**Subject area/course**: English/Language Arts

**Grade level/band**: 10-12

**Task source**: Summit Public Schools

**Poetry Professor**

**STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Task context**:

“If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.” So quips Emily Dickinson about verse, also known as poetry, or what poet Rita Dove calls “language at its most distilled and powerful.”

What’s all this fuss about? What is so special about poetry?

This project will equip you with the close-reading skills to truly appreciate how a seemingly obscure, pointless, and “flowery” poem actually has the potential to rock your world. In addition, you will practice college-level skills by verbally explicating (giving a lecture about) a poem to your teacher and classmates. The content you will learn, in addition to reading, annotating, discussing. and writing practice, will help you become a college-level expert in poetry. But this project is not just about poetry: it is about speaking with clarity and confidence about an opaque and complex subject. In other words, this project will turn you into a poetry professor!

The project will also help develop your analytical skills. You will find that your ability to break a poem apart in order to understand it better will teach you how to look at any complex situation and identify all its parts, a useful skill for both college and career. For example, a manager might be having issues with an employee. In order to completely understand the situation, he or she needs to be able to analyze all factors that contribute to the problem. Likewise, an engineer who seeks to build a mechanical device to serve a specific purpose needs to conduct an analysis to determine the final characteristics of the device.

1. **Final product**:

In the first step of this project, you will learn how to notice and analyze a poem’s structure, word choice, development, and theme/central idea through annotations and discussions. You will develop these cognitive skills by analyzing different aspects of the same poem.

You will then use your annotations to complete a timed write on the poem in order to develop your ideas further, specifically how a poet uses literary elements to create an experience for the reader. Your teacher will provide feedback on your ability to identify how a poem’s structure, word choice, and development help convey a theme and central idea of the text.

Now’s the fun (and most challenging) part. You will choose a *challenging* poem – we’re not talking Dr. Seuss here – about which you will become an expert. You will use the notes you have taken about poetic sound, form, figurative language, and literary time periods to create an outline for an engaging lecture that explains how your poem’s individual poetic components work together to convey meaning.

Finally, you will give your lecture to a small group of students. You will use poetic terminology with precision and accuracy, and the objective of your lecture is to explain to your classmates how the poet is creating meaning by manipulating various poetic elements.

You will use some form of multimedia to help support your classmates in their understanding of your poem.

**Additional Information**

1. **Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:**

* An understanding that poets manipulate sounds, words, structure, and other poetic elements not only to convey a theme or message to the reader, but to recreate the very experience that the poem is describing.
* In order to appreciate poetry, you must pay special attention to a poem’s key poetic elements.
* In order to convey your understanding of a poem with accuracy and expertise, you must know how to verbally explicate a poem.

1. **Materials needed:**

* Item A. 100 Pages of Poetry or is it?
* Item B. Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer
* Item C. Annotating Checklist
* Item D. Lecture Outline
* Item E. Model Lecture Outline

1. **Time requirements:**

This task will require approximately 2-3 weeks to complete. Your teacher will provide specific deadlines to your class.

1. **Scoring:**

Your work will be scored using the Summit Public Schools Poetry Professor Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.