

6th Grade

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## WEEK AT A GLANCE!

Story:  
"A Blessing"

Genre: Poetry

Vocabulary/Word Study Skill:  
multiple meaning words

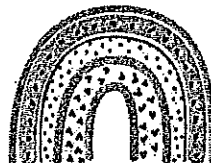
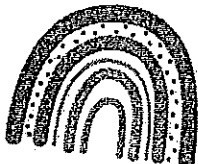
Comprehension: elements of  
poetry:

- ❖ Repetition
- ❖ Alliteration
- ❖ Simile
- ❖ Tone

Grammar: Verb Tenses,  
Action & Linking Verbs

Vocabulary:

- shyly: in a bashful or timid manner
- loneliness: sadness because one feels alone or isolated
- blossom: a flower or group of flowers; OR mature or develop in a healthy or mature way



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

Name:

Date:

## A Blessing

James Wright

### SHORT-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following items after you have read the text.

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**RL.6.5** Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of theme, setting, or plot.

- 1. Analyze how a particular sentence fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of theme.**

Reread lines 7 and 8 of "A Blessing." Notice that a line break divides the sentence into two parts. Describe the two parts of the sentence. Then, explain how the sentence helps to develop this theme: Humans and animals live in separate worlds.

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**RL.6.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 2. (a) Explain what the text says explicitly.**

Reread lines 15–24 of "A Blessing." What does the horse do in this section, and how does the speaker respond to the horse? After his contact with the horse, what does the speaker realize? Cite evidence from the poem to support your response.

- (b) Explain an inference you can draw from the text.**

Reread lines 22–24 of "A Blessing." Think about what the speaker realizes after his contact with the horse. Based on this realization, or insight, what can you infer about the speaker's relationship with nature? Support your inference using both details from the lines and your background knowledge.



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**RL.6.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**3. (a) Identify a theme and explain how it is conveyed through particular details.**

Identify a theme, or central message, of “A Blessing.” Then use details from the poem to explain how the poet develops this theme.

**(b) Write a summary of a text.**

Write an objective summary of “A Blessing” that includes main ideas but not your personal opinions or judgments. Make sure to include the author and title of the text.



### EXTENDED-RESPONSE ACTIVITY Word Choice and Tone

**DIRECTIONS:** Complete the following activity as either a written response or a group discussion.

**RL.6.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

4. In “A Blessing,” the poet uses two similes to describe the horses. In line 11, he says, “They bow shyly as wet swans,” and in line 20, he says the horse’s ear “... is delicate as the skin over a girl’s wrist.” Explain the meaning of each of these similes and how the poet’s use of these similes to describe the horses contributes to the poem’s tone.

Use these guidelines in your writing or discussion.

- Remember that a simile is figurative language that compares two things using words such as “like” or “as.” What two things does the speaker compare in each simile?
- Explain the meaning of the similes. What does the poet’s use of the image of swans suggest about the horses? What does the comparison to a girl’s wrist suggest about the black and white horse? How do these comparisons help you understand ideas in the poem?
- Identify the tone, or attitude, of the poem. What word would you use to describe the speaker’s attitude toward the horses?
- Explain how the objects that the poet uses in the two similes help develop that tone. How would the tone be different if the poet had chosen to compare the horses to other objects?

#### TIP FOR WRITTEN RESPONSE

Use precise words to convey your meaning. To find replacements for vague words, use a thesaurus.

#### TIP FOR DISCUSSION

Ask a group member to clarify a statement if you are confused about what he or she said.

Name:

Date:

### TEXT QUESTIONS

## A Blessing

James Wright

**DIRECTIONS:** Respond to these questions. Use textual evidence to support your responses.

1. (a) **Analyze** How do the ponies feel about the speaker and his friend being in the pasture? (b) **Support** Which words in the poem support your answer?

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2. **Interpret** Think about the different characteristics of barbed wire and a pasture. What might the speaker's words "We step over the barbed wire into the pasture" symbolize?

