



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Elizabeth Woody Oregon Poet Laureate 2016–2018

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Identity
- Language

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- Determine key themes in Elizabeth Woody's poetry using the TPCASTT close reading strategy
- Discuss the perspective and cultural experiences described in Elizabeth Woody's poems through the analysis of figurative language and word choice
- Participate in collaborative analysis and discussion of poetic text

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How does poetry contribute to our understanding of self, others, and the world?
- How does the use of voice empower an individual and a people?

LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?
Classroom
- How are the students organized?
 - ☒ Whole class ☒ Teams
 - ☒ Pairs ☒ Individually

TIME REQUIRED

3 hours

Overview

Elizabeth Woody is a poet and educator of Navajo, Wasco, and Yakama descent and is an enrolled tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Woody's writing focuses on the histories of her ancestors, the rich Pacific Northwest landscape, and the experience of being a tribal member, an American, and a woman in contemporary society. Woody is the winner of the American Book Award. In 2016, she was named the eighth poet laureate of Oregon—the first person of American Indian heritage to hold that honor. Oregon poets laureate are appointed by the governor and serve a two-year term as cultural ambassadors, traveling around the state to share the power of reading and writing poetry.

In this lesson, students will explore and analyze Woody's poetry. Students will have the opportunity to listen to Woody speak about her work and her relationship with language and the landscape. They will reflect on and discuss her perspective and the process by which she writes. Students will also learn a structured strategy for analyzing poetic text and recognizing key themes. Finally, students will demonstrate what they have learned by creating a group analysis and presentation of one of Woody's poems.



Background for teachers

ELIZABETH WOODY

Teachers should become very familiar with Elizabeth Woody and her poetry. Woody is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon, is of Yakama Nation descent, and is “born for” the Tódich’íinii (Bitter Water clan) of the Navajo Nation. Her paternal grandfather’s clan is Mą’ii deeshgiizhinii (Coyote Pass – Jemez clan). She received the American Book Award in 1990 and the William Stafford Memorial Award for Poetry and was a finalist for an Oregon Book Award in 1995. In 2017, she was named the eighth poet laureate of Oregon. Woody has published three books of poetry. She also writes short fiction, essays, and is a visual artist.

Books of poetry

- *Luminaries of the Humble*, (Sun Tracks, Vol 30), University of Arizona Press.
- *Seven Hands Seven Hearts*, Eighth Mountain Press.
- *Hand into Stone: Poems*, Contact II Publications.

Resources about Elizabeth Woody

Bend Magazine

“Elizabeth Woody’s Unusual Path to Poet Laureate”

<https://bendmagazine.com/elizabeth-woodys-unusual-path-poet-laureate/>

STANDARDS

Oregon English standards

9-10. RL.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze word choice and the impact on meaning.

9-10. RL.6 Analyze a perspective, points of view, or cultural experience in works that draw on a wide range of world literature across time and location, including consideration of which perspectives are represented and which are absent.

9-10. SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

MATERIALS

What materials are needed for students to engage in this activity?

- For projector:
 - Elizabeth Woody PowerPoint
- Student handouts:
 - Elizabeth Woody Quotations
 - Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer
 - Elizabeth Woody Poetry Packet
 - Group Presentation and Evaluation Feedback Form

Oregon Public Broadcasting Presentation (Video)

"Elizabeth Woody: Transcending Chaos Through Art"

<https://www.opb.org/television/programs/oregon-art-beat/article/oregon-poet-laureate-elizabeth-woody-warm-springs-poetry/>

Oregon Poetic Voices (Video)

<http://oregonpoeticvoices.org/poet/303/>

Milwaukee Poetry Series (Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKa3gK7X-iA>

Poetry Reading and Talk by Elizabeth Woody (Video)

<https://vimeo.com/215695541>

Oregon Humanities Center (Video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atn_Wn8yJJI

Cultural Trust (Website)

<https://culturaltrust.org/oregon-poet-laureate/elizabeth-woody/>

Poetry Foundation (Website)

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/elizabeth-woody>

Teachers should also familiarize themselves with the history of Celilo Falls, the ancient petroglyph/pictograph called Tsagaglalal (She Who Watches), and the activism of David Sohappy, all of which play an important role in one of the Elizabeth Woody poems included in this lesson.

