

Suggestions for a two week unit on Sonnets:

- **Day 1 and 2:** Introduce sonnets: Petrarchan and Shakespearean; mention Lin- Manuel Miranda's sonnet. If you want each student to recite a sonnet make this announcement immediately:
 - **Assignment:** everyone must recite a sonnet so select one in the next two or three days because on give date the "Fickle Finger of Fate" will begin its selection. A double A grade if sonnet is memorized. Obviously nobody will be ready the first day but one can say "no" once. Students can go to ESU Website for sonnet selections or use any source they want. (This will take time but you can start immediately. Students whose names have already been called (do 3 a day) will rush to look for a sonnet and be ready to at least read if their name is called by chance the next day. Tell them every bit of punctuation is important! (scramble list of student last names, use for FFF)
- **Day 3:** One day close reading of Sonnet 73. Provide form to be filled out and let students work alone for ½ the class. (Don't give this assignment as homework as one can easily look up the sonnets). 2nd ½ of class discuss in groups and decide or agree to what each word and line might mean. If time discuss as a class.
- **Day 4** Finish Sonnet 73 as a class. Label literary devices, etc.
- **Day 5-9 1 week** for the writing of sonnets while at the beginning of each class 3 students will recite their selected sonnet. The only way students really understand meter, -- even if they are not so successful—is to attempt writing their own sonnet. They learn to count the syllables of their own, and fellow classmates' sonnets.
 - Students agonize over rhyme and iambs—struggle for simile, metaphor, personification, apostrophe, etc. Great way to introduce all literary devices.
 - These sonnets are written with a lot of help from friends and by 3rd day students should have a great deal to be peer edited by fellow students and exhausted teacher. Tell peer readers to initial their comments. It takes a classroom to write a sonnet. There are always 3 or 4 students who do meter automatically— let students go to such students for help.
 - **On the final day** instruct peer editors to use rubric for peer edits and to come up with **3 concrete suggestions to fix the thing. They may need a separate paper.** Students should feel free to find yet another human: friend, mom, dad, sister brother, football coach, for a peer edit if, by chance, their peer editor is somewhat clueless. Everyone must try to evaluate and make positive statements. Working on someone else's sonnet gets one going on his/her own. Often a fellow student will write the best line.
 - See sonnet Rubric for requirements and points. If possible quatrains should have separate imagery or subject. Tell student to hand in the following: the sonnet single spaced and looking like Shakespeare's, all peer edits and first attempts. Try to give the peer editor a grade also.

Example of student sonnet below-- one who hated the assignment and was mostly a math student. My statement to him was that I was sure the math problems he solved were just as complex. In the end he allowed me to use his sonnet as an example. Often it is good to include an original sonnet in a letter of recommendation.

Sonnet # 304

*Cannot believe I'm sitting here at one.
No topic hath yet sprung into my mind.
This sottish torture's only just begun.
Forsooth this work-load proves to be unkind.
In slumber, chimes do strike the tone of three;
I wake to find my situation worse.
For as my pillow served the backspace key,
I find my work is lost and start to curse.
Mine eyes half open, I begin anew
Delirious, I start to write once more.
By four a.m. this masterpiece I'd brewed,
And slept till morning on the hardwood floor.
Experience has brought forth to mine eyes
That writing sonnets truly I despise.*

Petrarchan Sonnets and their influence on Shakespeare

Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) a famous Italian scholar and poet in Renaissance Italy, wrote the first series of love sonnets to "Laura," the woman Petrarch loved "hopelessly and from afar" until her death in 1348. Central to Petrarch's sequence is the range of moods of the speaker, a range that includes every emotion from spiritual ecstasy to agony and melancholy. All of Petrarch's sonnets (and many of Shakespeare's) are also concerned with the poet and his task. Sonnet #134 is an example of Petrarch's use of **oxymorons**. By Shakespeare's time everyone recognized this convention as old, worn out, tired, stale, and unimaginative. Romeo is introduced as a Petrarchan lover and Shakespeare makes fun of Romeo as he spews lines to Benvolio. (see below and compare to Petrarch opposite). Remarkably in these lines Shakespeare simultaneously foreshadows much of the play, genius that he is.

