Objectives:
- Students will read and analyze the life and times of Walt Whitman
- Students will analyze, respond, and relate the photographs provided to the historical time period and the events of that time period (ex. Lincoln’s assassination)
- Students will apply their poetry elements guide to read and analyze Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

Pennsylvania Teaching Standards:
**Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening**
- 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas
  - 1.2.8A Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas
- 1.3 Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature
  - 1.3.8A Read and understand works of literature
  - 1.3.8C Analyze the effect of various literary devices
  - 1.3.8F Read and respond to nonfiction and fiction including poetry and drama
- 1.6 Speaking and Listening
  - 1.6.8A Listen to others
  - 1.6.8B Listen to a selection of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction).
  - 1.6.8D Contribute to discussions.

**History**
- 8.1 Historical Analysis and Skills Development
  - 8.1.9D Analyze and interpret historical research
- 8.3 United States History
  - 8.3.9B Identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in United States history from 1787 to 1914.

**Arts and Humanities**
- 9.2 Historical and Cultural Contexts
  - 9.2.8B Relate works in the arts chronologically to historical events
  - 9.2.8D Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective.

Activities/Strategies:
- Bellwork—Project the picture of Lincoln’s personal effects the day he was assassinated on the front projector screen: [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/tlc0070.jpg](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/tlc0070.jpg)
  - Ask the students: Whose belongings might these be? Do you think this person is a male or female? Rich or poor? What other traits might this individual have? What time period do you think this individual comes from? Write your thoughts in your notebook as you try to analyze this individual’s belongings to make an educated guess as to who it is.
- Once the students have done the Bellwork, begin to reason through their thoughts with them and help them in their analysis of the picture, lead the students to the answer, but allow them to set the pace and let their ideas lead the way
- Hand out the Walt Whitman poetry packets to introduce the students to the poet
- Turn to the first page in the packet and read over some important facts of Whitman’s life, especially those that influenced his writing
- Next read “O Captain! My Captain!” and have the students use their elements sheet to analyze the poem specifically look at:
  - The shape of the poem
  - The repetition
  - The type of poem—elegy
  - Answer certain question on the bottom of the page pertaining to the metaphors of Lincoln as a captain and the United States as a ship, etc
- Once the poem has been read and discussed, project the picture of Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” poetry draft on the front screen and talk to the students about revising writings and
that even famous poets revise until they get it right—it doesn’t always happen perfectly the first time: http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/images/tlc0405.jpg

Have students turn to the next poem and show the students the picture of the funeral procession by projecting it on the front screen: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cwpb.00593

Examine the picture, specifically looking for specific pieces of the image that suggest traditions or elements of a presidential funeral procession

Then read “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” and also analyze this poem with the elements sheet

Then read “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” and also analyze this poem with the elements sheet, specifically looking to answer the questions on the right hand column of the handout

Closure: At 5 minutes to the bell, stop reading and discussing the poem, and assign what hasn’t been finished for homework. Also, ask the students questions about Walt Whitman and his two elegiac poems.

Assessment:
- Class discussion
- Teacher observation and questioning
- Future quiz

Materials:
- Walt Whitman packets
- Poetry elements sheet
- PowerPoint for the primary source materials

Primary Source Citations


Accommodations:
- Help students to correctly read the poems and dissect them using the poetry elements
- Give students hints and key words when looking and analyzing the photographs
- Move students with trouble seeing to the front of the room, if they are not already seated there
WALT WHITMAN

