


Day 5: "Because I could not stop for Death"

Begin lesson

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|  | Teaching notes |
| | Click the "Begin lesson" button to view this lesson. Teaching notes for each slide will appear in this box. |

Before the Lesson

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| Before the Lesson | Teaching notes |
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Anchor Text

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Because I could not stop for Death (712)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By Emily Dickinson Published in 1890</p> <p>Because I could not stop for Death - He kindly stopped for me - The Carriage held but just Ourselves - And Immortality.</p> <p>We slowly drove - He knew no haste And I had put away My labour and my leisure too, For His Civility -</p> <p>We passed the School, where Children strove At Recess - in the Ring - We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain - We passed the Setting Sun -</p> <p>Or rather - He passed us - The Doves drew quivering and chill - For only Gossamer, my Gown - My Tippet - only Tulle -</p> <p>We passed before a House that seemed</p> | <h3>Teaching notes</h3> <p>Download and print copies of the anchor text for each student.</p> |
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Student Notes Sheet

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| <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Name: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Student notes for: "Because I could not stop for Death"</p> <p>Day 5</p> <p>Culminating question: The subject of Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for Death" is clearly death, but what ideas about death is Dickinson exploring in this poem? Using details from the poem, write an essay exploring what themes Dickinson explores in "Because I could not stop for Death" and how those themes interact with and build on one another to convey a larger idea about death.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <h3>Teaching notes</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ This guided notes sheet provides students with the text-dependent questions associated with this lesson, and relevant graphic organizers. You may modify these sheets as needed.■ During class, students can use these sheets to record their responses, notes, or ideas. Use the back to record responses to the focus question. <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment. |
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Getting Started

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| <h2>Getting Started</h2> | Teaching notes |
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Introduction 1 of 2

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| <p>Because I could not stop for Death (712) <small>By Emily Dickinson Published in 1850</small></p> <p>Because I could not stop for Death - He kindly stopped for me - The Carriage had no seat And no umbrella - My horse was lame - And I had far to go - My only dress a blue - And my gait was slow - My hand was sown In silence - till the Day - We passed the fields of Gazing Grain - We crossed the Setting Sun - My neighbor - she passed us - The three of us drove and talk - Her only companion - My horse - and I - We passed before a House that seemed A swelling of the Road - The Kitchens were neatly made - The Chamber - in the second - My horse - his color was - and yet From corners there - the I then perceived the Owner - Dead - and no stirring</p> <p>"Because I could not stop for Death" Emily Dickinson</p> | <h2>Teaching notes</h2> |
| <p>earlier guided notes sheets to students to use as they write today's response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Distribute copies of the poem to students and display a copy as well. ■ Ask students to keep in mind all of the things they learned about this poem through reading, re-reading, and analyzing it this week. Tell them you'll be reading it one last time together before they have time to write their response to a culminating question. ■ Read the poem out loud. ■ Tell students that today, they'll be answering the culminating question and that they'll have to draw on their knowledge of the two themes Dickinson develops in her poem, as well as the ways she develops those themes. | <p>Pacing: ~10 minutes</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind students of the work completed in earlier lessons that have contributed to their understanding of the poem. If possible, you might want to return |

Introduction 2 of 2

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As we explore the text we will be asking and answering questions.

We will find and keep track of evidence from the text to support our ideas about each question.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 minutes

Notes:

- Remind students of the work completed in earlier lessons that have contributed to their understanding of the poem. If possible, you might want to return

earlier guided notes sheets to students to use as they write today's response.

- Distribute copies of the poem to students and display a copy as well.
- Ask students to keep in mind all of the things they learned about this poem through reading, re-reading, and analyzing it this week. Tell them you'll be reading it one last time together before they have time to write their response to a culminating question.
- Read the poem out loud.
- Tell students that today, they'll be answering the culminating question and that they'll have to draw on their knowledge of the two themes Dickinson develops in her poem, as well as the ways she develops those themes.

Focus Question

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| <h1>Focus Question</h1> | Teaching notes |
| | |

Focus Question

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The subject of Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for Death" is clearly death, but what ideas about death is Dickinson exploring in this poem? Using details from the poem, write an essay explaining two themes Dickinson explores in "Because I could not stop for Death" and how those themes interact with and build on one another to convey a larger idea about death.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~30-40 minutes

Standard: RL.11-12.2

Purpose: It is easy to see that this poem focuses on death, but in order to have a full idea of Dickinson's message about death, students must understand that she is using a variety of methods to develop themes that

will then build on and interact with one another. By examining these things carefully, students can see that this seemingly simple poem is actually much more complex and sophisticated than it originally appears.

