

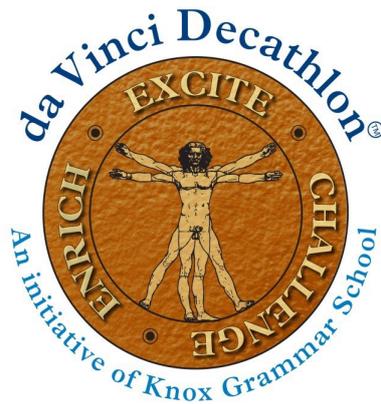


KNOX
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

STATE

DA VINCI DECATHLON 2022

CELEBRATING THE ACADEMIC GIFTS OF STUDENTS
IN YEARS 5 & 6



ART AND POETRY

TEAM NUMBER _____

Total	Rank
/40	

NO RHYME OR REASON?

BACKGROUND

“I don’t always understand poetry.” *Timms – The History Boys* (Alan Bennett)

Like Timms, I am sure you have had trouble understanding poetry at one point or another. Perhaps you have had trouble understanding art as well. To many, art and poetry are just a mess of words and colours. So how do they work? Why do they work?

It is about finding the right pattern.

Wordsmiths like William Shakespeare played with rhythmic pattern. Shakespeare used unrhymed iambic pentameter. Where does iambic pentameter come from? It’s like a heartbeat, with one soft beat and one strong beat repeated five times. It comes from nature.

Austrian artist Gustav Klimt is recognised for his use of pattern in many of his paintings and murals. One of his most famous works, *Stoclet Frieze* (pictured below) is not only a mosaic, but it depicts The Tree of Life – once again, nature.



It is no coincidence that the patterns in both Shakespeare and Klimt’s work link to nature. Early Greek philosophers Plato, Pythagoras and Empedocles all studied patterns to explain order in nature. Think about it – symmetry, trees, spirals, foam, tessellation, cracks, waves, stripes – all are patterns that exist in the natural world.

THE TASK

Your task is to find poetry in nature. Read the extract from John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. Steinbeck sets the scene through his vivid description of the natural environment.

You will use the extract to compose a piece of found poetry. Found poetry takes words or phrases from existing texts and reorders them to create a new work around a specific theme. You will find a pattern of words around the theme of nature. The presentation of the found poem should be enhanced by a work of art that incorporates natural patterns.

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees - willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter’s flooding; and sycamores

with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of racoons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little grey, sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron laboured up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

GUIDELINES

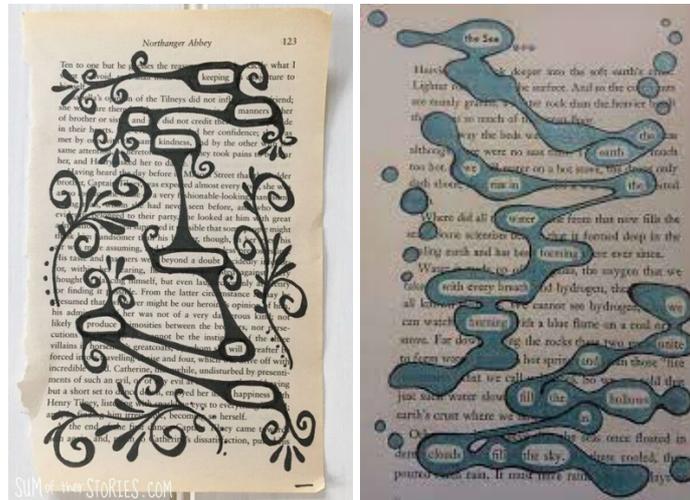
- Your work of Art and Poetry **MUST** be completed on the page with the extract.
- The poem and the artwork must complement each other. They should be connected **physically** and **thematically**.
- The finished product must include at least **ONE three-dimensional** aspect.
- The finished product must include an example of **ONE** of the following naturally occurring patterns: symmetry, trees, spirals, foam, tessellation, cracks, waves, stripes.
- You must demonstrate at least one example of **visual imagery** and **metaphor** in your work.
- You have been given space to transcribe a copy of your poem; however, it **MUST** still be visible on the artwork itself.
- You may form words from other words in your found poem (e.g. – ‘hissed’ could become ‘his’), though you must not use any more than three consecutive words from the original extract in your poem (e.g. – if the sentence is ‘the big brown dog jumped over the log’ you could use ‘big brown dog’ but not ‘big brown dog jumped’).
- Use the marking guidelines for additional direction.

MATERIALS TO BE PROVIDED

- 1 piece of paper with the extract (you **MUST** compose your poem and complete your finished artwork on this page)
- 2 pieces A4 paper

- 2 pieces A4 cardboard
- Your own pencils, crayons and textas
- Glue and sticky tape (use purposefully and sparingly)

FOUND POETRY EXAMPLES



N.B. The examples above give you an idea of how to identify particular words and make them clear as part of your new poem. While they are decorative, you are expected to produce a more detailed and specific work of art to complement your poem.

Transcribe your poem below. Please note, you will NOT be marked based on what is written below. However, if the markers need to clarify a word, they can use the transcription below to do so.

MARKING GUIDELINES

CRITERIA	SKILFUL	EFFECTIVE	SOUND	BASIC	LIMITED
Clear and cohesive poem developed from the original extract	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Relevant and detailed visual representation that demonstrates artistic flair	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Purposeful incorporation of the required visual and literary elements	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
Close physical and thematic connection between art and poetry	10-9	8-7	6-5	4-3	2-1
TOTAL					/40

END OF PAPER

EXTRACT

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