VOCABULARY

Poet laureate – A poet appointed to, or regarded unofficially as holding, an honorary representative position in a country, region, or group.

Paraphrase – Express the meaning of something written or spoken using different words, especially to achieve greater clarity.

Connotation – An idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal or primary meaning.

Attitude/Tone – The general character or attitude of a place, piece of writing, or situation.

Theme – The underlying meaning, message, or "big idea" of a talk, a piece of writing, a person's thoughts, or an exhibition. A theme can be stated either directly or indirectly and should not be confused with the subject.

Point of view – The narrator's position in relation to a story being told.

Figurative language – The use of words or phrases in a way that goes beyond their literal meaning. There are different ways to use figurative language, including the following:

Simile – A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more emphatic or vivid (e.g., *as brave as a lion*, *crazy like a fox*).

Metaphor – A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.

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CELILO FALLS

Celilo Falls (or Wy-am, meaning “echo of falling water” or “sound of water upon the rocks,” in several American Indian languages) was one of history’s great marketplaces. Tribes from across the Pacific Northwest came to the Celilo Falls area on the Columbia River Gorge to fish for salmon, trade, feast, and participate in games and religious ceremonies. It is estimated that more than 5,000 Indigenous people would gather at the falls each year, and more than a half-dozen tribes had permanent villages between the falls and the present-day town of The Dalles.

In 1957, the Army Corps of Engineers completed the Dalles Dam, just downstream from the site of Celilo Falls. On the morning of March 10, 1957, the dam was opened and the resulting lake that formed behind it flooded the ancient site of Celilo Falls in a matter of hours. Today, only Celilo Village, a small Native American fishing community, exists near the former site of the falls.

TSAGAGLALAL (SHE WHO WATCHES)

Tsagaglalal (pronounced “sa-ga-gla-la”), or She Who Watches, is an ancient Native America petroglyph/pictograph located on a basalt cliff on the north bank of the Columbia River, approximately 16 miles downriver from the former site of Celilo Falls. In the oral tradition of several Columbia River tribes, She Who Watches was a female chief who was turned into stone by Coyote in order to watch over the people for all eternity. For many people, She Who Watches is a powerful figure who bears

VOCABULARY *(Continued)*

Personification – The attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman, or the representation of an abstract quality in human form.

Symbolism – The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.

Imagery – Visually descriptive or figurative language, especially in a literary work.



silent witness to the ancient history of the Indigenous people of the region, their inseparable connection to the river and surrounding landscape, their continued presence, and the promise of renewal.

DAVID SOHAPPY

David Sohappy (1925–1991) was a member of the Wanapum band of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. Sohappy was a religious leader and political activist who led the fight to restore fishing rights to Native American tribes along the Columbia River. For two decades, beginning in the 1960s, Sohappy and others participated in direct actions and legal cases that sought to restore off-reservation tribal fishing rights that were established in the Yakama Treaty of 1855. In the 1980s, Sohappy was arrested and imprisoned for nearly two years for refusing to comply with U.S. government fishing regulations. Sohappy's struggle gained both regional and national attention and he became—and remains—a hero to many tribal activists and environmentalists.

Resources on Celilo Falls

Celilo Falls Columbia River | Celilo Falls history (Webpage)

<https://www.critfc.org/salmon-culture/tribal-salmon-culture/celilo-falls/>

Bock-Schroeder Foundation: Celilo Falls (Webpage)

<http://bock-schroeder.com/celilo-falls>

Oregon Live: Celilo's success might be path forward for Columbia River tribal housing — but it wasn't easy (Article) https://www.oregonlive.com/politics/2016/05/celilos_success_might_be_path.html

The Story of Celilo Falls (Video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=on4tE78ed0A>

Resources on Tsagaglalal (She-Who-Watches)

<https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/tsagaglalal-she-who-watches-along-the-columbia-river-before-relocation-prior-to-flooding-of-the-area-by-the-dalles-dam> (Image)

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2014/aug/16/she-who-watches-horsethief-lake-aboriginal-art/> (Article)

Resources on David Sohappy

River People: Behind the Case of David Sohappy. 1981. Produced by Michal Conford and Michele Zaccheo (Film) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwvnc3fZDDY&feature=youtu.be>

