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New York, NY
10029

English Language Arts and Literacy
Grade 11
Fall 2008
Marking Periods 1 and 2

**Poetry of Place:
Understanding Ourselves and our Community
Through the Poetry of Spanish Harlem**

During this unit we will be studying the poetry and poets of Spanish Harlem in order to get a better sense of our community's cultural history and understand how its literary history is both a reflection of and an influence on the daily life of this particular place.

The first major component of the unit is the study of poetry as an expressive art form within the context of community. We will read, discuss, interpret, analyze, compare, and write written responses to the poetry of and about El Barrio with an eye toward how this poetry is an important part of our community's identity. We will also study specific poets who represent the Spanish Harlem experience in an effort to understand the relevance of each poet's life and work to the neighborhood and its people. Finally, using the poems we've read as models, we will write short poems of our own inspired by our experiences in our home of Spanish Harlem.

Related to this study is the exploration of Spanish Harlem as a unique place within the New York City Landscape. We will read about and discuss the neighborhood's history as well as current social and economic issues as they relate to its location and its people. We will explore how this location affected its authors and how it affects us every day. We will reflect on how our experiences led to our poetry, and we will journal outside within the community once a week in order to better understand the neighborhood's physical and cultural uniqueness. We will also travel as a group throughout the community to various locations – both natural and cultural – that together make up the corner of the city that is Spanish Harlem.

Guiding Question:

How can we better understand our selves by studying the cultural, artistic, and literary history of Spanish Harlem?

Unit Question:

How can we better understand Spanish Harlem through its poetry?

Essential Learning Elements:

- o Critical Thinking
- o Literary Exploration
- o Creativity & Craftsmanship

Objectives:

Reading Poetry

- o Read, comprehend, and recognize the unique characteristics and conventions of poetry
- o Analyze the poetry of influential authors in our community through discussion and written response
- o Appreciate poetry as an important influence on and reflection of our community

Understanding Spanish Harlem

- o Discuss and apply historical and socio-cultural information about our community
- o Gather and interpret biographical information about selected poets from our community
- o Connect or relate our experiences to those of poets from our community

Writing and Writing about Poetry

- o Develop the writing qualities of word choice and fluency/lyricism/flow
- o Use the writing process to draft, revise, and publish portfolios

Improving Literacy

- o Determine importance, make connections, and ask questions while reading and listening
- o Summarize and synthesize after reading and during discussion & pre-writing

Community and Character

- o Recognize the ways in which cultural and artistic/literary accomplishments of a community can help to shape the lives of its residents
- o Learn, work, and communicate effectively in a collaborative setting

Product:

Poetry Portfolio – Each student will complete a poetry portfolio including selected poems with interpretations, biographical information on authors of interest, original poetic work related to the unit objectives, and a reflection on understanding of place, poetry, and self based on this work.

POETRY PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Student Name: _____

Portfolio Assignment	Credit Available:	Credit Earned:
Response to Poetry: <i>Thoughtful and comprehensive analysis of at least 2-3 pieces of poetic work by authors from the community (present and past)</i>	200 points	
Includes reaction to, interpretation of, and analysis of poetic work	150	
Recognizes and examines the relevant characteristics and conventions of poetry	50	
Comment:		
Authors of Interest: <i>Detailed and accurate biographical essay about at least 2 selected poets from the community (present and past)</i>	150 points	
Considers the relevance of each poet's life and work	100	
Connects or relates personal experiences to those of the poets	50	
Comment:		
Original Poetic Work: <i>At least one piece of poetry written about, inspired by, or relating to Spanish Harlem</i>	100 points	
Uses the poems we have read as a model for form and/or content while maintaining originality	25	
Exhibits the writing qualities of effective word choice and stylistic flow	50	
Uses a transparent writing process to brainstorm, draft, revise, and publish	25	
Comment:		
Reflection on Place, Poetry, and Self: <i>1-3 paragraph reflection on this unit and portfolio relating to objectives and learning experiences</i>	50 points	
Shows evidence of comprehension re: why poetry is an important influence in our community	25	
Shows evidence of synthesis re: how the cultural, artistic, and literary background of our community helps to shape our lives	25	
Comment:		
.....Total →		
.....Final Grade →		

OUTLINE OF LESSONS

Week 1-2 -- Poetry:

- o What is Poetry and Why does it Matter?
- o Identifying Poetic Conventions
- o Comprehending Meaning
- o Reacting and Responding

Week 3-4 -- Spanish Harlem:

- o General Information and History
- o Social and Cultural Issues
- o My Home, My Words: Journaling in the Community

Week 5-6 -- Poetry of Spanish Harlem:

- o Interpretation and Analysis
- o Synthesis and Comparison

Week 7-8 -- Poets of Spanish Harlem:

- o Influential Poets Then and Now
- o Relating to their Spanish Harlem and our own

Week 9-10 -- Poetry of Place:

- o Writing our Own Poems about life in El Barrio

Week 11 -- Reflection:

- o Reflecting on our Work, Process, and Learning

Week 12 -- Shining the Light:

- o Publishing our Portfolios

WHAT IS POETRY?