Answer:

Death is an unavoidable human experience. After all, no one gets out of life alive. So why does a fear of death still persist? Why do we see life and death as opposite sides of the same coin? In her poem "Because I could not stop for Death", Emily Dickinson explores our deeply held beliefs and feelings about both life and death. She confronts our fear of death and attempts to erase it by showing us how life and death are simply two parts of the same journey, two halves that make one whole.

Dickinson uses a very friendly, relaxed tone when describing death. She does this in order to develop the theme that death should not be feared. Dickinson does this by saying that death "kindly stopped" and "knew no haste". She also says that death has "civility." Dickinson's tone when describing the carriage ride itself is very steady, peaceful, and soothing. She uses assonance and alliteration to create soothing word combinations like "we slowly drove- He knew no haste". The poem itself uses iambic feet and moves back and forth from iambic tetrameter to iambic trimeter. This metrical pattern mimics the motion of the carriage, giving the poem a steady, peaceful feel. By creating this tone, Dickinson develops a second theme: the idea of life and death being a continual journey. Death isn't a different trip or a detour, but simply the continuation of a trip that life started.

Dickinson uses metaphor and symbolism to further develop her theme about life and death being one continuous journey. As she rides along in the carriage, the speaker sees children, recess, fields, the sun, and a house. Taken together, these things symbolize the life cycle. The children symbolize our early lives. Recess symbolizes all of the activities in our lives that consume our time. The fields symbolize the later years in our life when we are maturing and waiting to be harvested. The setting sun

symbolizes our impending death. Finally, Dickinson compares the grave to a house; one that is simply another stop along the journey of life and death. All of these symbols and metaphors support the theme of life and death being one continuous journey.

This poem is written in chronological order, starting with Death picking the speaker up in his carriage, progressing through all the events of the life cycle, and ending with death and eternity. This supports the theme that life and death are a continuous journey. Dickinson used the lyric style because lyric poems are traditionally used to express personal and very emotional feelings. They are also typically written in present tense. Using the lyrical form allows Dickinson to illustrate her positive feelings about death. It also allows her to discuss it using present tense, which gives us the idea that death is ever present and not something that only happened to others in the past, or that will only happen to us in the future.

The way Dickinson uses punctuation and capitalization is unconventional in this poem. Dickinson capitalizes most of the nouns in the poem. This gives each word importance, and makes readers slow down a bit as they think about why those words are so important. Dickinson also uses dashes in this poem. The dashes can slow us down just like her use of capitalization does, but the dashes also connect one line or idea to the next line or idea. Together, the capitalization and dashes slow us down, make us think about the importance of each word or image in the poem, and then pull us on to the next word or image. By using chronological order, lyrical form, and nontraditional capitalization and punctuation, Dickinson blends her two themes (death is not to be feared and life and death are a continuous journey) to create an additional theme: life and death are not two mutually exclusive things.

By comparing life and death to a continuous journey, stopped only briefly by a pause at the grave, Dickinson is suggesting that life and death are not two sides of one coin, but rather represent two legs of the same continuous journey, interrupted only briefly by the physical death of the body. She is suggesting that we not fear death because of this, and that we should perhaps readjust our view of the deeply important human concepts of life and death.

Look for students....

- Clearly demonstrating that they have identified and analyzed two themes in the poem.
- Showing that they see how those two themes work together to develop an even larger meaning of the poem.
- Using a variety of examples and/or quotes from the poem that demonstrate how both themes are conveyed.

Additional Notes:

- Struggling students may benefit from a scaffolded essay. Perhaps you could furnish an introduction statement, as well as some transition statements from one paragraph to the next. Students can then use their notes sheets to help them fill in the rest of the essay.

After the Lesson

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| <h1>After the Lesson</h1> | Teaching notes |
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Comprehension Skill Video

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| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Core Lesson Ask yourself, "How do these themes connect or build from each other?"</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Themes in "Because I could not stop for Death"</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"> Death should not be feared </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Life & death are a journey </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Life & death are mutually exclusive </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ death is kind ◦ death is patient ◦ death is polite • lyric poem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ relatively short ◦ describes deep emotional feelings or ideas about death </td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronological order </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">LearnZillion</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">Visit https://haywood.lzill.co/r/44519</p> | Themes in "Because I could not stop for Death" | | | Death should not be feared | Life & death are a journey | Life & death are mutually exclusive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ death is kind ◦ death is patient ◦ death is polite • lyric poem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ relatively short ◦ describes deep emotional feelings or ideas about death | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chronological order | <h3>Teaching notes</h3> <p style="margin-top: 20px;">Use this video as an intervention tool for students who struggle to answer the focus question. The video uses a metacognitive approach to model the targeted reading comprehension skills.</p> |
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| Themes in "Because I could not stop for Death" | | | | | | | | | | |
| Death should not be feared | Life & death are a journey | Life & death are mutually exclusive | | | | | | | | |
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