

Task Title: Interpreting a Poem

OALCF Cover Sheet – Practitioner Copy

Learner Name: _____

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Successful Completion: Yes ☐ No ☐

Goal Path: Employment ☐ Apprenticeship ☐

Secondary School ☐ Post Secondary ☐ Independence ☐

Task Description: The learner will read and interpret a short poem.

Main Competency/Task Group/Level Indicator:

- Find and Use Information/Read continuous text/A1.3
- Communicate Ideas and Information/Write continuous text/B2.3

Materials Required:

- Pen/pencil and paper and/or digital device

Learner Information

Secondary and post-secondary students are often asked to interpret poems, stories, novels and other forms of literature. Interpreting writing can include identifying themes, connecting ideas with current events or universal human experiences, or drawing connections between the author's words and one's own experiences.

Read "Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver.

Wild Geese

By Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
For a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Work Sheet

Task 1: Write a short paragraph of 4 or 5 sentences. Explain what you think Oliver is telling readers about being human.

Answer:

Task 2: Write a short paragraph of 4 or 5 sentences. Explain what you think Oliver is telling readers about nature.

Answer:

Task 3: Write a short paragraph or 4 or 5 sentences. Describe how a theme in this poem connects to something in your life or community.

Answer:

Answers

Task 1: Write a short paragraph of 4 or 5 sentences. Explain what you think Oliver is telling readers about being human.

Answers will vary. Themes about humanity include

- Lack of moral reckoning or repentance as the human objective: "You do not have to be good"
- Connection with nature and importance of understanding humanity (and individual human beings) as part of the natural world
- Essential connections between each human being: "tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine"
- Try not to hold too deeply to challenges or successes: "Meanwhile, the world goes on"
- Humanity is not more important than the natural world, and our existence is simply one part of a larger natural world: "your place in the family of things"

Task 2: Write a short paragraph of 4 or 5 sentences. Explain what you think Oliver is telling readers about nature.

Answers will vary. Themes about nature include

- Interconnectedness between humanity and the natural world
- Freedom of nature (and possibility of freedom for human beings living in the natural world)
- Connectedness of nature and significance of the whole (flock) as greater than its parts (individual geese)
- Belonging as part of nature, including each human being

Task 3: Write a short paragraph or 4 or 5 sentences. Describe how a theme in this poem connects to something in your life or community.

Answers will vary.

Performance Descriptors

Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
A1.3	integrates several pieces of information from texts			
	manages unfamiliar elements (e.g. vocabulary, context, topic) to complete tasks			
	identifies the purpose and relevance of texts			
	begins to recognize bias and points of view in texts			
	infers meaning which is not explicit in texts			
	follows the main events of descriptive, narrative, informational and persuasive texts			
B2.3	write text to present information, summarize, express opinions, present arguments, convey ideas or persuade			
	manages unfamiliar elements (e.g. vocabulary, context, topic) to complete tasks			
	selects and uses vocabulary, tone and structure appropriate to the task			

Task Title: InterpretingAPoem_SP_A1.3_B2.3

This task: Was successfully completed ☐ Needs to be tried again ☐

Learner Comments:

Instructor (print): _____

Learner (print): _____