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3. (a) **Evaluate** How does the use of figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, create a certain mood in the poem? (b) **Support** What are some examples of this figurative language?

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4. **Paraphrase** How might you express, in your own words, the feeling the speaker describes in the final three lines?

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Name:

Date:

**CONCEPT VOCABULARY AND WORD STUDY**

## A Blessing

James Wright

### WORD LIST

shyly

loneliness

blossom

**A. DIRECTIONS:** In each of the following items, think about the meaning of the italicized word or phrase and then answer the question.

1. If a boy speaks *shyly*, would you expect him to be yelling? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
2. If Rayna were experiencing *loneliness* would she feel content and surrounded by loved ones? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_
3. If a tree is in *blossom*, is it dropping its leaves? Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. WORD STUDY: Multiple-Meaning Words** are words that have more than one definition. Readers can determine the meaning of a multiple-meaning word by its context, that is, by looking at how it is used. Read each sentence below. Then select the definition that fits the underlined word as it is used in the sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_ She cast the fishing line into the water.  
a. to throw  
b. to assign parts in a play
2. \_\_\_\_ Amir was supposed to chair the meeting of the Environmental Club.  
a. leader of a gathering or event  
b. seat with four legs and a back
3. \_\_\_\_ The detectives searched the river but found no trace of the diamond.  
a. something drawn  
b. a surviving mark or evidence
4. \_\_\_\_ Halle's class went to the mint for their social studies field trip.  
a. place where coins are made  
b. a strong smelling and edible plant

Name:

Date:

**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE** ➔ **ELEMENTS OF POETRY**

## A Blessing

James Wright

Poets use the musical elements of language to help express thoughts and feelings in their work. In poetry, the rhythms and sounds of words can be just as important as the words' definitions. Poets choose each word carefully to convey a particular meaning, tone, and mood. Here are some of the literary devices that poets use to enhance their poetry:

- **Sound devices** are groups of words that create sound patterns and may add a musical quality to poetry. **Repetition** is the use of any element of language (a sound, word, phrase, or sentence) more than once. **Alliteration** is the repetition of a letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words.
- **Figurative language** is language that is not meant to be taken literally. **Similes** compare two unlike things using *like* or *as*. Metaphors compare two unlike things by saying that one thing *is* another.

The **tone** of a poem is the poet's attitude toward his or her audience and subject. The tone might be described by an adjective such as *formal*, *serious*, *playful*, or *bitter*.

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the following questions about "A Blessing." Use textual evidence from the poem to support your responses.

1. What is one example of a simile from "A Blessing"?

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2. What is one example of a metaphor from "A Blessing"?

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3. What is the effect of the repetition of the words "have come"?

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4. In lines 9–12, what is the effect of the alliteration using the /th/ sound?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE > ELEMENTS OF POETRY**

The next time you read a poem, read it aloud to yourself. You'll find that poets use musical elements of language to help express thoughts and feelings. In a poem, the rhythms and sounds of words are just as important as what they mean. Below are some of the literary devices that poets use to enhance their poetry.

- **Sound devices** are groups of words that create sound patterns. **Repetition** is the use of a sound, word, phrase, or sentence more than once. **Alliteration** is the repetition of a letter or sound at the beginning of words that are close together, as when the witches in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* chant "Fair is foul, and foul is fair..." at the beginning of the play.
- **Figurative language** conveys a meaning or interpretation that goes beyond the literal meaning of the words. One type of figurative language is simile. A **simile** compares two unlike things using *like* or *as*, as in the phrase "as fast as a hungry cheetah." Metaphors compare two unlike things by saying that one thing *is* another.

The **tone** of a poem is the poet's attitude toward his or her audience and subject. The tone might be described by an adjective such as *humorous*, *angry*, *sarcastic*, or *happy*.

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Read the lines below. Then, write the sound device being used: *repetition* or *alliteration*.

1. The ball bumped up and bounced back to the goal.

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Ring, ring, ring the bell! Grab the rope and ring the bell!

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The wayward ducks waddled toward the pond.