What do you think of when I say Poetry? What kind of language is used in Poems? How can a Poem be like a song or a story?

Have you ever read a poem? What kind? By whom? About what?
Have you written a poem? What kind? About what?

READ ABOUT	WRITTEN ABOUT

Have you ever read or written a poem about cultural background, community, Spanish Harlem or being from this neighborhood?

Title: _____

Author: _____

When read or written: _____

How did it inspire you? What did it make you feel or think about?

WHAT IS POETRY?

Expresses music and lyricism (rhythm and flow) in language

Teaches us about the richness of language...

...through imagery and symbols

Describes and communicates deep feelings, thoughts, and ideas...

...by using careful and detailed word choice

Uses a poetic structure including lines, verses, and stanzas

Is written by following both inspiration and a writing process

Relates to personal experiences in an intense way

Tells a story or expresses an opinion

Expresses the author's creative voice

Speaks to the reader or listener

Explores the mysteries of life

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- ✿ Poetry conveys something that “regular words” cannot – it can inspire, dramatize, and transmit a message to its readers/audience that can change their lives if they read and listen closely.
- ✿ Poetry about a particular place or type of experience can also bring people together to share their world, understand each other, and “groove” together in the mix of the things they have in common.
- ✿ We will be reading poetry of and about Spanish Harlem and the Latino experience here in New York City, so that we can explore our neighborhood and community and connect better to the place we live and the people around us.

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT POETIC CONVENTIONS?

Match the Poetic Convention to its correct Definition!!!

- a) Point of View __ Using words that relate to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch to enhance the reader's experience
- b) Theme __ A comparison of one thing to another using like or as
- c) Tone __ Describing a non-human entity using human-like characteristics
- d) Poetic Structure __ A description of one thing in the vein of another
- e) Imagery __ Repeating one sound in a series of words
- f) Description __ Word that means two different things at once
- g) Sensory Detail __ The poet's attitude toward the subject, the mood or emotionality
- h) Symbolism __ Speaking to an inanimate object or entity as though it were a person
- i) Simile __ Saying something in a way that conveys its opposite
- j) Metaphor __ Painting a picture in the reader/listener's mind
- k) Allusion __ An outcome of events contrary to what might have been expected
- l) Personification __ The author's narrative reference
- m) Repetition __ Length of sentences that fit together, appropriate line breaks, a sense of lyricism if read aloud
- n) Alliteration __ Format of a poem, including lines, couplets, verses, and stanzas.
- o) Pun __ A statement which contains apparently opposing or incongruous elements
- p) Onomatopoeia __ Lyricism, rhyme, musicality
- q) Sarcasm __ A poem's subject/idea/lesson/message/intention
- r) Irony __ The literal imitation of physical sounds
- s) Paradox __ Detailed, expressive, strong words that help the reader visualize the imagery
- s) Rhythm __ Repeating of words, phrases, or refrains one right after the other or throughout the poem like a chorus
- u) Flow __ The use of objects or actions to represent bigger feelings, ideas, or concepts

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT POETIC CONVENTIONS?

Match the Poetic Convention to its correct Definition!!!

- a) Point of View _g Using words that relate to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch to enhance the reader's experience
- b) Theme _i A comparison of one thing to another using like or as
- c) Tone _l Describing a non-human entity using human-like characteristics
- d) Poetic Structure _j A description of one thing in the vein of another
- e) Imagery _n Repeating one sound in a series of words
- f) Description _o Word that means two different things at once
- g) Sensory Detail _c The poet's attitude toward the subject, the mood or emotionality
- h) Symbolism _k Speaking to an inanimate object or entity as though it were a person
- i) Simile _q Saying something in a way that conveys its opposite
- j) Metaphor _g Painting a picture in the reader/listener's mind
- k) Allusion _r An outcome of events contrary to what might have been expected
- l) Personification _a The author's narrative reference
- m) Repetition _u Length of sentences that fit together, appropriate line breaks, a sense of lyricism if read aloud
- n) Alliteration _d Format of a poem, including lines, couplets, verses, and stanzas.
- o) Pun _s A statement which contains apparently opposing or incongruous elements
- p) Onomatopoeia _t Lyricism, rhyme, musicality
- q) Sarcasm _b A poem's subject/idea/lesson/message/intention
- r) Irony _p The literal imitation of physical sounds
- s) Paradox _f Detailed, expressive, strong words that help the reader visualize the imagery
- t) Rhythm _m Repeating of words, phrases, or refrains one right after the other or throughout the poem like a chorus
- u) Flow _h The use of objects or actions to represent bigger feelings, ideas, or concepts

IDENTIFYING POETIC CONVENTIONS

- Point of View – The author’s narrative reference
- Theme – A poem’s subject/idea/lesson/message/intention
- Tone — The poet’s attitude toward the subject, the mood or emotionality
- Poetic Structure – Format of a poem, including lines, couplets, verses, and stanzas.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

