

# Poetry Packet

## Composition 9: What's Your Passion?

Essential Question: How do poets express passion in words?

**PROMPT:** Write a poem that expresses any strong emotion—that is, create a poem that is “passionate.” If you have ever felt strongly about anything in your life, if you have ever experienced anything intensely, this assignment is custom made for you.



### Focus Skills

1. Spelling
2. 20 Lines Minimum
3. Boldface 3 Vivid Verbs
4. Highlight 3 Sensory Images
5. Underline 3 Parallel Phrases

Bonus: +2 typed, +2 title, +1 vocabulary

### Mega-Tips for Content Development

- Do not try to rhyme, since rhyme can destroy passion and often get in the way of choosing the most passionate words. Writers get so caught up in choosing rhyming words that they forget all about the vivid verb or sensory word that will sound more passionate. There's nothing too passionate about “Humpty-Dumpty sat on a *wall*/ Humpty-Dumpty had a great *fall*,” is there?
- Write about a personal experience—but feel free to fictionalize. What is personal is usually more passionate.
- Envision this poem as a mini-mini-story.
- Before you write, create an *idea bank*: that is, write out the brief story line for the poem in one sentence, and then free-write a list of any phrases or impressions that come to mind when you reflect on the event. Aim for sensory impressions especially. See the model idea bank below for the student poem that follows.

## Bobble-Head Ed Poetry Smack-Down

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1. Poems that use language that the “Keeper of the Bobbles” finds unfit for publication in Stardust or that defame the reputation of another student or teacher in any way will be disqualified.
2. Place a title over the poem but attach no name. Remove all FCA-related boldfacing, underlining, and highlighting. Students will vote for the best [2] poems on Day 1. The Top vote getter will win the “People’s Choice Most Popular Poem Award”. The Top 10 poems will advance to Day 2, when a winner for “The Most Poetic Poem” will be selected 50% by Student Vote and 50% by TAHS English Teacher Committee Vote for the Bobble-Head grand prize.
3. **Deadline:** Before **3 PM** on **February “W”**, paste the text of the poem and its title into an email sent to: [sleverhart@tyrone.k12.pa.us](mailto:sleverhart@tyrone.k12.pa.us)



### Voting: you are the judge!

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1. On **February “X”** in English class, you will log on to Mr. Everhart’s staff page to read all of the poems submitted from all periods. You’ll select the top [2].
2. On **February “Y”**, the top [10] vote-getters from each period will appear on Mr. Everhart’s staff page. There, you’ll pick your top [2] poems. TAHS English Teachers will do the same. Results will be combined for a winner.
3. On **February “Z”**, a quick but solemn “Presentation of the Bobble Ceremony.”

## Model Idea Bank

*Story Line:* Hurt by my girlfriend's insults, I fantasize about causing her equal pain by driving my car on a suicide mission into the trees in front of her house.

*Impressions:* tiny shards of glass sprinkling over the grass, your heart cut like a blade, empty cold road, sees her reflection in the ambulance ceiling

## Making a Scene

Sometimes I'd rather drive into those trees,  
The ones by your house,  
Than think of all the condescension  
That *streams\** from your mouth.  
You'd see the *tiny shards of glass*  
*Sprinkling* over your lawn,  
Perhaps one *piercing* your ribs  
*Like a serrated blade*  
Before I am gone.  
The surgeon will not cut more of me to pieces  
Than your words have,  
And so as I sit here on this empty road  
Asking how I got  
So cold  
So far  
From being able to apologize,  
I swear that tonight  
I can almost see your reflection  
In the ambulance ceiling.

[\* note italicized passionate words]

## Model Idea Bank

*Story Line:* I drive my car too fast and wash it when it gets dirty.

*Impressions:* romantically charged driving words [double-meanings]: sweetheart, ride, take me places, crossing the line, top down, fueled, move slowly, get a little dirty, wash away, slippery fun, dangerous curves, see myself in you, junk in the trunk, used, new, squealing, drive

“Ode to Shelby”	
1	Since we’ve met, sweetheart, It’s been quite a ride. <u>You’ve taken me places</u> I’d only dreamed, <u>I’ve taken you places</u> you couldn’t go alone,
5	Your <i>hot breath sweeps</i> me round hairpin turns, Crossing the line a few too many times, <u>My pulse up, your top down,</u> <u>Fast, careless, spontaneous,</u> Fueled by raw desire.
10	Maybe we should have moved more slowly, <u>I know the dangers--</u> But <u>I have no regrets.</u> We get a little dirty, But that’s life--
15	Nothing that can’t be washed away, Nothing a little slippery fun can’t fix, Your dangerous curves <i>lathered</i> so smooth and clear I swear I can <u>see myself in you, lose myself in you.</u> Some guys complain about the junk in your trunk,
20	Others say you’re used-- But you’re new to me each time I turn you on, And no matter how far we go on this <i>moon-washed night,</i> I just want you to know, That <i>squealing</i> down this alley in the <i>midnight heat,</i>
25	You’re the finest Mustang I’ll ever drive.

