Lesson Plan by: Erin Shay
Lesson:  *Oh Captain! My Captain!* - An elegy with extended metaphors, repetition, and rhyme
Length:  45 minutes
Grade Level Intended:  8

Academic Standard(s):
English 8.3.6 Identify significant literary devices, such as metaphor, symbolism, dialect or quotations, and irony, which define a writer's style and use those elements to interpret the work.
- Metaphor: an implied comparison in which a word or phrase is used in place of another, such as *He was drowning in money*.
- Symbolism: the use of an object to represent something else; for example, a dove might symbolize peace.
- Dialect: the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation used by people in different regions.
- Irony: the use of words to express the opposite of the literal meaning of the words, often to be humorous. (Core Standard)

Performance Objective(s):
Given the poem by Walt Whitman, *Oh Captain! My Captain!* the student will write in a paragraph the extended metaphor for “the captain” and “the trip” with 100% accuracy.

Given the poem by Walt Whitman, *Oh Captain! My Captain!* the student will underline the repeated phrase in all three stanzas with 100% accuracy.

Given the poem by Walt Whitman, *Oh Captain! My Captain!* the student will write out the pairs of end rhymes found throughout the poem, with 7 out of the 9 pairs identified correctly.

Assessment:
The student will write a paragraph that states that “the captain” is an extended metaphor for Abraham Lincoln and that “the trip” is an extended metaphor for the civil war. For enrichment activity: read through what they wrote and write that they had good ideas or were on the right track etc.

The student will underline “fallen cold and dead” from each stanza. For the enrichment activity they should have also included two of the four other repeated phrases or words, not in every stanza, but somewhere in the poem. (There are four more: “Oh, Captain my Captain!” in the first two stanzas, “heart! heart! heart!” in the first stanza, line 5, “rise up” in stanza 2 lines 1 and 2, “For you. . . ” in stanza 2, lines 2, 3, and 4)

The student will write out 7 of the 9 end rhyme pairs in the poem: done; won, exulting; daring, red; dead, bells; trills, crowding; turning, head; dead, still; will, done; won, tread; dead. For enrichment: the student needed to identify at least one of the two internal rhymes. (There is one in stanza 1 line 3, “near; hear” and one in stanza 3 line 4 “trip; ship”)
Advance Preparation by teacher:
Print out enough copies for the entire class to receive the poem on a piece of paper.
Type and print the directions to the activity out on enough paper for each student to receive one.
Be sure to leave space under the first question for their paragraph.

Procedure:

Introduction/Motivation: The teacher will ask the students to identify nicknames that they may have for the principle, teachers, or friends and the teacher should ask how they got such a nickname and ask if it is some form of symbolism and an extended metaphor (Gardner’s intelligence style: Interpersonal).

Step-by-Step Plan:
1. First the teacher will introduce the poem, *Oh Captain! My Captain!* by Walt Whitman by telling the students the year and place it was written in.
2. Then the teacher will call upon three students at random and each will read a stanza aloud (Gardner’s intelligence styles: Verbal/Linguistic and Musical/Rhythmic).
3. After reading the poem, the teacher should ask the students if they think the captain really is a captain or if it is a nickname or extended metaphor for someone.
4. Then the teacher should ask the students if they remember what was going on around the year the poem was written (Some assistance may be helpful for the students: maybe you should add that it was a war and ask if they remember which one. Or you could ask if anyone knew who was president at the time of the war).
5. Finally, the teacher should tell the students that Walt Whitman wrote this poem, an elegy, as a tribute to the president Abraham Lincoln who died just before the end of the Civil War.
6. The teacher could spend some time discussing with the students that from the poem it would be easy to infer that Walt Whitman was a Northern advocate during the Civil War because of his support and love/admiration for Lincoln demonstrated in the poem.
7. The teacher should ask the students if they have any questions and answer them if they do.
8. Then the teacher must pass out the instructions to the 3 questions of the activity (Gardner’s intelligence style: Intrapersonal).
9. Then the teacher should remind the students to think about what we had discussed about extended metaphors and how they carry through the symbolism through the entire poem and the poem never directly tells you who the captain is and what was his journey, but it can be inferred through knowledge of the time period who or what they each represent.
10. Time should be allotted for the students to complete the questions and once students finish, the teacher may allow silent reading time until all the students have completed the work.
11. The papers should be collected.

Closure: The teacher should ask the students if they can now think of any other phrases or things that are extended metaphors. It could be anything, for example, outer space being called the new west or the new frontier (Gardner’s intelligence style: Interpersonal).

Adaptations/Enrichment:
For the students with hearing impairments, they will be allowed to read it quietly in their head. For students with a learning disability, the poem can be read with the teacher again once the rest of the
class is working on the 3 questions. For students with visual impairments, the questions could be answered verbally with the teacher one-on-one.

One way to enrich the lesson for those students in the class who need more stimulation and difficulty, the teacher could ask them to look at the whole poem and discuss all the extended metaphors that are in it. Such as, discuss what is really meant by “the ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won” and “the vessel grim and daring”? What is “the vessel” referring to? Is the captain really his father? They why do you think he was called his father in the poem?

This question will only be graded on the original assignment given to all the students, but will at least get the students thinking more. For the second question, the enrichment should be to identify at least two other repeated phrases (there are four more: “Oh, Captain my Captain!” in the first two stanzas, “heart! heart! heart!” in the first stanza, line 5, “rise up” in stanza 2 lines 1 and 2, “For you...” in stanza 2, lines 2, 3, and 4). The enrichment for the last question should be to identify any internal rhymes in the poem (there are two). There is one in stanza 1 line 3, “near; hear” and one in stanza 3 line 4 “trip; ship”.

**Self-Reflection:**
Did the students become interested after my introduction?
Did the students get engaged in the reading?
Did the students understand my discussion about the historical context of the poem?
Did the discussions go well and was a lot said by the students?
Did the students do well on the 3 questions of the activity?
Did my enriched learners go above and beyond; did I give them more stimulating things to think about?
Did my students who needed adaptations get the help/assistance they needed?
Would I do anything differently if I were to do it again?
How did my students react? Facial expressions? Yawns? Comments? Were there doodles on the papers?
Would I do this activity again?
Oh Captain! My Captain!
By: Walt Whitman

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 all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
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,
For you bouquets and ribboned 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,
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 anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Questions to Oh Captain! My Captain!

1. Write a paragraph that tells who “the captain” is an extended metaphor for as well as what “the trip” is an extended metaphor for. Include in the paragraph how you can infer that from the poem or what you know about when it was written.
2. Underline the phrase that is repeated in all three stanzas.
3. Write out seven pairs of end rhymes found within the poem. Ex: sun; sun
Questions to Oh Captain! My Captain! (Enrichment Activity)

1. Write a paragraph that tells who “the captain” is an extended metaphor for as well as what “the trip” is an extended metaphor for. Include in the paragraph how you can infer that from the poem or what you know about when it was written. Also consider what is really meant by “the ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won” and “the vessel grim and daring”? What is “the vessel” an extended metaphor of? Is the captain really Walt Whitman’s father? They why do you think he called him his father in the poem?

2. Underline the phrase that is repeated in all three stanzas as well as AT LEAST two other repeated words or phrases in the poem that do NOT need to be in all three stanzas.

3. Write out seven pairs of end rhymes found within the poem as well as at least one internal rhyme. Ex: fun; sun