- Imagery – Painting a picture in the reader/listener’s mind
- Description – Detailed, expressive, strong words that help the reader visualize the imagery
- Sensory Detail – Using words that relate to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch to enhance the reader’s experience
- Symbolism – The use of objects or actions to represent bigger feelings, ideas, or concepts
- Simile – A comparison of one thing to another using like or as
- Metaphor – A description of one thing in the vein of another
- Allusion – Speaking to an inanimate object or entity as though it were a person
- Personification – Describing a non-human entity using human-like characteristics

OTHER TECHNIQUES:

- Repetition – Repeating of words, phrases, or refrains one right after the other or throughout the poem like a chorus
- Alliteration – Repeating one sound in a series of words
- Pun – Word that means two different things at once
- Onomatopoeia -- The literal imitation of physical sounds
- Sarcasm -- Saying something in a way that conveys its opposite
- Irony – An outcome of events contrary to what might have been expected
- Paradox -- A statement which contains apparently opposing or incongruous elements
- Rhythm –Lyricism, rhyme, musicality
- Flow – Length of sentences that fit together, appropriate line breaks, a sense of lyricism if read aloud

COMPREHENDING MEANING IN POETRY

Here by Sandra Maria Esteves

I am two parts/a person
boricua/spic
past and present
alive and oppressed
given a cultural beauty
...and robbed of a cultural identity

I speak the alien tongue
in sweet boriqueño thoughts
know love mixed with pain
have tasted spit on ghetto stairways
...here, it must be changed
we must change it

I may never overcome
the theft of my isla heritage
dulce palmas de coco on Luquillo
sway in windy recesses I can only imagine
and remember how it was

But that reality now a dream
teaches me to see, and will
bring me back to me.

What is the major “take-away” (message, idea, lesson) that you get from the poem?

Mine	Others

WHY are these important themes for us to understand?

I think _____ and
_____ are
important messages/themes for us to understand because _____

_____.

REACTING AND RESPONDING TO POETRY

- ⊕ Each group will have an Anthony Morales poem to read; everyone in the group will get a copy.

- ⊕ Read the Poem

- Read the poem to yourself twice or three times
- As you read, highlight, text code, or take notes on the most interesting or important words, phrases, and sections

- ⊕ Designate Roles For Discussion

- Facilitator asks the questions to keep the discussion going.
- Recorder/Reporter writes down the key things that people say and shares out with the class
- Time-keeper checks overall time and individual time.
- Reader reads the poem out loud to the class.

- ⊕ Discuss the Poem

- What did you notice in or about the poem?
- Which parts stood out for you? What struck you about them?
- *Which poetic conventions does the author employ*?
- What questions do you have about this piece?
- Where could you connect or relate to the poem?
- What do you think is the poem's overall story or meaning?
- What is its main message or purpose?
- Which of these discussion items would you like to share with the class as a whole in order to help them understand the poem?

- ⊕ Share Out the Poem and your group's Thoughts

- Read the poem aloud
- Share the three or four most 'major' noticings with the class
- Think about how your group's poem might connect with the other poems in the class. (Share connection if time allows.)

Recorder's Form

Group Member Names:

-What did you notice in or about the poem?

-Which parts stood out for you? What struck you about them?

-*Which poetic conventions does the author employ*?

-What questions do you have about this piece?

-Where could you connect or relate to the poem?

-What do you think is the poem's overall story or meaning?

-What is its main message or purpose?

WHAT IS SPANISH HARLEM?

What do you think of when I say Spanish Harlem? What comes to mind right away? What places, things, people, and words are a part of your neighborhood?

What do you know about the history of Spanish Harlem?
What do you feel are the social and cultural issues faced by this community?
Do you have any favorite arts or cultural institutions here?
Any favorite outdoor spots? Other places you love to go?

If you had one paragraph in which to summarize your school/home community/neighborhood and what it means to you, what would you want to make sure to include? (Use your answers to the first two questions!)

READING ABOUT SPANISH HARLEM IN SMALL GROUPS

- ⊕ Each group will have a piece to read about Spanish Harlem; everyone in the group will get a copy.

- ⊕ Read the Piece

- Read the piece to yourself two times
- As you read, highlight, text code, or take notes on the most interesting or important words, phrases, and sections

- ⊕ Designate Roles For Discussion

- Facilitator asks the questions to keep the discussion going.
- Recorder/Reporter writes down the key things that people say and shares out with the class
- Time-keeper checks overall time and individual time.
- Reader reads the key parts of the piece out loud to the class.

- ⊕ Discuss the Piece

- What did you learn about Spanish Harlem that you did not know before?
- What struck you as particularly interesting or important?
- What, if anything, related to your own personal life or experience?
- What do you still wonder about or are you confused about?
- Which of these discussion items would you like to share with the class as a whole in order to help them understand something about the community?