Indian Fishing Activist David Sohappy Sr. Dies. 1991. *Seattle Times*. (Article)
<https://www.intribune.com/obituaries/northwest-indian-activist-david-sohappy-sr-dies-at-66d60f47b7/>

Yakima Rebel Stands Ground for Fishing Rights: Indians David Sohappy believes in tradition and an 1855 treaty guaranteeing an unlimited salmon and steelhead harvest. Dec. 30., 1990. *Los Angeles Times*. Associated Press. (Article) <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-12-30-mn-10145-story.html>

Resources for Teaching Poetry

Poets.org (Website)

<https://poets.org>

Academy of American Poets (Website)

<https://poets.org/academy-american-poets>

National Poetry Month (Website)

<https://poets.org/national-poetry-month>

Poetry Resources For Teachers | from Poetry Foundation

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69415/nurturing-the-omni-vore-approaches-to-teaching-poetry>



Considerations for teachers

Assessment

- Students will engage in a substantial amount of classroom and small-group discussion. The teacher should actively monitor individual participation in discussions to discern student understanding of key concepts.
- Teachers can assess individual student understanding of how to identify perspective and cultural experiences in poetic text by reviewing the completed student handout Elizabeth Woody Quotations.
- Students will correctly identify key elements of poetic text (e.g., connotation, attitude, shifts), by completing the handout Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer.
- Students will work collaboratively to complete a final group presentation about one of Elizabeth Woody's poems. This will allow the teacher to assess individual student and whole-class understanding of how to analyze and interpret poetic language.

Practices

- *TPCASTT close reading strategy* – The acronym stands for “title, paraphrase, connotation, attitude, shifts, title revisited, and theme.” This reading strategy guides the student toward interpreting the poem, putting the poem into their own words and extracting a message from the poem. Teachers should become familiar with the activities in this lesson that focus on this strategy as it offers a step-by-step way to analyze a poem.
- *Individual work* – Some activities rely on students completing work independently, with encouragement and assistance from the instructor when needed.
- *Small group* – If you have not yet utilized small-group discussion, be sure to set the stage by explaining norms and expectations for group dynamics. As necessary, group students heterogeneously to allow for multiple strengths in each group. Anticipate any students who may have difficulty with group work (or reading the handouts for this lesson) and match them with other students who will help them be successful.



- *Classroom discussion* – Large-group or whole-class discussion allows students to express their thoughts and hear the thoughts of others. For the instructor, this practice is a good way to take the pulse of the group and see what general themes are emerging. For students, large-group discussion can be a way to express themselves or to hear differing perspectives from others.

Learning targets

- I can determine key elements and themes in poetry using the TPCASTT close reading strategy
- I can recognize and discuss the perspective and cultural experiences described in poetic text
- I can participate in collaborative analysis and presentation of poetic text

Options/extensions

- Challenge students to independently write three to five additional verses to an Elizabeth Woody poem of their choice. The verses must continue the overall theme of the poem. Allow approximately 10 to 15 minutes per verse. Monitor student progress for completion only.

Reflection/closure

Ask students to choose one to three poems written by Elizabeth Woody that gave them a special or inspired feeling. Direct students to read these poems multiple times and reflect on why they found them moving or meaningful. Challenge students to write a poem that addresses the same theme/message as the poem(s) selected. Themes/messages may include how personal identity is inextricably linked to ancestry or the essential bond between humans and the natural world.



Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- Elizabeth Woody PowerPoint
- Elizabeth Woody Quotations
- Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer
- Elizabeth Woody Poetry Packet
- Group Presentation & Evaluation Feedback Form

Activity 1

Introducing Elizabeth Woody

Time: 30 minutes

Step 1:

Introduce the learning objectives for the lesson. Acknowledge that some students may feel intimidated about reading poetry. Reassure students that the class will work collaboratively to better understand the key elements of poetry and to identify themes.

Say:

Poetry is a form of writing that evokes feeling and thoughts and conveys meaning beyond what is written.

The sound of the words, the rhythm of the lines, even the style of the poem itself all tell us more about what is being written. Songs are similar to poems, except they are set to music. In a poem, the music and rhythm come from the words themselves.

Step 2:

Ask student to share types of poetry they have learned about. This can be a brief three- to five-minute discussion.

