

Name: _____

Date: _____

“O Captain! My Captain!” by Walt Whitman

Guided Notes – Lesson 6

How does the structure of “O Captain! My Captain!” reveal the author’s theme?

Objective: *In this lesson you will learn how to interpret the author’s theme by analyzing the poem’s structure.*

Steps:

1. Look for patterns in the poem
2. Ask, “How do these patterns affect my impressions?”
3. Determine the theme

O Captain! My Captain!- Look at one stanza at a time:

1. Look for patterns in the poem
(*Focus on physical structure patterns for this lesson.*)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart! 5
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills, 10
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck, 15
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won; 20
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead. 25

2. Ask, “How do these patterns affect my impressions?”

(Use the box below to record notes on your impressions.)

3. Determine the theme
(Record your thoughts in the box below.)

Your Turn!

How does the rhythm of “O Captain! My Captain!” further reveal the author’s theme?

1. Look for patterns in the poem
2. Ask, “How do these patterns affect my impressions?”
3. Determine the theme

O Captain! My Captain!- Look at one stanza at a time:

1. Look for patterns in the poem
(Focus on rhythm patterns for this lesson.)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart! 5
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills, 10
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck, 15
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won; 20
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead. 25

2. Ask, “How do these patterns affect my impressions?”
(Use the box below to record notes on your impressions.)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing or drawing.

3. Determine the theme
(Record your thoughts in the box below.)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing or drawing.