- ⊕ Share Out your group's notes on the piece about our neighborhood

- Read the most important parts of the piece out loud
- Share the three or four most 'major' noticings with the class
- Think about how your group's piece is related to the others

Recorder's Form

Group Member Names:

-What did you learn about Spanish Harlem that you did not know before?

-What struck you as particularly interesting or important?

-What, if anything, related to your own personal life or experience?

-What do you still wonder about or want to learn more about?

WHAT IS SPANISH HARLEM?

Spanish Harlem, also known as El Barrio and East Harlem, is a neighborhood in the Harlem area of New York City, in the north-eastern part of the borough of Manhattan. Spanish Harlem is one of the largest predominantly Latino communities in New York City. It includes the area formerly known as Italian Harlem, and still harbors a small Italian American population along Pleasant Avenue. However, since the 1950s it has been dominated by residents of Puerto Rican descent, sometimes called Nuyoricans.

The neighborhood boundaries are Harlem River to the north, the East River to the east, East 96th Street to the south, and 5th Avenue to the west. The primary business hub of Spanish Harlem has historically been East 116th Street from 5th Avenue headed east to its termination at the FDR Drive. The area is patrolled by both the 23rd Precinct located at 162 East 102nd Street and the 25th Precinct located at 120 East 119th Street.

Spanish Harlem has a population of 117,743 as of the 2000 US census. For decades East Harlem has been one of the poorest communities in the United States of America. Almost half the population lives below the poverty line and receives public assistance. Over 25% of the population resides public housing units. The vast majority of units in Spanish Harlem are renter occupied.

THE HISTORY OF SPANISH HARLEM:

The construction of the elevated transit to Harlem in the 1880s urbanized the area, precipitating the construction of apartment buildings and brownstones. Harlem was first populated by German immigrants, but soon after Irish, Italian, Lebanese and Russian Jewish immigrants began settling in Harlem. In East Harlem, Southern Italians and Sicilians soon predominated and the neighborhood became known as Italian Harlem, the Italian American hub of Manhattan. Puerto Rican immigration after the First World War established an enclave at the western portion of Italian Harlem (around 110th Street and Lexington Avenue), which became known as Spanish Harlem. The area slowly grew to encompass all of Italian Harlem as Italians moved out and Latinos moved in in another wave of immigration after the Second World War.

Spanish Harlem was one of the hardest hit areas in the 1960s and 1970s as New York City struggled with deficits, race riots, urban flight, drug abuse, crime and poverty. Tenements were crowded, poorly maintained and frequent targets for arson. In 1969 and 1970, a regional chapter of the Young Lords ran several programs including a free breakfast for children and a free health clinic to help Latinos and poor. The Young Lords coalesced with the Black Panthers and called for Puerto Rican self-determination and neighborhood empowerment.

Many famous artists have lived and worked in Spanish Harlem, including the renowned timbalero Tito Puente (110th Street was renamed "Tito Puente Way"), Jazz legend Ray Barretto and one of Puerto Rico's most famous poets, Julia de Burgos among others. Piri Thomas wrote a best-selling autobiography titled, "Down These Mean Streets" in 1967.

SPANISH HARLEM IN THE PRESENT DAY:

With the growth of the Latino population, the neighborhood has expanded. It has become home to one of the few major television studios north of midtown, Metropolis (106th St. and Park Ave.), where shows like BET's *106 & Park* and *Chappelle's Show* have been produced.

The major medical care provider to both East Harlem and the Upper East Side is the Mount Sinai Hospital, which has long provided tertiary care to the residents of Harlem. Many of the graduates of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine make careers out of East Harlem public health initiatives including the battle against asthma, diabetes, unsafe drinking water, lead paint and infectious disease.

The Harbor Conservatory for the Performing Arts serves as a focus for theatre, dance, and musical performance in the neighborhood. El Museo del Barrio, a museum of Latin American and Caribbean art and culture is located on nearby Museum Mile and endeavors to serve some of the cultural needs of the neighboring community.

There is a diverse collection of religious institutions in East Harlem: from mosques, a Greek Orthodox monastery, several Roman Catholic churches, including Holy Rosary Parish-East Harlem, and a traditional Russian Orthodox church.

There are some residents who feel the area should be labeled "SpaHa" because of similarities with SoHo and TriBeCa that are emerging in Spanish Harlem. The views of the East River and Queens, and easy access to Central Park is just as convenient, if not more, than areas south. The formal gardens in Central Park, located on 110th and Fifth, are a hidden gem within the park, as well as the less crowded uptown Ice-Skating Rink.

SOCIAL ISSUES IN SPANISH HARLEM:

Social problems associated with poverty from crime to drug addiction have also affected the area for some time. Violent crime remains an obstacle to community security, but crime rates have dropped significantly over the past 15 years. Today the Latin Kings are prevalent in Spanish Harlem.

Spanish Harlem has significantly higher drop out rates and incidents of violence in its schools. Other problems in local schools include low test scores and high truancy rates. Drug addiction is also a serious problem in the community. The neighborhood's incarceration rate in the area is also very high. This has a direct correlation to aggressive policing tactics including "sweeps" due to the area's high crime rate.