Note: Examples that most grade 10 students have encountered may include Shakespearean sonnets, found poetry, spoken word, or rap.

Step 3:

Show slides 1-2 and provide students with an overview of the Oregon Poet Laureate.

Say:

The Oregon Poet Laureate serves as a state ambassador of poetry. Oregon poets laureate are appointed by the governor and travel the state sharing the power of reading and writing poetry. Most serve a two-year term.

Activity 1 *(Continued)*

Step 4:

Show slides 3-4 and provide a brief overview of Elizabeth Woody's work.

Say:

Elizabeth Woody is a poet and educator of Navajo, Warm Springs, Wasco, and Yakama descent. Her poetry includes many themes that we will discuss in depth. Woody is the winner of the American Book Award and in 2017 she was named the eighth poet laureate of Oregon. She is the first Native American to hold that honor in Oregon. We will begin learning about Elizabeth Woody by listening to her share some of her personal story and her poetic work.

Step 5:

Show the video on slide 5, "Elizabeth Woody: Transcending Chaos Through Art," from Oregon Public Broadcasting. The video is approximately 10 minutes long. Ask students to refrain from taking notes and to give their full attention to the video. [Link to video: <https://www.opb.org/television/programs/artbeat/segment/oregon-poet-laureate-elizabeth-woody-warm-springs-poetry/>]

Step 6:

Now, divide the class into pairs and pass out the Elizabeth Woody Quotations handout to each pair. Give students approximately 10 to 15 minutes to discuss and respond in writing to each quotation. As a means of exploring these quotations, they should consider the following questions:

How does Elizabeth Woody define poetry?

Why does Elizabeth Woody write poetry?

What might she want her poetry to achieve?

Activity 1 *(Continued)*

Step 7:

As a whole class, ask each pair to share their written impressions.

Optional Extension Activity: Ask students to read the *Bend Magazine* article, “Elizabeth Woody’s Unusual Path to Poet Laureate” at <https://bendmagazine.com/elizabeth-woodys-unusual-path-poet-laureate/>. After students have read this article, direct them to write a letter to Elizabeth Woody (author) asking her questions about her experience as a poet and writer. Send the letter to the author in care of the publishing house listed in the author’s book:

Eighth Mountain Press
624 SE 29th Ave Portland, OR 97214

Activity 2

Analyzing “She-Who-Watches, The Names Are Prayer”

Time: 60 minutes

Step 1:

Distribute a copy of the *Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer*. Provide one copy to each student. Display a copy of the graphic organizer using an overhead projector to model the analysis process for the whole class.

Step 2:

Show slide 6, “What is a theme in poetry?”

Say:

A theme in poetry is the central thought or underlying meaning of the poem. A theme in poetry is not the same as the subject or topic of the poem, but it is a statement the poem makes about the topic. We are going to analyze Elizabeth Woody’s poem, “She-Who-Watches, The Names Are Prayer” and identify poetic theme using a process called TPCASTT.

Step 3:

Using slides 7-14, walk students through each element of TPCASTT.

Step 4:

Begin to model the TPCASTT strategy by facilitating a whole-class discussion on how to complete the first row “title” on the graphic organizer. Write the title of the poem on the projected teacher copy of the Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer.

Step 5:

Ask students, “What ideas/images does this title evoke? What do you think the title means? Facilitate a classroom discussion for two to three minutes. Record student responses on the first row “title” on the graphic organizer.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Step 6:

BEFORE listening to Woody's reading of *"She-Who-Watches, The Names Are Prayer"* share slides 15-16 and provide students with background information on Celilo Falls (Wy-am), the She Who Watches petroglyph/pictograph, and activist David Sohappy, to whom this poem is dedicated.

Optional Extension Activity: Give students a pre-reading assignment on Celilo Falls, She Who Watches, or David Sohappy. This would provide students with some contextual knowledge to support understanding for this activity.

Step 7:

Show the video clip on slide 17 (minutes 4:01 to 9:00). Ask students to complete the "paraphrase" row of their graphic organizer by adding words, phrases, and images that stand out as they listen.

Step 8:

Continue to help students paraphrase by listening to the reading as a whole class once or twice more, but this time **PAUSE** after every two or three lines and ask students to write down the meaning of each set of lines (sentences) in their own words.