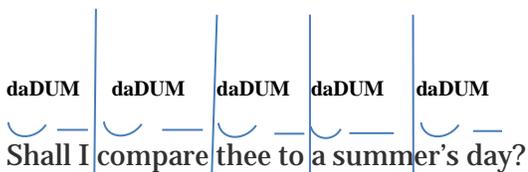
<p>Petrarch's sonnet #134 as translated by Anthony Mortimer</p> <p>I find no peace, and have no arms for war, and fear and hope, and burn and yet I freeze, and fly to heaven, lying on earth's floor, and nothing hold, and all the world I seize.</p> <p>My jailer opens not, nor locks the door, nor binds me to hear, nor will loose my ties; Love kills me not, nor breaks the chains I wear, nor wants me living, nor will grant me ease.</p> <p>I have no tongue, and shout; eyeless, I see; I long to perish, and I beg for aid; I love another, and myself I hate.</p>	<p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Act I, scene 1</p> <p>What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours? which, having, makes them short. BENVOLIO In love? ROMEO Out— BENVOLIO Of love? Here's much to do with hate, but more with love. Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate, O anything of nothing first create! O heavy lightness, serious vanity, Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms, Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health, Still-waking sleep that is not what it is! This love feel I, that feel no love in this. To Benvolio Dost thou not laugh?.....</p>
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Note: Orsino's first lines in *Twelfth Night* reveal a Petrarchan lover who is in love with love; Shakespeare's extraordinary and fresh poetry in these lines are seldom forgotten: "If music be the foold of love play on..."

*Sonnets and **some of** the background information were taken from *Literature of the Western World*, Volume One. eds. Brian Wilkie and James Hurt. New York: MacMillan, 1984. 1586-87, 1593-94.

Shakespeare's Sonnets

A sonnet is made up of **14 lines** that are organized into **3 quatrains and a couplet**. The **rhyme scheme** of a sonnet is: **abab, cdcd, efef, gg**. To figure out the **rhyme scheme** of any poem always assign the first rhyme **a**, the second rhyme **b**, the third rhyme **c** and so on. The meter of a poem is a series of stressed and unstressed syllables. Shakespeare's sonnets are written in iambic pentameter and there are 10 syllables in each line. "Iambic" means that the **rhythm goes from an unstressed to a stressed syllable: daDUM**, as happens naturally in such words as divine, caress, bizarre, delight. **Iamb** is the name given to one **daDUM**. One **daDUM** equals **one foot** of the meter.* There are **5 feet** of meter in each line. (Since it is **pentameter**, we know pent stands for **5** so, each line gets precisely **5 daDUMS**) Usually Shakespeare's sonnets pose a problem that is introduced in the three quatrains and resolved in the couplet.



Sonnet 18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?	()	_____
Thou art more lovely and more temperate	()	_____
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,	()	_____
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.	()	_____
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines	()	_____
And often is his gold complexion dimmed	()	_____
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,	()	_____
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;	()	_____
But thy eternal summer shall not fade	()	_____
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;	()	_____
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,	()	_____
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.	()	_____
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see	()	_____
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.	()	_____

*Each iambic unit is called a foot (the term foot is also applied to other rhythmical units such as trochaic [DUMda], dactylic [DUMdada], and anapest [dadaDUM])

Romeo and Juliet's Sonnet *Romeo and Juliet 1, 1*

Shakespeare may have known how to make fun of Petrarchan lines, but he really delivers with the fresh, new, and beautiful lines of two young people who, for the first time speak to one another, revealing their intellect, wit and spontaneity. Of course Shakespeare as well reveals his genius and creativity with this first and unique use of the sonnet form.

If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO

O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.
They pray: grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.

Sonnet 73

LXXIII.

That time of year thou mayst in me behold

[] _____

When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

[] _____

Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,

[] _____

Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

[] _____

In me thou seest the twilight of such day

[] _____

As after sunset fadeth in the west,

[] _____

Which by and by black night doth take away,

[] _____

Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

[] _____

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire

[] _____

That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,

[] _____

As the death-bed whereon it must expire

[] _____

Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

[] _____

This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,

[] _____

To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

[] _____

Lin-Manuel Miranda's Sonnet

Recited by Miranda at the 2016 Tony Awards

*My wife's the reason anything gets done.
She nudges me towards promise by degrees.
She is a perfect symphony of one.
Our son is her most beautiful reprise.
We chase the melodies that seem to find us
Until they're finished songs and start to play.
When senseless acts of tragedy remind us
That nothing here is promised, not one day
This show is proof that history remembers.
We live through times when hate and fear seem stronger.
We rise and fall, and light from dying embers
Remembrances that hope and love last longer.
And love is love is love is love is love is love is love;
Cannot be killed or swept aside.
I sing Vanessa's symphony; Eliza tells her story.
Now fill the world with music, love, and pride.*

