Before Reading

I’m Nobody! Who are You?
Poem by Emily Dickinson

Is the Moon Tired?
Poem by Christina Rossetti

Mooses
Poem by Ted Hughes

How can POETRY surprise you?

Have you ever read a story that completely surprised you? Perhaps you were surprised by what happened to its characters or the feeling it gave you when you finished reading. Poetry can also surprise us because the poet uses language in an especially original way. Figures of speech (similes, metaphors, personification, and hyperbole), images, and sounds can make a poem totally surprising—and memorable.

DISCUSS  In this section you will find three poems. One is about being a nobody, one is about the moon, and one is about a moose. Discuss for a few minutes what aspect of each subject you imagine each poem will focus on. After you read the poems, see if they surprised you.
TEXT ANALYSIS: FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative language is language based on imaginative comparisons. Writers use figurative language to describe a part of life in memorable and original ways. As you read, look for the following types of figurative language.

- A **simile** is a comparison of two things, using the words *like* or *as*. (Her eyes *were like* green emeralds.)
- A **metaphor** is a comparison of two things without the words *like* or *as*. (Her eyes *were* green emeralds.)
- **Personification** is the giving of human qualities to something that is not human. (*The sun smiled down on us.*)
- **Hyperbole** is the use of exaggeration for effect. (*The sun burned us to a crisp.*)

Review: Sound Devices

READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES

When you read poetry, you will have to **make inferences**, or educated guesses, about the poem’s meaning. To make an inference, you use details from the text, plus what you know from your own experience. As you read, record each inference you make in a graphic organizer like the one shown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines in Poem</th>
<th>My Knowledge</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I’m Nobody!” (line 1)</td>
<td>When someone is called a “nobody,” it could mean “nobody special.”</td>
<td>The speaker is very ordinary.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

In two of the poems you are about to read, the following words are used to create images or metaphors. Use the correct word to complete the sentences that follow.

**WORD LIST**

- blunder
- cackle
- dreary
- lectern

1. It would be _____, not fun, to be a somebody.
2. The moose is tall and sturdy like a high wooden _____.
3. The dry underbrush seems to _____ at the ugly moose.
4. Clumsy and lost, he will _____ on through the woods.

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
I’m Nobody! Who are you?
Are you—Nobody—Too?
Then there’s a pair of us!
Don’t tell! they’d advertise—you know!

5 How dreary—to be—Somebody!
How public—like a Frog—
To tell one’s name—the livelong June—
To an admiring Bog!  A

dreary (drîr’é) adj.
dismal, bleak, or boring

A FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
In lines 5–8, the speaker uses a simile to compare a public person—“Somebody”—to a frog, and uses a metaphor to compare the public to a “Bog.” Are these flattering comparisons? Explain why or why not.

1. bog: an area of soft, waterlogged ground.
Is the moon tired? she looks so pale
Within her misty veil:
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.

Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.

Is the Moon Tired?
Christina Rossetti

MAKE INFERENCES
What is the “misty veil” mentioned in line 2?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
What words does Rossetti use to personify the moon?
The goofy Moose, the walking-house frame,  
Is lost  
In the forest. He bumps, he **blunders**, he stands.

With massy bony thoughts sticking out near his ears—  
Reaching out palm upwards, to catch whatever might be  
falling from heaven—  
He tries to think,  
Leaning their huge weight  
On the **lectern** of his front legs.

He can’t find the world!  
Where did it go? What does a world look like?  
The Moose  
Crashes on, and crashes into a lake, and stares at the  
mountain and cries

“Where do I belong? This is no place!”

He turns and drags half the lake out after him  
And charges the **cackling** underbrush—

He meets another Moose.  
He stares, he thinks “It’s only a mirror!”

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**
Reread line 1. Explain why you think the poet uses this metaphor to describe the moose.

- **blunder** (blūn’dar) v. to move clumsily

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**
What **hyperbole**—or exaggeration—can you find in line 16?

- **cackle** (kāk’al) v. to make a sound of shrill laughter or chatter
“Where is the world?” he groans, “O my lost world! And why am I so ugly? And why am I so far away from my feet?”

He weeps. Hopeless drops drip from his droopy lips.

The other Moose just stands there doing the same.

Two dopes of the deep woods.

SOUND DEVICES
How does the alliteration in line 24—the repetition of consonant sounds in words close together—help you to picture the moose?

MAKE INFERENCES
Who might the speaker be referring to in the last line?
Comprehension

1. **Recall** In “I’m Nobody! Who are You?” why doesn’t the speaker want to be a “somebody”?

2. **Clarify** What does the speaker in “Is the Moon Tired?” think made the moon tired and pale?

3. **Clarify** In “Mooses,” what does the speaker think of mooses?

Text Analysis

4. **Make Inferences** What does the speaker in “I’m Nobody! Who are You?” think about the public? How does the poem connect with Dickinson’s own experiences as a poet?

5. **Draw Conclusions** Do you think the speaker in “I’m Nobody! Who are You?” means what she says about fame? Explain.

6. **Understand Figurative Language** Find the metaphors used to describe the moose in lines 1 and 9 of “Mooses.” What does the metaphor in line 4 describe?

7. **Evaluate Inferences** Look back at the chart you completed as you read the poems. Compare your charts in class. Do you all agree on the inferences you made about each poem’s meaning?

8. **Make Judgments** Reread “Mooses” and use a web like the one shown to record details in the poem that are funny or sad. Is “Mooses” a mostly sad poem or a mostly humorous one? Support your judgments with details from the poem.

Extension and Challenge

9. **Creative Project: Writing** We often think of the things around us, such as cars, computers, or pets, as having personalities of their own. Choose an animal or object. Using personification, write a poem that shows the animal or object you chose with human qualities. Share your poem with the class.

**How can POETRY surprise you?**

Discuss in class the element of surprise in these poems: Did each poem include something that you did not expect? Think of language as well as message.
Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE
To show your understanding of the vocabulary words, choose the letter of the term that is most closely related to the boldfaced word.

1. blunder: (a) dance, (b) cook, (c) stumble, (d) mumble
2. lectern: (a) voter, (b) guide, (c) desk, (d) chair
3. cackle: (a) laugh, (b) gather, (c) cry, (d) punish
4. dreary: (a) heavy, (b) gloomy, (c) ready, (d) old

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN SPEAKING

Poets use figurative language to describe aspects of life in a unique way. With a partner, discuss a specific example of figurative language from one of the poems. What is your reaction to the poet’s use of figurative language? What insight about life did the poet hope to make? Use at least two Academic Vocabulary words in your discussion.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE LATIN ROOT lect
The vocabulary word lectern contains the Latin root lect, which means “to choose” or “to read.” This root appears in many English words. You can use other word parts and context clues to figure out the meaning of words containing the root lect.

PRACTICE Choose the word from the web shown that best completes each sentence. Use context clues, or, if necessary, use a dictionary.

1. We held a(n) _______ to decide who would be in charge of the Student Council.
2. People in other parts of the country may speak a different _______ of English.
3. Since this store has such a great _______, you can buy nearly anything here.
4. The teacher’s _______ on literature was long, but interesting.
5. The house had been abandoned for years and showed signs of _______.

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