

Diction (13)

NAME: _____
DATE: ____/____/____
WEEK: ____ : PERIOD: #____

Consider:

Wind **rocks** the car.
We sit parked by the river,
silence between our teeth.
Birds scatter across islands
of broken ice . . .

— Adrienne Rich, "Like This Together, for A.H.C."

Discuss:

1. What are the feelings produced by the word *rocks*? Are the feelings gentle, violent, or both?
2. How would the meaning change if we changed the first line to *Wind shakes the car*?

Apply:

3. List with the class different meanings for the verb *rock*. How many of these meanings would make sense in this poem? Remember that the poet often strives to capture complexity rather than a single view or meaning.

Diction (14)

NAME: _____
DATE: / /
WEEK: : PERIOD: #

Consider:

Close by the fire sat an old man whose countenance was **furrowed** with distress.

— James Boswell, *Boswell's London Journal*

Discuss:

1. What does the word *furrowed* connote about the man's distress?
2. How would the impact of the sentence be changed if *furrowed* were changed to *lined*?

Apply:

3. Write a sentence using a verb to describe a facial expression. Imply through your verb choice that the expression is intense. Use Boswell's sentence as a model. Share your sentence with a partner.

Diction (15)

NAME: _____
DATE: ____/____/____
WEEK: : _____ PERIOD: # _____

Consider:

Her face was white and sharp and slightly gleaming in the candlelight, like **bone**. No hint of pink. And the hair. So fine, so pale, so much, crimped by its plaiting into springy zigzag tresses, **clouding** neck and shoulders, shining metallic in the candlelight, catching a hint, there it was, of green again, from the reflection of a large glazed cache-pot containing a vigorous sword-leafed fern.

— A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance*

Discuss:

1. When the author describes a face "like *bone*," what feelings are suggested?
2. How can hair be "*clouding* neck and shoulders"? What picture does this word create for the reader?

Apply:

3. Substitute another noun for *bone* in sentence one. Your substitution should change the meaning and feeling of the sentence. Share your sentence with the class and explain how your noun changes the sentence's connotation and impact.

Diction (16)

NAME: _____
DATE: / /
WEEK: : PERIOD: #

Consider:

"Ahhh," the crowd went, "Ahhh," as at the most beautiful of fireworks, for the sky was alive now, one instant a **pond** and at the next a **womb** of new turns: "Ahhh," went the crowd, "Ahhh!"

— Norman Mailer, "Of a Fire on the Moon"

Discuss:

1. This quote is from a description of the Apollo-Saturn launching. The Saturn was a huge rocket that launched the Apollo space capsule, a three-man ship headed for the moon. Why is the sky described as a *pond* then a *womb*? Contrast the two words. What happens that changes the sky from a *pond* to a *womb*?
2. What does Mailer's use of the word *womb* tell the reader about his attitude toward the launch?

Apply:

3. Think of a concert you have attended. Write one sentence which expresses a transformation of the concert stage. Using Mailer's description as a model, call the stage first a _____ then a _____. Do not explain the transformation or your attitude toward it. Instead, let your diction alone communicate both the transformation and your attitude. Share your sentence with a partner.