas make us think of the sound of a fast moving train. Kind of like the train when it's going down the track making this sound: chug-chug-chug-chug. On the other hand, the final stanza reminds us of a train slowing down when it's about to stop.</p>	
<p>Independent Work (2 minutes)</p> <p>The fourth stanza not only changes in rhythm, but also Dickinson's feelings toward the train. She uses the words "omnipotent," "docile," and "punctual as a star" to describe the train. Do you remember the meaning of omnipotent? [Pause.] Yes, it means all-powerful, or God-like. What about docile? [Pause.] It means calm or obedient. And what does the phrase "punctual as a star" mean? [Pause.] Right, it means always on time.</p> <p>For your independent work today, think about what we've talked about and review your notes. Then write a paragraph discussing Dickinson's use of the fourth stanza to reinforce how she feels about the train. Take a moment to write down any words from the last stanza you may want to use. [Show Slide 9 and wait a few moments for students write down words they want.]</p>	<p>Students copy words from the last stanza to answer the question.</p>
<p>Closing (1 min)</p>	

PBS Lesson Series

I enjoyed working on analyzing the words and structure of “The Railway Train” with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series! Bye!	
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