With a decrease in affordable housing, homelessness has become a worsening problem. Many families double or triple up in a single apartment, relocate to other neighborhoods, or leave the city completely. But since the neighborhood has such a great population density, the neighborhood as a whole possesses strong purchasing power.

In recent years, property values in Spanish Harlem have climbed along with the rest of the Manhattan and the metro area. Many people priced out of more affluent sections of the city have begun to look at Spanish Harlem as an up and coming area due to the neighborhood's proximity to Manhattan's core and subway accessibility. With increased market rate housing there has been a severe decline of affordable housing in the community. Many believe that Spanish Harlem real estate developers hoping for a wave of gentrification wish to displace current low income and long time residents -- This has created tension in the community.

MY HOME, MY WORDS: JOURNALING IN THE COMMUNITY

Have you ever kept a journal?

Have you ever written something while sitting outside somewhere in your neighborhood?

I

Find a quiet place, outside if possible, within the Spanish Harlem community, where you can write in your journal. Try to find a different spot each week so that you can experience your surroundings in greater depth and breadth.

Places to go nearby within Central Park:

The field behind the pond entering at 105th

The conservatory gardens entering at 104th

The bridge and waterfall heading West on the path

The hill on the South side of the pond

The bench by the sand on the side of the park going North on 5th

The North side of the pond on the grass or the stone path on 110th

The community garden on Lexington Avenue

The playground on 105th

A yard or playground by your or a friend's building

Cultural Institutions which would welcome you to write inside or nearby:

Museo del Barrio

The Harbor Conservatory

Museum of the City of New York

Any of the Churches in the neighborhood

Neighborhood restaurants or coffee shops

II

Interpret the quote of the week: What does it make you think of? What would you add to it? How does it relate to your personal or daily life? To life in Spanish Harlem? Write one to three paragraphs explaining your interpretation. Be ready to share!

- Week 1: Things do not change; we change.
- Week 2: What a man thinks of himself determines his fate.
- Week 3: Here is life, an experience largely untried by me.
- Week 4: To affect the quality of the day; that is the highest of arts.
- Week 5: We are all school masters and our school is the universe.
- Week 6: Be true to your work, your word, and your friend.
- Week 7: Be not simply good; be good for something.
- Week 8: There is no remedy for love but to love more.
- Week 9: Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.
- Week 10: Life – who knows what it is, or what it does?
- Week 11: There is no interpreter between us and our conscience.
- Week 12: If I am not I, who will be?

THE POETRY OF SPANISH HARLEM AND LATINO NEW YORK CITY

- ❖ Listen (and read along if you'd like) while I read this selection about the poetry of Spanish Harlem.
- ❖ As you listen, take notes (and/or text code) on the most interesting or important pieces of information that you hear:

What became the Latino poets' movement was influenced by Beat writers like Jack Kerouac, firebrand black poets like Amiri Baraka, and oral poetry traditions. It was informed by the discrimination, segregation and other harsh experiences suffered by Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Latino immigrants who settled in New York.

Today Latino-American poetry can range from sonnets to the frenzied verses of competitive slams, and its themes are universal: the politics of daily life, sex and love, discovery of self. The poets function in a less cohesive, more glamorized setting than in the old days. This is now poetry promoted by hip-hop and delivered in a more theatrical, performance-oriented way, which some poets celebrate and others criticize as being more often about entertaining or shocking an audience than about self-expression.

Listening Notes:

◆ Questions for Discussion

- What were the major influences of the Latino poets' movement?
- What is Latino-American poetry about today?
- Why do some folks like old school Latino-American poetry better?

Discussion Notes:

ANALYZING A POEM

- ☞ You already know how to understand the main theme of a poem, recognize poetic conventions within it, and discuss important elements of it after you read.
- ☞ Now we are going to go deeper into the analysis of poetry. You will be responsible for analyzing at least 2-3 poems from the given selection.
- ☞ In order to completely analyze a poem you must read it over several times, slowly, either in your head or aloud.
- ☞ During each read you will take notes as you focus on specific elements of the poem:

FIRST READ

- Pay attention to **Spacing** and **Punctuation**: Periods, ellipses and dashes call for a pause in reading and in the thought itself, while commas demand a shorter break. If there is no punctuation at the end of a line, the thought continues without break to the next line.
-
- Look closely at the **Title**: The title is indicative of **subject, tone** and **genre**. Decide if the title has connotative meanings, write down synonyms for words in the title, and connect the title to as many different things as you can.
-
- **Subject**: What's the basic **situation**? Who is talking, and under what circumstances? Try writing a paraphrase – that is, rewrite the poem in your own words to deepen your understanding of what the poet is getting across. Fit phrases into modern day translations to ensure you grasp the full meaning.

