Lesson plan 17.1

Example of a lesson that uses George Herbert’s poem ‘Easter Wings’ to teach the significance of poetic structure

**Time/length:** 60 minutes

**Topic/focus:** Poetic structure

**Subject:** English

**Year Level:** 10

**Context:** Students are near the beginning of a sequence of lessons introducing poetry and associated concepts; they have spent at least one lesson employing techniques that allow them to take more time over a poem and to read (or listen) to it aloud.

EQUIPMENT/RESOURCES

* PPT slides or Google doc with ‘Easter Wings’ on it
* ‘Easter Wings’ paper handouts, scissors, glue and blank paper (1 to 2 students)

SYLLABUS OBJECTIVES

* Review, edit and refine students’ own and others’ texts for control of content, organisation, sentence structure, vocabulary, and/or visual features to achieve particular purposes and effects (ACELY1757 )
* Analyse and explain how text structures, language features and visual features of texts and the context in which texts are experienced may influence audience response (ACELT1641)

LESSON OUTCOME

* Understand that the arrangement of lineation to space in a poem has a direct effect on its meaning

ASSESSMENT OF LESSON OUTCOMES

* Contribution to class discussion
* Completed ‘Easter Wings’ handouts

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| Time | Procedure |
| **10 minutes** | **Hook/engagement**Ask students to sit in complete silence for 5 minutes, making note of every incidental noise they can hear inside and outside the classroom; solicit contributions for what they noticed (or didn’t notice that others did). |
| **5 minutes** | **Explicit teaching**Explain to students that we’re often so focused on what’s directly in front of us (a screen, a person) we sometimes fail to recognise the ambient ‘white noise’ that subtly affects our interactions. Explain that every poem has its visual equivalents of this: lineation (the text that you concentrate on) and space (the ambient ‘white noise’ of the page). |
| **5 minutes** | **Reading/scaffold**Explain that you are going to read a poem aloud – ask students to make note of any confusing phrases or unknown words.* This was written in 1633, not long after William Shakespeare died
* The ‘Lord’ addressed in the poem is generally understood to be a reference to the Christian God
* ‘Affliction’ refers to an illness or disability, and the term usually implies that God wants the victim to suffer from it.

Read the poem aloud and answer any clarifying questions the students have about it. |
| **15 minutes** | **Exploration/application**Organise students into pairs and provide each pair with the ‘Easter Wings’ paper handouts (Attachment A), scissors, glue and blank paper. Explain that each pair has the full text of the poem but that you have removed all the line breaks set by the poet – the job of each pair of students is to cut out the sentences, phrases or individual words of the poem and glue them onto the blank paper in an arrangement they feel best suits the poem and highlights its most important elements.  |
| **15 minutes** | **Share results**Each pair swaps their work with another pair, taking it in turns to read the new version aloud and comment on the similarities and differences to their own version; emphasise the way each version draws attention to different elements of the text and what the effect is. |
| **10 minutes** | **Reading/scaffold** Reveal George Herbert’s original arrangement of lines for the poem on a PPT slide or Google Doc (Attachment B). Ask students what the shape of each stanza looks like; highlight the way the words of the poem mirror its shape (the lines ‘I became / Most thinne’ occur when the poem is at its ‘most thin’). Ask students whether this arrangement makes some of the lines feel faster or slower than others – which lines? Explain that all poems include a careful arrangement of lineation to space, and that the first thing we should do when reading a poem is consider what it looks like. |