Note: Students can use the back of their graphic organizer for additional space.

Step 9:

(Partner Work) Ask students to turn to a partner and share how they paraphrased Woody's poem. Then ask for a few volunteers to share with the whole class.



Activity 2 (Continued)

Step 10:

Ask students to continue to work with a partner to complete each section of the *Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer*. Walk the room to answer questions and provide input.

Step 11:

After 15 to 20 minutes of partner work, gather students for a whole-class discussion.

Step 12:

Facilitate a whole-class discussion using the following questions:

What is “She-Who-Watches, The Names Are Prayer” saying?

What is the message Woody is trying to get across?

Optional Extension Activity: Ask student to write a one- to two-page response about the theme of “She-Who-Watches, The Names Are Prayer.” Direct students to consider the question: “What revelation about the behavior of human beings or the conduct of society, or insight into the human condition is Woody attempting to convey throughout the poem?” Use this response to determine individual student understanding of poetic theme.



Activity 3

Group Analysis and Presentation

Time: 90 minutes (time to develop a final presentation will depend on in-class versus out-of-class time available and is at the discretion of the teacher).

Preparation: It is recommended that a classroom (or school) set of *Seven Hands, Seven Hearts: Prose and Poetry*, by Elizabeth Woody is acquired to support this activity.

Step 1:

Assign students to small groups (three to four students per group) and provide each with a poster-board to create a visual aid aligned to the group oral presentation.

Options for Final Group Presentation: Consider additional ways that student groups can show what they know about Elizabeth Woody and about analyzing poetry by providing students with a choice of the following final presentation options:

- Create a simple poster (as described for this activity)
- Make a PowerPoint presentation
- Use a three-panel display board
- Create a flow chart or diagram
- Make an instructional video for middle school students on how to analyze poetic theme using a poem written by Woody
- Write a handbook or instruction book for middle school students on how to analyze poetry using poems written by Woody
- Create a large-scale Venn diagram to compare the poetic themes of multiple poems written by Woody
- Make a short documentary film about Woody and her work



Activity 3 *(Continued)*

Step 2:

Establish expectations that encourage respectful and inclusive classroom interactions (these expectations are usually defined at the beginning of school year/semester and should be reviewed as students begin group work).

Step 3:

Define group roles (e.g., recorder, timekeeper, reporter/speaker). Group members or the teacher may assign roles.

Step 4:

Distribute a copy of the Group Presentation and Evaluation Feedback Form and review project purpose and expectations with the whole class. Share with students that they will work together to create a presentation about the theme of a poem written by Elizabeth Woody. Provide the following overview of project expectations:

- Create a useful and clear visual aid/poster to support oral presentation.
- Include a clear introduction, a stated objective, a body with supporting material, and a definite conclusion.
- Identify all key elements essential to poetic analysis (e.g., TPCASTT) and provide clear and concrete explanations and examples directly from the poem.
- Summarize key poetic theme(s) and clearly state the main message.
- Prepare and practice for the presentation.



Activity 3 (Continued)

Step 5:

Next, distribute one blank copy of the Poetry Analysis Graphic Organizer to each group, and one Elizabeth Woody Poetry Packet that includes the following poems from *Seven Hands, Seven Hearts: Prose and Poetry*. Assign one poem per group.

“She-Who-Watches, the Names Are Prayer” (p. 76)

“We Remember Our Relatives” (p. 45)

“Weaving” (p. 46)

“In Memory of Crossing the Columbia” (p. 70)

“Hand Into Stone” (p. 73)

Step 6:

Give each small group 30 minutes to read and create a written analysis of their poem using the TPCASTT method.

Step 7:

Monitor the groups’ progress during work time.

Note: Time to complete the final presentation can be determined by the teacher depending on time available and final product options. For example, a PowerPoint presentation will require access to computers for each group and will take more time than the development of a summary poster.

Step 8:

When final presentations have been completed, bring the whole class together and facilitate group presentations.



Activity 3 *(Continued)*

Step 9:

After each presentation, allow five minutes for the audience to ask questions or make constructive/positive comments.

Step 10:

Have each group do a preliminary self-score on their Group Presentation and Evaluation Feedback Form and have them explain their score in a one- or two-paragraph written response.