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Read the sentences below. Then, write whether the figurative language device being used is a *simile* or a *metaphor*.

1. His laugh was like thunder.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The storm was an angry giant coming toward us.

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE CRAFT AND STRUCTURE** → **ELEMENTS OF POETRY**

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Read the lines below. Then, write the sound device being used: *repetition* or *alliteration*.

1. Showers come in April, / Showers come in May.

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The buzz of the bumblebees started again.

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The little leprechaun leaped into the air.

Sound Device: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Read the sentences below. Then, on the line following each item, write whether the figurative language device being used is a *simile* or a *metaphor*.

1. He was as clumsy as a bull in a china shop. \_\_\_\_\_
2. We ran through the curtain of rain. \_\_\_\_\_
3. My father is a rock. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Those two are as different as night and day. \_\_\_\_\_
5. That old man was as mean as a snake. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. DIRECTIONS:** Think of a word that best describes the tone of each sentence below, and write it on the line.

1. Ah! Fresh air, and a roaring campfire. Does it get any better?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Had none of them heard the thunder or seen the flashes in the sky? How did they not see that the storm was coming?

\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Date:

**WORD STUDY** → MULTIPLE-MEANING WORDS

**Multiple-Meaning Words** are words that have more than one definition. Readers can determine the meaning of a multiple-meaning word by the way it is used in the sentence and by the words that surround it. The word *bark* is an example of a multiple-meaning word. It can mean “a sound that a dog makes” or “the outer covering of a tree.” Readers can determine which meaning is intended by looking at how the word is used in a sentence.

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Select the definition that fits the underlined word as it is used in the sentence.

1. The woman's fair complexion meant that she got freckles when she went out in the sun.
  - a. in accordance with rules
  - b. light; blond
2. The cashier at the store gave Sophia her change.
  - a. money returned when amount paid exceeds amount due
  - b. act of becoming different
3. She kept a potted plant and an umbrella on the deck.
  - a. a pack of cards
  - b. roofless area connected to a house

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**B. DIRECTIONS:** Choose the sentence that uses the same meaning of the underlined word.

1. Mark is going to charge his tuition.
  - a. She was afraid the bull would charge.
  - b. Don't charge that book; pay cash for it.
2. Lance had a minor role in the film.
  - a. The changes she made to the paper were minor.
  - b. Nina's parents had to sign for her because she was a minor.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**WORD STUDY** ► MULTIPLE-MEANING WORDS**A. DIRECTIONS:** Choose the word whose meaning fits both sentences.

1. The librarian read the \_\_\_\_\_ from beginning to end.

Her approach to the problem was \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. book                      c. original  
b. novel                     d. safe

2. That hairstyle really \_\_\_\_\_ the shape of your face.

Both men and women were required to wear \_\_\_\_\_ at work.

- a. flatters                  c. ties  
b. uniforms                d. suits

3. Laila knew how to operate a \_\_\_\_\_.

The \_\_\_\_\_ flew high over the building.

- a. machine                c. car  
b. crane                    d. bird

**B. DIRECTIONS:** Write two sentences for each word, using a different meaning of the word in each sentence.

- 1.
- fly*
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 2.
- break*
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- 3.
- bank*
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Date:

## CONVENTIONS ► VERBS AND VERB TENSES

### A Blessing

James Wright

A **verb** expresses an action or a state of being. Every complete sentence includes at least one verb. **Action verbs** such as *draw* and *dance* describe an action of a person, animal, or thing. Some verbs, such as *think* and *know*, describe mental actions instead of physical actions. **Linking verbs** such as *am* and *is* connect a noun or pronoun to a word that identifies, renames, or describes it (example: "She *is* smart").

When a verb is used in a sentence, it has a **tense**. A verb tense shows when the action (or state of being) of the verb takes place. The three simple tenses are **past tense**, **present tense**, and **future tense**. Regular verbs such as *march* and *talk* form their past tense by adding *-ed* or *-d*.