### Gettysburg Address: Parallelism Practice and Bonus for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> 9-Weeks

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

*Below, list all 15 sets of parallelism in Lincoln's speech as follows: #15. of the..., for the..., by the...*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

## Parallelism

**Which sentences [those in A or those in B] sound better-- and why?**

[A]

- Government of the people, for the people, and by the people shall not perish from this earth.
- When days were old and knights were bold.

[B]

- Government of the people, for the people, and by everybody who is a citizen shall not perish from this earth.
- When days were old and knights performed deeds that were very bold.

Parallelism injects rhythm into your writing whenever you have a conjunction like *and*, *but*, *or*. You achieve that rhythm by using similar numbers and similar types of words for each phrase in the series. The examples above illustrate the importance of using the same number of words and the same types.

**How would you make the following sentence more parallel?**

1. Faulkner's stories have suspense, style, *and* they are well structured?
2. She spoke with warmth *and* in a humorous vein.
3. When Twain went to Oxford, he was cheered by admirers, celebrated by critics, *and* gave many coveted interviews to the press.
4. Tchaikowsky's overture makes you imagine the thunder of canon, the march of soldiers, *and* how they celebrated the victory.

### APPLICATION

Pass out student portfolios. Select at least 2 topic sentences from essays that you have written this year. Rewrite these topic sentences so that the subtopics listed within them are parallel.

# Composition 10: Your Inner Child

**Essential Question: How do express the significance of a childhood experience in poetry?**

**PROMPT:** Reflect on an incident or experience from your childhood that has had enough significance for you that you have remembered it all of these years. Write a narrative poem recreating that experience or memory.



## Focus Skills

1. Spelling
  2. 20 Lines Minimum
  3. Boldface 3 Vivid Verbs
  4. Highlight 3 Sensory Images
  5. Underline 3 Parallel Phrases
- Bonus: +2 typed, +2 title, +1 vocabulary

## Mega-Tips for Content Development

1. Envision this poem as a mini-mini-story told from your first-person point of view reflecting back years ago.
2. Before you write, create an *idea bank*: that is, write out the brief story line for the poem in a one sentence, and then free-write a list of any phrases or impressions that come to mind when you reflect on the event. Aim for sensory impressions especially. See the model idea bank below for the student poem that follows.
3. Include memorable or meaningful dialogue periodically.
4. A good poem will tell a story about your childhood. A great poem will tell a story about your childhood...but have a message for adults.

### Model Idea Bank

*Story Line:* Dared by my friends, I jump from a hayloft into a pile of hay—and feel truly alive.

*Impressions:* the loft, ladder seemed taller than a tree, wooden rafters, death waiting below, pile of straw, itchy, some up sleeves, explosions of dust, sun shining through cracks in barn wall, dust suspended in the air, time stands still, gentle landing, high-fives

### I am Whole

It is forbidden  
And so it *seduces us like a guiding voice*.  
First the check to ensure no one is here,  
We behold the loft—  
Where no child dare tread.  
My *stomach sinks* in front of a ladder  
That *soars* higher than the ancient catalpas in the yard.

“What? You scared?”

Such questions are not really questions.

“Nah, let’s do it.”

We climb.

Higher and higher, our destination joyously concrete:  
The wooden rafters above.  
*Death licks its lips* on the floor below,  
An image I block from my eyes.  
I obey the feet ahead of me,

Thirty feet might as well be a mile,  
*The loose straw below me jagged stones.*

But already they *plunge*  
*In a whirl of raw passion*  
That *explodes in clouds of dust and straw.*

“Come on,” they urge.

I look down  
And *feel the afternoon sun through the cracks* in the wall,  
My feet fixed to the rafter beneath me,  
Weighing for the moment the peculiar dangers  
Of self-preservation.

There is no choice.  
I swallow deeply and exhale  
And soon am weightless,  
Falling to some uncertain outcome,  
*Hurtled downward* with all of gravity’s wrath,  
And in midair I find time irrelevant enough  
To feel a blasé communion  
*With dust particles suspended in streaks of light,*  
Until at last *a gentle golden landing reaches up for me.*

Low-laughter and high-fives,  
*A few shakes of itchy straw* from shirt sleeves.

I am whole.

## Model Idea Bank

*Story line:* My father makes a fool out of himself catching fireflies in our back yard.