SECOND READ

- **Shape** of the poem: Does the poem appeal to your intellect or emotions? What **structure(s)** are used? Metaphor, simile, rhythm, rhyme, etc? How are these aspects integrated? How does structure support content?
-
- The Author's **Tone**: What is the author's manner toward the subject? What is his/her **mood, emotional relationship**, general feeling?
-
- Poem's **Attitude**: What is the general attitude of the poem? What feelings does it arouse in you, the reader? What emotions do you think the poet wanted to awaken? Watch punctuation, word choice and sound usage for clues. (**Soft** words like "slide," "feather," "laughter" usually add a gentle feel, while words with **harsh** sounds like "corked," "guzzle," "battled" can lend a clipped, tense atmosphere.)

THIRD READ

- Use of **Figurative Language**: Where does the author use imagery, sensory description, symbolism, metaphor, personification, or other devices to draw the reader in and help you visualize the poem? What elements are the most striking or effective?
-
- **Word Connotation** (Deep Meaning): Go through the poem, writing down every word that could have a **deeper meaning**. This kind of analysis can reveal hidden meanings and plays on words that might otherwise have remained unseen. Keep a dictionary nearby; consult it often to unravel words with heavy connotations.
-
- **Shift** in the piece: Where does the **shift in thought** arrive? There should be a break, when the speaker ends one manner of speech, **changes** point of view, or **pauses** to consider something other than the subject. This is known as the shift, referring to the shift in thought. That place is generally the **turning point** of the poem, and it's important to understand where and why the shift occurred in your poem.

AFTER YOU READ

- Go back to the **Title**: After unlocking the puzzle of the poem itself, return to the title. The connotations you uncovered before analyzing the body can now be matched up to your results to see if they apply, or add any **fresh perspectives**.
-
- Think about your Overall **Impression**: In what ways is this poem original, exciting, expressive, **significant**? How does it relate to the time and place in which it was written? To the author's life? To your life? To life in general?

ANALYSIS SUMMARY

- ☞ After your readings, summarize your notes into a 1-2 paragraph analysis of the poem you have just read.
- ☞ Include elements from all of your readings as well as your impressions after reading. Go as deep as you can into the poem and its hidden meanings!

POEM ANALYSIS

NAME: _____

AUTHOR: _____

POEM TITLE: _____

NOTES WHILE READING

FIRST READ

Meanings within Title:

Notes on Subject/Situation

SECOND READ

Elements of Shape/Structure

Author's Tone

Attitude of Poem

THIRD READ

Figurative Language Used

Word Meanings/Connotations

POEMS FOR ANALYSIS

"For once, America is truly brought together into one from its myriads of ethnicities – 10,000 ethnicities become sharply focused into an art form." -- Miguel Algarin

Selections from *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas

Electronic Frontier by Miguel Algarin

The Old Buildings and *Love Poem for my People* by Pedro Pietri

El Reverendo Pedro Pietri by Amiri Baraka

^*La Bodega Sold Dreams* and *New York City Hard Times Blues* by Miguel Pinero

Oye Mundo/Sometimes by Jesus Papaletto Melendez

Reflections on the Metronorth, Winter 1990; and *Nigger-Reecan Blues* by Willie Perdomo

^Selections from *Sonnets from the Puerto Rican* by Jack Agueros

Barrio Beateo by Jesse F Garcia

Immigrants in our own Land by Jimmy Santiago Baca

^*Project Blues* by Raymond Ramirez

^Selections from *Boy without a Flag* by Abraham Rodriguez

^Selections from *The Complete Poems of Julia de Burgos*

Poems used in earlier Sections of this Unit:

How to be Nuyoricán, Holla at the God, January Morning, Ya Tu Sabes Bro, What's Really Good, and *Here* by Anthony Morales

Here by Sandra Maria Esteves

INFLUENTIAL POETS OF SPANISH HARLEM

- ✦ We will be researching the most influential poets of Spanish Harlem in order to better understand their influences, the themes of their work, their uses of language, and their affects on the community and the art form.
- ✦ You will be responsible for researching and writing about two or more poets who you think you might find the most interesting based on your readings and discussions.
- ✦ General Background Information about the Latino-American Poets
 - Influences: Beat Generation, Harlem Renaissance, Oral Tradition - storytelling & music
 - Themes: Existing in a new difficult place, poverty, sexuality, violence, drug use
 - Language: Code-switching, Spanglish, Use of two languages

✦ The Poets

Piri Thomas

Born and raised in Spanish Harlem

Dealt with racism and confusion over Puerto Rican and Cuban descent

Wrote *Down These Mean Streets*

Miguel Algarin

Grew up in Spanish Harlem

Formed Nuyorican Poets Café

Edited *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe*

Jack Agüeros

Born 1934 in Spanish Harlem

Community activist, poet, writer, translator

Former Director of El Museo del Barrio

Compiler and translator of *The Complete Poems of Julia de Burgos*

Wrote *Sonnets from the Puerto Rican*

Pedro Pietri

Born in Puerto Rico

Grew up and was memorialized in Spanish Harlem

Major political player in the Nuyorican movement

Produced recordings of poetry as well as written work

Miguel Pinero

Lived in New York

Wrote prison drama *Short Eyes* in 1974 as well as poetry

Won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award

[continued]

Jesus Papaleta Melendez
New York City Native
Poet, helped organize NY writing workshops
Enriched the lives of tens of thousands of children

Willie Perdomo
Grew up in East Harlem.
“When you see things that are wrong,
you want to say it's wrong.
It's a raw language for a raw experience.”