Comments on Lin-Manuel Miranda's Sonnet

First of all this is a **16** line sonnet with some lines of unconventional meter. We may be in the age of a “new Shakespeare” where language and rhythm take us to new heights. Take a closer look at Charlotte Runcie's comments from Britain's *The Telegraph*: “The English poet who inspired Lin-Manuel Miranda's Tony's speech—and why it's a literary masterstroke:

The poem is also, as you might expect from such a gifted writer as Miranda, a dazzlingly clever piece of writing. It isn't just any sonnet. Most sonnets, written by poets from Shakespeare to Wordsworth and beyond, are identifiable by their structure of 14 lines and a regular rhythm and rhyme scheme. This allows the poet a controlled structure in which to explore otherwise unruly and complex ideas about love and personal emotion.

But Miranda's sonnet is 16 lines long, and has some moments of unconventional rhythm. What does that tell us? The best-known writer of the 16-line sonnet is probably the Victorian writer George Meredith, who wrote a sequence of them titled 'Modern Love', exploring his own disastrous marriage and expressing a sentiment that love in his time had become corrupted and corrosive.

Miranda adopts Meredith's form and uses it to talk about his own good marriage, and about love as a positive and unbeatable force. To take a form that had been associated with a poet claiming love is rotten, only to turn it around to use it as a poem about the healing power of love in the face of darkness, is elegant, beautiful and extremely powerful.

Miranda's poem reaches a climax with the penultimate couplet (which would have been the final couplet in a more conventional 14-line sonnet):

And love is love;

Cannot be killed or swept aside.

These two lines show mastery of the form from Miranda. The other lines in the sonnet have five stressed syllables each and are written in iambic pentameter, the meter most famously used by Shakespeare. But in the line “And love is love...” there are three extra syllables.

George Meredith CREDIT

The word “love” actually breaks the boundaries of the strict sonnet form here, just as love - as Miranda is saying - can break boundaries in every other area of life. The very next line is a stressed syllable short of the typical five: it needs the extra syllables from the line before it to balance it out within the poem. It needs that extra love to become whole.

Just like Miranda's hugely successful hip-hop musical Hamilton, which tells the story of the American revolution and the life of Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, the sonnet is thoughtful, lyrically complex and perfectly expressed.

It shows one eye towards Miranda's extensive knowledge of literary tradition and history, and one eye on the future. It's a call for love in defiance of hate and fear, and it's a tribute to Miranda's own overwhelming personal experience of love. It was particularly appropriate for the Tony Awards to pay tribute to the victims of the Orlando shooting because theatre, and Broadway in particular, have always been seen as a safe haven for LGBT people. On a day of unspeakable tragedy as the result of a hate crime against gay people, Lin-Manuel Miranda and the Tony Awards provided a loving refuge.

Twelfth Night Or What You Will

SCENE I. DUKE ORSINO's palace. Ask yourself: where does a simile or metaphor begin and end? What imagery carries the whole piece and ties it together?? Enter DUKE ORSINO, CURIO, and other Lords; Musicians attending
 music should be played that rises and falls, that goes to a slower sadder cadence along with the lines

DUKE ORSINO

If music be the food of love, play on;

Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,

The appetite^o may sicken, and so die. *the lover's appetite for music*

That strain again! it had a dying fall:^o *cadence*

O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,

That breathes upon a bank of violets,

Stealing and giving odour. Enough, no more!

'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
(*Music ceases*)

O spirit of love! how quick and fresh^o art thou, *lively and eager*

That, notwithstanding thy capacity

Receiveth as the sea^o, nought enters there, *receives without limit*

Of what validity and pitch^o soe'er, *value/height; excellence*

But falls into abatement^o and low price, *lesser value*

Even in a minute: so full of shapes is fancy

That it alone is high fantastical.^o *uniquely imaginative*

Write as literal a translation as you can on each opposite line; concepts can carry on to next line if the punctuation indicates. Indicate literary devices above the line: metaphor, simile, personification, Apostrophe, alliteration, assonance, imagery, etc.

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