TENSES	REGULAR VERB: <i>talk</i>	IRREGULAR VERB: <i>be</i>
Past	I talked	He saw
Present	I talk	He sees
Future	I will talk	He will see

A. **DIRECTIONS:** Underline the verb in each sentence. Then, identify the verb tense by writing *past*, *present*, or *future* on the line provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The ponies come out to greet their riders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They will take a riding lesson tomorrow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yesterday, we met the horses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The instructor tells us not to be nervous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I will ride the brown horse with the white muzzle.

B. **DIRECTIONS:** Complete each sentence by writing the correct verb tense on the line provided. The hints in parentheses tell you which verb and tense to use.

- (past tense of *learn*) We \_\_\_\_\_ a lot about horses.
- (future tense of *live*) The horses \_\_\_\_\_ in the stable and on the plains.
- (present tense of *stand*) One horse \_\_\_\_\_ far away from the others.
- (past tense of *eat*) They \_\_\_\_\_ the apples we gave them.
- (future tense of *worry*) I \_\_\_\_\_ about staying on the horse.

Name:	Date:
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### CONVENTIONS VERBS AND VERB TENSES

A **verb** expresses an action or a state of being. Every complete sentence includes at least one verb.

**Action verbs** such as *walk*, *sing*, or *laugh* describe an action of a person, animal, or thing. Some verbs, such as *believe* and *understand*, describe mental actions instead of physical actions. **Linking verbs** such as *am*, *is*, or *were* connect a noun or pronoun to a word that identifies, renames, or describes it (example: "She *is* smart.>").

When a verb is used in a sentence, it has a **tense**. A verb tense shows when the action (or state of being) of the verb takes place. The three simple tenses are **past tense**, **present tense**, and **future tense**.

Regular verbs such as *follow* and *walk* form their past tense by adding *-ed* or *-d*.

TENSES	REGULAR VERB: <i>walk</i>	IRREGULAR VERB: <i>go</i>
Past	I walked	He went
Present	I walk	He goes
Future	I will walk	He will be going

**DIRECTIONS:** Underline the verb in each sentence. Then, identify the verb tense by writing *past*, *present*, or *future* on the line provided.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The bus arrived at the Chicago depot at about 7:45.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lucia will cook omelets for us later this morning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ That author writes about significant events in her life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our basketball team lost another game last night.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We planned a surprise party for Dad.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONVENTIONS** VERBS AND VERB TENSES

**A. DIRECTIONS:** Underline the correct verb form in parentheses. Then, identify the tense by writing *past*, *present*, or *future* on the line provided.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The oranges we ate this morning (were, are) tasty.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ According to my science teacher, the human eye (works, will work) like the lens of a camera.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Yesterday, Aunt Sharise (drives, drove) us to Grandma's house.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Alice (failed, will fail) the test if she does not study.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Simone has a healthy diet because she always (plans, planned) her meals carefully.

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**B. DIRECTIONS:** Complete each sentence by writing the correct verb tense on the line provided. The hints in parentheses tell you which verb and tense to use.

1. (past tense of *learn*) As a child, Vincent \_\_\_\_\_ to greet his grandfather respectfully.
2. (future tense of *live*) I wonder whether I \_\_\_\_\_ in Oregon when I am older.
3. (past tense of *stand*) My parents \_\_\_\_\_ in line for almost two hours to get those tickets.
4. (present tense of *send*) Hannah \_\_\_\_\_ her grandmother a handwritten letter almost every week.
5. (past tense of *fall*) The baby \_\_\_\_\_ asleep as soon as he was placed in his crib.
6. (future tense of *worry*) Your parents \_\_\_\_\_ about you if you do not call.
7. (past tense of *eat*) That morning the children \_\_\_\_\_ a hearty breakfast.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Unit 1 Independent Reading Log

Reading Time	Title and Author	What is it about?	How would you rate it?	Explain your rating.
Monday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Tuesday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Wednesday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Thursday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	
Friday From _____ to _____			Great 5 4 3 2 1 Awful	