Anthony Morales
26 year old quintessential New Yorker:
Born in the Bronx
Schooled in Harlem (Columbia)
Teaches in Brooklyn (El Puente)
Performs at the Nuyorican Poets Café, also with Willie Perdomo
Visits schools in all boroughs
Historian of Latino Poetry and Culture in New York City

Abraham Rodriguez
Born in the Bronx
Went to school on 116th Street in Spanish Harlem
Wrote *Boy without a Flag*, *Spidertown*, *Iguana Dreams*

Julia de Burgos
Best known female poet in Puerto Rico
At age nineteen her first verses were published
Graduated from the University of Puerto Rico as a teacher
Moved to New York
Died in Spanish Harlem

✦ **Relating to their Spanish Harlem and our Own**

... We will watch a number of films and visit a number of cultural institutions relating to the neighborhood, people, and poetic arts of Spanish Harlem.

... During each film/visit, you will take note of your noticings and wonderings as well as the most important and interesting details you learn.

Piñero -- Film that puts the spotlight on the Nuyorican poets' scene, which came into being in the 1960's and 70's and is still going strong as the popularity of poetry surges nationwide, featuring Pinero who is best remembered for "Short Eyes," the incendiary prison-set play that catapulted him to fleeting fame.

Every Child is Born a Poet – Film by Piri Thomas combining poetry, documentary and drama, exploring the life and work of the 75-year-old Afro-Cuban-Puerto Rican poet and author of *Down These Mean Streets*, tracing Thomas' path from childhood to manhood in New York City's Spanish Harlem from the 1930s to the 1960s

Visit to El Museo del Barrio -- Founded in 1969 by artist Raphael Montañez Ortiz with the support of a group of Puerto Rican educators, artists, parents and community activists in East Harlem's Spanish-speaking El Barrio, it has evolved into New York's leading Latino cultural institution, having expanded its mission to represent the diversity of art and culture in all of the Caribbean and Latin America.

Tour of Julia de Burgos Cultural Center – El Barrio art scene is vibrant, alive, and well at the Taller Boricua Gallery here, as well as through Marina Gutierrez's mobile installation for the center's renovation.

Walking tour of Spanish Harlem

Notes Page for Films and Cultural Tours

Film/Tour: _____

Name: _____

I notice...	I wonder...
Most Important Historical Details:	Most Interesting Artistic/Surrounding Details:

POETRY OF PLACE: WRITING OUR OWN POEMS

→ Now that we have read and analyzed poetry, and have gathered information about Spanish Harlem and its poets.....

→ You are going to write YOUR OWN POEMS about your experiences growing up in and around Spanish Harlem!

→ We will use the poems we read as a model for form and an inspiration for content.

CONTENT

*Answer these questions:

- How has my life been affected by growing up and going to school here in El Barrio?
- What have been my greatest struggles related to growing up in this community?
- What have been my greatest joys because of growing up here?
- What message would I like to share about living in and/or going to school in Spanish Harlem?

PRE-WRITING

*Brainstorm Ideas for your poem in an easy, relaxed free-write.

*If you are uninspired, use this content Jump-start Workshop:

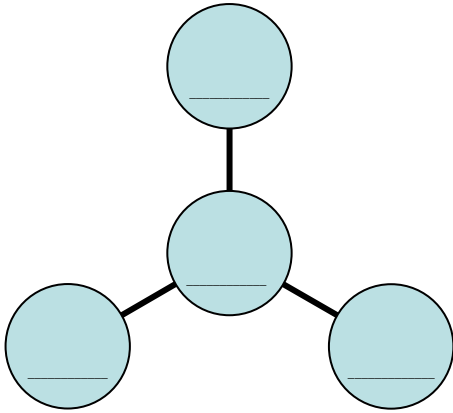
PART 1

- Trade notebooks with a partner
- Designate Person A and person B
- Person A: Tell person B a story about a specific meaningful or memorable experience you had that took place in this neighborhood.
- Person B: Write down the most important and colorful details of Person A's story *in Person A's notebook*.
- Now Person B tell your story and Person write the details *in Person B's notebook*
- Now, switch notebooks and READ what your partner thought were the most important and colorful details of your story.
- Circle the 3-5 best details of your own story to use in your poem.