- Born May 31, 1819 at West Hills, New York, second child of 10
- Father = Walter Whitman, carpenter and farmer
- Mother = Louisa van Velsor, both father and mother descendants of early settlers on Long Island, Whitman was very close to his mother
- The family moved to Brooklyn, where Whitman attended public school and loved taking the ferry, a theme in many of his later works
- Whitman was largely self-taught, he attended lectures and visited museums and libraries where he studied theatre, history and geography as well as the works of Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle, James Fenimore Cooper, William Shakespeare, and Homer among many other writers
- At age 14, Whitman lived alone, he worked for the newspaper Patriot, learning the trade and getting some of his articles printed
- After fires in New York destroyed a number of publishing companies, Whitman taught at the Long Island schools
- 1838-1839 Whitman was editor of his own paper The Long Islander
- Between 1840-1845 Whitman had numerous articles and stories published in newspapers and magazines
- 1946, Whitman became editor for the Brooklyn Eagle, a position he held for three years.
- When Whitman came face to face with the inhumane treatment of slaves in New Orleans, he wrote a number of poems inspired by his travels to the south
- During the American Civil War, Whitman’s brother George was injured, causing Whitman to become a nurse to him, helping care for him and others sick and wounded in the Washington D.C. hospitals.
- Upon the news of president Abraham Lincoln’s death, Whitman wrote a tribute to him
- Whitman spent most of his free time and money caring for the sick
- After suffering in 1873, he moved to New Jersey, living with his brother George before buying his own place
- During the following years Whitman traveled to the West, but he suffered increasing problems due to the stroke and failing health.
- He died on March 26, 1892 in New Jersey and lies buried in the tomb he designed himself in Harleigh Cemetery, alongside his family members.
When President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865, a war-weary nation was plunged into shock. The last great battles of the Civil War were still a recent memory, and the murder of the president seemed to be a bloody, pointless coda to four years of conflict and instability. There was a great outpouring of grief across the country, and poems and songs were written mourning the nation’s loss.

One American who grieved for the fallen president was the poet Walt Whitman. Whitman had lived in Washington for most of the war and was a great admirer of Lincoln, whom he felt embodied the American virtues of plain-spokenness, courage, and "horse-sense." He often saw the president riding around town on horseback, and the two men sometimes exchanged cordial bows.

Lincoln’s death inspired Whitman to write one of his most memorable works—a simple, three-stanza poem of sorrow that bore little resemblance to his other, more experimental writings. "O Captain! My Captain!" was published in New York’s Saturday Press in November of 1865, and was met with immediate acclaim. The poem’s evocation of triumph overshadowed by despair spoke to readers throughout the shattered nation, and it was widely reprinted and published in anthologies. "O Captain! My Captain!" became the most popular poem Whitman would ever write, and helped secure for him a position as one of the greatest American poets of the 19th century.

Whitman was very particular about the appearance of his poems and paid careful attention to every detail of spelling and punctuation.
O the bleeding drops of red!

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!
BY WALT WHITMAN.

O captain! my captain! our fearful trip is done.
The ship has weathered every rack, the wave we thought to un
The ports are won, the bells I heard, the people allproclaiming,
While follow upon the steady head, the vessel grim and daring.
But O heart! heart! heart!

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:
For you he sakes the shouting men, their eager faces turning.
O captain! dear father!
This arm
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel, my arms, he has no pulse nor will.
In his cabinet the ship stands, his voyage closed and done:
From fearful trip the voyager comes in with object won.
Sail on, O sail! and stop, O holy!
But I, with silent tread,
Walk the spot my captain lies
Fallen cold and dead.
Whose items are these?
O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

BY WALT WHITMAN.

I.

O CAPTAIN! my captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people allexciting;
While fellow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.
But O heart! heart! heart!
I loosed you not the little spot
Where on the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

II.

O captain! my captain! rise up and hear the bell!
Rise up! for the flags are flung, for you the bangle trills:
For you bonnets and ribboned wreaths, for you the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning.
O captain! my captain! in the wheel
This arm shall never sink at last
It is some dream that on the deck
You have fallen cold and dead.

III.

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 in its voyage close and done:
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won!
Exult, O shores! and ring, O bells!
But I, with silent tread,
Walk to the spot my captain lies
Fallen cold and dead.
O Captain! my captain!