*Impressions:* dusk, crickets, coolness of night, embers sprinkled from a fire, glowing like fairy dust, electric darkness, miraculous, phosphorescence

### Phosphorescence

It is a ritual of summer—  
We sit on the porch steps  
In the *still July dusk*  
The *crickets trilling in the coming coolness*.  
And we wait.  
They come from the *blackness beneath the trees*,  
Their *lights aglow like fairy dust*,  
*Yellow-green embers sprinkled from a celestial fire*.

“Catch,” I shout.  
So you *lope* through the grass  
*Slick with dew* and other treacheries.  
It’s a game of trajectory.  
You aim inches, sometimes yards ahead of the lights,  
Never sure what course they have taken since the last signal.  
You work on hunches in an *electric darkness*.  
Off-balance, you dive for a shadow  
And fall gracelessly.

“You miss,” I *howl* from the steps.

After repeated falls,  
You return the magic quarry to my cupped hands,  
And I watch the *glow come on like a switch*.  
I *burn* to hold it tight,  
To possess the *phosphorescent miracle* forever.  
But I let it go.

“Daddy, catch another,” I beg.

And you do.  
Because there are thousands of miracles  
About tonight,  
About this moment,  
And the game is not really about bugs.

## Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death-  
He kindly stopped for Me-  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves-  
And Immortality-

We slowly drove- He knew no haste-  
And I had put away  
My Labor- and my Leisure too-  
For his Civility-

We passed the school where children played  
At Recess in a Ring-  
We passed the fields of Gazing Grain-  
We passed the setting Sun-

Or rather He passed us-  
The Dews grew quivering and chill-  
For only gossamer was my gown  
My Tippet- only Tulle-

We paused before a House that seemed  
A swelling of the Ground-  
The roof was scarcely visible-  
The cornice in the Ground-

Since then 'tis centuries- but  
Feels shorter than a Day  
I first surmised the Horse's heads  
Were toward Eternity.

## Apparently With No Surprise

Apparently with no surprise  
To any happy Flower--  
The Frost beheads it at its play  
In accidental Power.  
The blonde Assassin passes on—  
The Sun proceeds unmoved—  
To measure off another Day  
For an Approving God.

## Composition 11: A Poem of Your Choice

**Essential Question: How do we make poetic experiences concrete?**

**PROMPT:** Write a poem on any topic whatsoever, as long as it follows the focus skill guidelines below.

### Focus Skills

1. Spelling
2. 20 Lines Minimum
3. Square 3 Vivid Verbs
4. Circle 3 Sensory Images
5. Underline/Italicize at least 3 Parallel Phrases

Bonus: +2 typed, +2 title, +1 vocabulary



### Specific, Concrete, Sensory Words

Which paragraph below has more style and why?

[A]

Airheads can be found in the girls' lavs putting stuff on their faces, you know, the type of stuff that they always carry around in their purses, just in case. They usually dress fine, have nice hair, and look pretty. No one doubts that for a minute. It's all pretty clear. It's what every girl aims for and what every guy dreams about. It's sort of shallow, maybe, and perhaps it's not what everybody should want, but you can't deny that it is true. It's part of us all and it's how we are conditioned to view women. They are usually dumb and do a lot of stupid things.

[B]

Airheads can be found in the girls' lavs applying make-up with mortar trowels. There they are, smothered in cherry lipstick, their eyelids weighted down with kilograms of blue shadow. Gucci purses swing from their tanned shoulders, pierced navels exposed between the blue of their Guess? jeans and the silky nothingness of abbreviated tops. Unfortunately, for guys looking for more than a body, airheads have been known to lock themselves inside their Daddy's Porsches and to fail urine tests for which they probably studied.

### THREE GUIDELINES FOR STYLISH WORD CHOICE

- **REPLACE THE VAGUE WORD:** Avoid vague, general words like *thing*, *nice*, *stuff*, *fine*, *great*, *it*.
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1. Doyle began his career as a doctor, and it explains his interest in careful observation.
2. They planned to eat outdoors by candlelight, but a strong wind ruined things and the evening didn't seem so nice after all.
3. Jocks are often obsessed with their sports, and it often affects their academic performance.

- **SENSORY WORDS:** Use words that appeal to the senses—sensory images.
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4. What are 3 ways that you could say that “She had *nice* hair” without saying *nice*?  
Generate words that appeal to the **sense of sight** instead.
5. What are 3 ways that you could say that “I have a *bad* pain” without saying *bad*?  
Generate words that appeal to the **sense of touch** instead.

- **CHOOSE THE MOST SPECIFIC WORD** Aim for the most specific word possible, especially when pronouns are at play.
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6. Put your [stuff, books, belongings] away.
7. I have some [directions, information, things] for you.
8. We [went, marched, traveled] up the hill.
9. Tom Cruise is a [great, magnetic, popular] actor.
10. I tried to [warn, communicate to, tell] you to study.