Understanding Shakespeare –
“Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind”
Grade Seven

Skill Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Close Reading</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Levels of Thinking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Syntax Techniques</strong></td>
<td><strong>Composition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Reversal</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>inverted order (inversion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials and Resources
- *Tales from Shakespeare* by Charles and Mary Lamb
- “Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind” from *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare

Lesson Introduction
The activity that follows will help students wrestle with complex language that may have more than one possible interpretation or meaning. Any accessible, short Shakespearean passage can be used to serve the same purposes. In this case, the “Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind” speech from *As You Like It* allows students an opportunity to read closely and to interpret a richly layered passage.

Consider having students read “As You Like It” from Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare*. The story is easily accessible to seventh grade students.
Understanding Shakespeare –  
“Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind”  
Grade Seven

Read the poem/song below and paraphrase it line by line. Pay particular attention to the phrases and clauses in bold face type.

Poem                                             Paraphrase

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,                     
Thou art not so unkind                              
    As man’s ingratitude.                           
Thy tooth is not so keen,                         
(5) Because thou art not seen,                    
    Although thy breath be rude.\(^1\)           
Heigh-ho! Sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly.  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly. 
    Then, Heigh-ho, the holly!                    
(10) This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,                  
That dost not bite so nigh                         
    As benefits forgot.                           
Though thou the waters warp,\(^2\)                 
(15) Thy sting is not so sharp                   
    As friend remembered not.                   
Heigh-ho! Sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly.  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly. 
    Then, Heigh-ho, the holly!                    
(20) This life is most jolly.

\(^1\) rude – adjective: rough; harsh 
\(^2\) warp – verb: freeze

Diction – word choice
1. In your own words, explain the meaning of the word “ingratitude.”

2. In the context of line 4, what is the meaning of the word “keen”?

3. Some of the words used by Shakespeare are archaic forms of words we use today. For each word, supply the word we use instead.
   a. thou __________________________
   b. thy __________________________
   c. art __________________________
   d. doth __________________________
   e. dost __________________________

   Imagery – words or phrases that appeal to one of the five senses
4. This poem contains images that appeal to the senses of ________________________, ________________, and __________________________.

5. The poem uses ________________________ images from __________________________ to express the idea that love and friendship __________________________________________.

6. Is this use of imagery effective? Justify your answer.

   Figures of Speech – words or phrases that describe one thing in terms of something else; often referred to as figurative language

   “Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind” contains examples of both personification and simile.

   Personification – a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics
   Simile – a comparison of two different things or ideas through the use of the words “like” or “as”

7. In what ways is the wind personified?

8. The poem contains three similes. Highlight the similes within the poem.

9. What is the effect of the use of the word “not” in these similes?
10. Write another simile comparing a harsh aspect of nature to a way in which people hurt one another. Be sure to use the word “not” in your simile.

11. The imagery and figures of speech reveal that the speaker’s attitude toward love and friendship is __________________________ because __________________________ ____________________________________________________________________________.

Musical or Sound Devices – stylistic techniques that convey meaning through sound

- Alliteration – the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same sound
- Assonance – the repetition of vowel sounds in a series of words
- Refrain – a repeated line or group of lines in a poem or song
- Rhyme – the repetition of sounds in two or more words or phrases that appear close to each other in a poem
- End rhyme – rhyme at the end of lines
- Rhyme scheme – the pattern of end rhymes

12. Decide if each set of words contains alliteration, assonance, or both.

   _______________ a. “winter wind”
   _______________ b. “dost not”
   _______________ c. “Though thou the”
   _______________ d. “waters warp”
   _______________ e. “sting...so sharp”
   _______________ f. “friendship is feigning”

13. Label the rhyme scheme of the poem.

14. Draw a box around the refrain of the poem. What is the effect of repeating these lines? (Think about things like theme, speaker’s attitude, and the qualities of lyric poetry.)
Sentence Structure
The normal word order is inverted or reversed in some lines of this poem.
15. Quote a line where the word order appears to be reversed from what you would expect it to be.

16. Rewrite the line in the normal order.

17. Why might a poet use inverted word order?

Repetition of words, lines, and clauses is used throughout the poem.
18. Study lines 1 and 11. What observations can you make about the type of repetition in these lines?

19. What is the effect of this repetition?

20. Quote another line from the poem that contains repetition.

Theme – the central message of a literary work
21. Quote the line from the poem that best represents the theme of the poem.

22. Write the theme statement in your own words.