

Analyzing Poetic Structure

Duration

One 45-minute class session

Resources

1. Student Handout 1: Poem: "Poets! Towers of God!" by Rubén Darío
2. Student Handout 2: Chart
3. Teacher Handout: Sample Chart with Sample Conclusion



Objectives of the Lesson

- To breakdown longer poems into sections to see how the ideas within a poem unfold
- To see how similes and metaphors in poems help deliver the author's message

College Board Objectives from the 2020–21 CED

- **Skill 3.C:** Explain the function of structure in a text.
- **Skill 6.A:** Identify and explain the function of a simile.
- **Skill 6.B:** Identify and explain the function of a metaphor.

Activities

- Students will read the poem "Poets! Towers of God!" by **Rubén Darío**.
- Students will then fill in a chart analyzing each stanza of the poem to determine how the individual parts operate to deliver the author's message.

Lesson Plan

Steps

1. Give students a copy of Rubén Darío's poem "Poets! Towers of God!"
2. Have students read the poem individually, in groups, or as a class (choice is up to you).
3. Students may need to read this poem several times before completing the structure chart.
4. Once the poem is read, students need to fill in the chart for each stanza within the poem.

NOTES

Write or type in this area

5. The first column asks students to explain the message within that stanza as a whole.
6. The second column asks students to detail the literary devices used (specifically similes and metaphors).
7. The third column asks students to explain the effect on the readers.
8. Once students are finished with the structure chart, they need to answer the conclusion question.

NOTES

Write or type in this area.

Poem

Directions: Read the following poem by **Rubén Darío**. You may want to consider taking notes while you read.

Poets! Towers of God!

Rubén Darío (1867–1916)

*Translation by Thomas Walsh and Salomón de la Selva**Stanza*

- 1 Poets! Towers of God
Made to resist the fury of the storms
Like cliffs beside the ocean
Or clouded, savage peaks!
Masters of lightning!
Breakwaters of eternity!
- 2 Hope, magic-voiced, foretells the day
When on the rock of harmony
The Siren traitorous shall die and pass away,
And there shall only be
The full, frank-billowed music of the sea.
- 3 Be hopeful still,
Though bestial elements yet turn
From Song with rancorous ill-will
And blinded races one another spurn!
Perversity debased
Among the high her rebel cry has raised.
The cannibal still lusts after the raw,
Knife-toothed and gory-faced.
- 4 Towers, your laughing banners now unfold.
Against all hatreds and all envious lies
Upraise the protest of the breeze, half-told,
And the proud quietness of sea and skies...

NOTES*Write or type in this area.*

Chart

Directions: After reading the poem “Poets! Towers of God!” by **Rubén Darío**, fill in the following chart detailing the structure of the poem. You may have to consider completing each row, focusing on one stanza at a time, before moving on to the next stanza.

Stanza	What is the overall message within this stanza?	How do you know? Find the simile and/ or metaphor being used and what is being compared.	What is the overall effect on the reader due to the message within the stanza and the comparisons utilized?
<p>Stanza 1 Poets! Towers of God Made to resist the fury of the storms Like cliffs beside the ocean Or clouded, savage peaks! Masters of lightning! Breakwaters of eternity!</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>
<p>Stanza 2 Hope, magic-voiced, foretells the day When on the rock of harmony The Siren traitorous shall die and pass away, And there shall only be The full, frank-billowed music of the sea.</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>
<p>Stanza 3 Be hopeful still, Though bestial elements yet turn From Song with rancorous ill-will And blinded races one another spurn! Perversity debased Among the high her rebel cry has raised. The cannibal still lusts after the raw, Knife-toothed and gory-faced.</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>

Chart



Stanza	What is the overall message within this stanza?	How do you know? Find the simile and/ or metaphor being used and what is being compared.	What is the overall effect on the reader due to the message within the stanza and the comparisons utilized?
<p>Stanza 4 Towers, your laughing banners now unfold. Against all hatreds and all envious lies Upraise the protest of the breeze, half-told, And the proud quietness of sea and skies...</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p>

Conclusion: Explain how Dario’s views on poets develop from stanza to stanza.

Write or type your response in this area.

Stanza	What is the overall message within this stanza?	How do you know? Find the simile and/ or metaphor being used and what is being compared.	What is the overall effect on the reader due to the message within the stanza and the comparisons utilized?
<p>Stanza 1</p> <p>Poets! Towers of God Made to resist the fury of the storms Like cliffs beside the ocean Or clouded, savage peaks! Masters of lightning! Breakwaters of eternity!</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>Stanza 1 emphasizes the strength poets have when facing adversity.</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p>Metaphor: compares poets to towers—towers of God to be more precise</p> <p>Simile: comparing strength of poets to cliffs beside the ocean or mountain peaks</p> <p>Metaphor: compares poets to breakwater barriers</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>These comparisons provide the audience with an image of strength as the poet is described as a sturdy tower—built by God, and as cliffs that are getting battered by the waves of the ocean yet hold strong. The visual of the poets serving as “breakwaters of eternity” create the image of the poet protecting and fortifying the poetry against all the adversity thrown at it.</i></p>
<p>Stanza 2</p> <p>Hope, magic-voiced, foretells the day When on the rock of harmony The Siren traitorous shall die and pass away, And there shall only be The full, frank-billowed music of the sea.</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>Stanza 2 talks about having hope for the day when the trials and adversities are no longer present.</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p>Metaphor: compares the danger to the poet’s cause to a siren who threatens to blow them off course, sending them crashing into the rocks</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>This metaphor shows the challenges poets face as tempting distractions but ultimately dangerous to the poet’s cause. But there is hope that one day these dangerous temptations won’t get in the way.</i></p>
<p>Stanza 3</p> <p>Be hopeful still, Though bestial elements yet turn From Song with rancorous ill-will And blinded races one another spurn! Perversity debased Among the high her rebel cry has raised. The cannibal still lusts after the raw, Knife-toothed and gory-faced.</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>Stanza 3 emphasizes that the hope needs to remain strong because poets still have large forces to face, but they need to remain steadfast on their path.</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p>Metaphors: compares the trials to bestial elements, perversity, and cannibals</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>This comparison paints a picture for the readers, displaying these trials to be these large, monstrous beasts that poets need to face and fight.</i></p>

Stanza	What is the overall message within this stanza?	How do you know? Find the simile and/ or metaphor being used and what is being compared.	What is the overall effect on the reader due to the message within the stanza and the comparisons utilized?
<p>Stanza 4</p> <p>Towers, your laughing banners now unfold. Against all hatreds and all envious lies Upraise the protest of the breeze, half-told, And the proud quietness of sea and skies...</p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>Stanza 4 switches the perspective to “your” to make the readers feel as if they are the poets themselves, and their banners unfolding over the tower means they have reached victory. The poet shall prevail.</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p>Metaphor: <i>compares the poet overcoming adversity to a quiet sea and sky</i></p>	<p><i>Write or type in this area:</i></p> <p><i>Comparing the quiet seas to the poet’s victory creates an image of serenity for the reader. The poets will prevail with “laughing banners” hanging from them (because they are towers) and symbolizing their ultimate victory.</i></p>

Conclusion: Explain how Dario’s views on poets develop from stanza to stanza.

Dario begins his poem by speaking highly of poets when he compares them to a sturdy “tower of God.” He recognizes their vulnerability though when tempted by the figurative sirens to stray from their course, and he warns them of their delicacy when facing the bigger threats that are far more dangerous and destructive than the sirens. He ends his poem with unwavering hope that the poets will prevail and remain strong and sturdy in their course.