

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 8: Lesson 6

Lesson Focus: The focus of today's lesson will be on William Blake and one of his poems, "The Fly."

Practice Focus: Students will analyze an informational text to determine the main ideas; students will also analyze one of Blake's poems using a strategy for unlocking its meaning.

Objective: Students will use "William Blake 1757-1827" and "The Fly" to learn about William Blake and one of his important poems with a focus on determining the main ideas in the texts as well as author's craft for creating meaning.

Academic Vocabulary: distinct, expression, engraver, radicals, veiled, retribution, connotation, personification, symbolism, melancholy, abstract

Texts for lesson:

William Blake, 1757-1827

From the time he was a child, William Blake had a **distinct** way of looking at the world. As a young boy, he returned from a walk in the country to tell his parents that he had seen "a tree filled with angels." And this type of creative **expression** likely paved the way for his poetic future. Blake began writing poetry within a few years of that incident. His first printed work, *Poetical Sketches*, was published in 1783.

In addition to being a poet, Blake was also a skilled painter and **engraver**. He frequently worked for London booksellers engraving illustrations for books and magazines. Through this work, he also made connections to other people who were making waves in the literary and political movements of the time.

Living in England at the time of Britain's war with the American colonies, Blake often addressed political topics in his work. He took a **stance** against King George and his country's treatment of the colonists and sided with **radicals** like Thomas Paine. Much of Blake's work also addressed religious and spiritual themes. Even his works that some people view as simple and childlike, such as *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, contain **veiled** criticisms of society.

During his life, Blake did not become well known as a poet among the general population, and was actually more highly regarded as an engraver. His work as a poet grew in popularity after his death. He continues to be well respected as a poet and an artist today.

The Fly

Little fly,

Thy summer's play

My thoughtless hand

Has brushed away.

Am not I
A fly like thee, meaning a fly like you?
Or art not thou, meaning or are you not
A man like me?

For I dance
And drink and sing
Till some blind hand
Shall brush my wing.

If thought is life
And strength and breath,
And the want
Of thought is death,

Then am I
A happy fly,
If I live,
Or if I die.

TP-CASTT Poetry Analysis

TITLE: Consider the title and make a prediction about what the poem is about.

PARAPHRASE: Translate the poem line by line into your own words on a literal level. Look for complete thoughts (sentences may be inverted) and look up unfamiliar words.

CONNOTATION: Examine the poem for meaning beyond the literal. Look for figurative language, imagery, and sound elements.

ATTITUDE/TONE: Notice the speaker's tone and attitude. Humor? Sarcasm? Awe?

SHIFTS: Note any shifts or changes in speaker or attitude. Look for key words, time change, punctuation.

TITLE: Examine the title again, this time on an interpretive level.

THEME: Briefly state in your own words what the poem is about (subject), then what the poet is saying about the subject (theme).

Independent Practice questions:

1. What stood out to you the most regarding William Blake's life and work? What personalities in society today are similar to Blake? Are they positive or negative influences? Why?

2. What did you learn the most in our analysis of Blake's poem, "The Fly"? What was the most important thing that you learned in using the TPCASTT tool to analyze his poem?

3. What are your thoughts about the poem? Is it silly or something important to consider? Explain your answer.