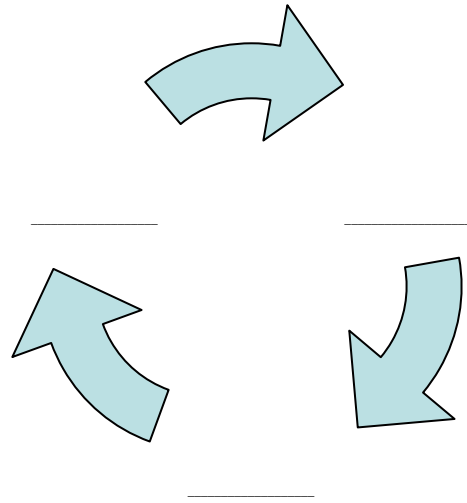
PART 2

- Pick your favorite detail to EXPAND.
- Copy that detail on a new piece of paper.
- Add 5 LINES that CONTINUE your favorite detail from that story.
- Can these lines also fit into your poem?

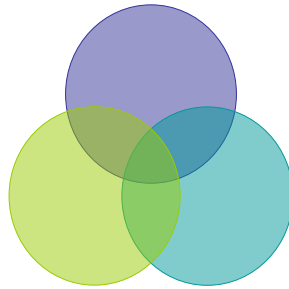
ORGANIZATION



Web



Flow



Venn

*Choose the type of Graphic Organizer that will best help you to plan your poem!

*Copy it in a larger form on the other side of this paper

*Use it to organize your ideas before and during brainstorming

FORMAT AND STYLE

*Use a poem you read as *inspiration* for your own poem's format. That means your poem should follow the general structure of one of the poems you have read, but it doesn't have to mirror it exactly.

Remember, Format includes:

- Lines [Phrases, Statements, Questions]
- Verses
- Couplets
- Stanzas
- Very SHORT mini-paragraphs
- Please note that your poem MAY rhyme but it DOES NOT HAVE TO RHYME!

*The style of your poem will reflect your own Uniqueness, Creativity, Voice, Originality, and Confidence.

*Remember, Style includes:

- Tone — The poet's attitude toward the subject, the mood or emotionality
- Imagery – Painting a picture in the reader/listener's mind
- Description – Detailed, expressive, strong words that help the reader visualize the imagery
- Sensory Detail – Using words that relate to sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch to enhance the reader's experience
- Symbolism – The use of objects or actions to represent bigger feelings, ideas, or concepts
- Simile – A comparison of one thing to another using like or as
- Metaphor – A description of one thing in the vein of another
- Allusion – Speaking to an inanimate object or entity as though it were a person
- Personification – Describing a non-human entity using human-like characteristics
- Repetition – Repeating of words, phrases, or refrains one right after the other or throughout the poem like a chorus
- Alliteration – Repeating one sound in a series of words
- Pun – Word that means two different things at once
- Onomatopoeia -- The literal imitation of physical sounds
- Sarcasm -- Saying something in a way that conveys its opposite
- Irony – An outcome of events contrary to what might have been expected
- Paradox -- A statement which contains apparently opposing or incongruous elements
- Rhythm – Alliteration, rhyme, musicality
- Flow – Length of sentences that fit together, appropriate line breaks, a sense of lyricism if read aloud

REFLECTING ON THIS WORK

Write a 1-3 paragraph reflection on this unit and portfolio relating to our classes' objectives and learning experiences. Include answers to some of these questions in your reflection.

- o What were the overarching themes of the poems we read?
- o What were the most often-used or most memorable poetic conventions?
- o What favorite lines from the poems affected you in a profound way?
- o What did you learn about the authors' relationship to their neighborhood and how it affected their experiences?
- o What did you learn about this neighborhood in general – its history, social issues, and strengths?
- o How did living in and learning about this community affect your own poetic, journal, and analytical writing?
- o What did you learn about poetry as a written and spoken art form throughout this process?
- o What did you feel went well for you in the process of reading, discussing, and writing poetry about El Barrio?
- o What elements of your work would you have changed?
- o How and why is poetry an important influence in our community?
- o How and why does the cultural and literary background of our community help to shape our lives?

Sources

Poems collected from various sources including authors' own collections as well as:
Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café, edited by Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman
Unsettling America: An Anthology of Contemporary Multicultural Poetry, edited by Maria
Mazziotti Gillan and Jennifer Gillan

Poets of Spanish Harlem biographical information compiled from:
Puerto Rican Voices in English: Interviews with Writers, by Carmen Dolores Hernandez

Poetry History of Spanish Harlem information compiled from Anthony Morales' website:
<http://anthonymorales.blogspot.com/search?q=spanish+harlem>

Analyzing Poetry material compiled from two websites:
<http://library.thinkquest.org/C005319/analyze.htm>
<http://www.poetrymagic.co.uk/critiquing.html>

Spanish Harlem Neighborhood and Cultural material compiled from:
Wikipedia.com

Weekly Journal Quotes compiled from:
Various works by Henry David Thoreau

Special Thanks
to
Susan Frey
for her Encouragement,
Support,
and Gentle Reminders,
and most of all for
Inspiring me to Write and Teach
about *Place*
in order to make it
Meaningful
to Me
and to
my Students.

-- *Lauren Jacobs*