

## Lesson 9.4

### IMAGES OF MAINE: POETRY

**Objective:** After reading selected poems by Maine authors, students will articulate how the poem represents Maine as a place, and will judge how accurate that image is.

**Materials:**

- **Sheet 9.4:** List of Suggested Poems
- Copies of poems by Amy Clampitt, Philip Booth, Edwin Arlington Robinson, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and/or other Maine poets

**Suggested Sources:**

- *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain.
  - *Maine Speaks*, Maine Writers and Publisher's Alliance
- These are excellent anthologies of Maine literature, and can be found in most libraries.

**\*Note:** this lesson can easily be adapted using Maine artwork, rather than poems.  
Contact the Farnsworth Art Museum, 352 Main St., Rockland, Maine, 04841, 207-596-6457, or the Portland Museum of Art, Seven Congress Square, Portland, Maine 04101, (207) 775-6148, for slides of paintings by Maine artists and/or of Maine.

**Timing:** 1-2 class periods

**Background Reading:**

- Chapter Nine

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss the idea of a "character" of Maine with students, asking questions like the following:
  - Does Maine have a specific identity?
  - Are there many ways of describing what Maine is like?
  - What do you associate with Maine?
  - What do you think other people associate with Maine?
  - Is Maine a place, as in a geographical location? Is Maine the people living in it? Both?
  - How do Maine's people influence its identity as a state?
  - Do you think of yourself as a Mainer? Why or why not?
2. Make a list on the board of all the images of Maine the students can come up with. As you read each poem, add items that did not come up in your brainstorm to the list. Have students write the brainstorm down in their notes.
3. Read Philip Booth's "Eaton's Boatyard" (see List of Suggested Poems, Sheet 9.4) to the class. Ask students to respond to the poem, asking questions like the following:
  - What is the poem about?

- Does it have anything to say about Maine? Does anything sound familiar to you?
  - How might this poem about a cluttered boatyard represent Maine?
  - What part of Maine does the poem represent?
  - Does it make you proud of your state? Embarrassed? Indifferent?
  - Is this an accurate image of Maine? Why or why not?
  - If you were choosing a poem to represent Maine, would you choose this poem? Why or why not?
3. Read each of the other poems together as a class, discussing their subjects and whether or not they represent Maine culture and/or identity in some way.
  4. Ask students to write their own Maine poems. They can be free verse or rhyming poems. In their poems, they should attempt to somehow represent the way that they see Maine. They can choose to write about whatever they like--land, sea, town, people, school, anything, as long as it demonstrates something they believe to be true about Maine. Have them choose their topic from their brainstorm lists, or from their own imaginations.
  5. Have students finish their poems for homework. Share some of them in class when they are through. Use their poems to add to your classroom list on all the things that are a part of Maine's identity.

**Evaluation:** You may want to not grade student poems as you would another piece of writing. Grading creative pieces by young writers (or artists, musicians, etc.) based on grammar, spelling, etc., can be counter-productive. Instead, give them credit for effort, and completing the poem on time.

**Follow-up Activities:**

- Have students who enjoy writing poetry complete a book of Maine poems for their portfolio.
- Have students represent Maine using another artistic medium: paint, dance, music, fiction, essays, sculpture, etc.
- Have students choose a Maine artist, writer, musician, or dancer and complete a short biographical report on that person.

**Alignment with Learning Results:**

Grade Level: **9<sup>th</sup>-dipl.**

Content Area: English Language Arts: **READING**

Standard: **Literary Texts**

Performance Indicator **A2**: Students read text, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, and present analyses of fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry, using excerpts from the text to defend their assertions.

Grade Level: **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

Content Area: English Language Arts: **READING**

Standard: **Literary Texts**

Performance Indicator **A2**: Students read fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry, within a grade appropriate span of text complexity, and analyze the characteristics noting how structural features and common literary devices help shape the reader's response.

**IMAGES OF MAINE: LIST OF SUGGESTED POETRY**

Philip Booth:

- "Eaton's Boatyard" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain
- "A Man in Maine" from *Relations: Selected Poems 1950 - 1985*

Amy Clampitt:

- "Beach Glass" from *The Kingfisher*

Edna St. Vincent Millay:

- "Inland" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain
- "Ragged Island" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain

Edwin Arlington Robinson:

- "New England" from *The Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson*.
- "Richard Cory" from *The Collected Poems*
- "Cliff Klingenhagen" from *The Collected Poems*

A. Poulin, Jr.

- "To My Brother," in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain

David Walker

- "Ancestral Photograph (c. 1860)", in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

- "My Lost Youth" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain
- "The Building of the Ship" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain
- "The Psalm of Life" in *The Maine Reader*, ed. Charles and Samuella Shain