

POEM ANALYSIS QUESTIONS UNIT 4:

ONE MORE NOTCH

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. Narrative poem tells a story. What is the narrative for this poem? Discuss the demeanor of the teacher and the student. From the description in the poem, what type of behavior is he exhibiting and what is the age range of the student? What might his behavior indicate?
2. **Diction:** The word “drooping” is used in the first and second stanza. Explain where and how it is a **double entendre**. There are other words and word combinations that function as a double entendre, a **homophone**, a **neologism** (new word) or **symbolism**. Identify those words and their functions in the poem and why they are used.
3. The manner in which the teacher describes the student not only describes him, but reveals aspects of her own personality and concepts. Analyze and discuss.
4. Omit the lines of dialogue from the poem. Does the reader still have an understanding of the dynamics and resolution of the poem? Replace the dialogue for description. How does the poem change? Consider point of view, tense, characterization.
5. What is the tone of the poem?

DOMINANT TRAIT

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. What effect does the alliteration have in Part 1?
2. How does the narrator feel in part 1 of the poem? What is the verbal/non-verbal conflict? Consider the historical allusions.
3. In part 2 the lines on the left have a different tone and intent than the words on the right. Explain.
4. What does the mother’s realization and admission reveal about her role as a mother and observer of behavior? From what she expresses in part 2 do you think the mother is racist, ashamed or both? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.
5. What does the speaker imply in the third part of the poem? How has the speaker’s understanding and opinion of the student changed from Part 1 to Part 3?
6. What is the *Dominant Trait* in this poem and how did it manifest? Refer to the footnotes for this poem. What does this poem indicate might be the cause of the students’ behavior and how it might be changed?

OBJECT LESSON #1

Suggested questions for reflection - small group discussion - class discussion

1. In stanzas 2-5 there is a list of descriptions for how the color black may be perceived. Analyze the descriptions and the behavior of the person in the 6th stanza. It has been said that imitation is the greatest form of flattery. Is the behavior of the person in stanza 6 a form of flattery or objectification and prejudice? Explain.
2. **Allusion:** There is an historical allusion in the poem. Why is it used, what does it mean, and might it be the root of the speaker's assumptions?
3. Do you think there will be a confrontation between the speaker and the person being described? What leads you to this conclusion? Explain.
4. **Tone:** What is the tone of the poem? Explain.
5. The three poems in this unit describe some form of social blindness, either by the speaker, the person whose behavior is being described, or both. Analyze and discuss. What is the root cause? Can it be resolved and how?