

Name: _____ Date: _____

Compare and Contrast Within a Genre (Poetry)

When you **compare and contrast** stories within the same genre, you are able to analyze the choices an author makes. When you look at two poems or stories on the same topic, you'll discover there are many ways an author can get his or her point across.

In this activity you'll compare and contrast two poems that share a similar topic. You'll look at what they have in common and how they differ. You'll analyze the poems and the poets' choices. Finally, you'll write your own poem on the same topic as the two you'll read below.

Directions:

1. Read "Chicago Poet" by Carl Sandburg.
2. Answer the questions in Part 1.
3. Read "My Shadow" by Robert Louis Stevenson.
4. Answer the questions in Part 2.
5. Compare and contrast the poems in Part 3.
6. Write your own poem on the same topic in Part 4.

Chicago Poet

by Carl Sandburg

I saluted a nobody.
I saw him in a looking-glass.
He smiled—so did I.
He crumpled the skin on his forehead,
frowning—so did I.
Everything I did he did.
I said "Hello, I know you."
And I was a liar to say so.

Ah, this looking-glass man!
Liar, fool, dreamer, play-actor,
Soldier, dusty drinker of dust—
Ah! he will go with me
Down the dark stairway
When nobody else is looking,
When everybody else is gone.

He locks his elbow in mine,
I lose all—but not him.

From the Public Domain: Chicago Poems by Carl Sandburg 1914

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Part 1

1. What are some of the poetic devices Carl Sandburg uses in this poem? (Examples: simile, rhyme scheme, rhythm, etc.)
2. What is this poem about?
3. Why do you think Carl Sandburg wrote "Chicago Poet"?

My Shadow

By Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nurse as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

From the Public Domain: A Child's Garden of Verses by Robert Louis Stevenson 1905

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Part 2

1. What are some of the poetic devices Robert Louis Stevenson uses in this poem? (Examples: simile, rhyme scheme, rhythm, etc.)
2. What is this poem about?
3. Why do you think Robert Louis Stevenson wrote "My Shadow"?

Part 3

1. How are "Chicago Poet" and "My Shadow" alike?
2. How are "Chicago Poet" and "My Shadow" different?
3. How do the structure and elements of "Chicago Poet" compare to the structure and elements of "My Shadow"?

Part 4

You're going to write a poem to go along with "Chicago Poet" and "My Shadow." Your poem can take any form you'd like: free verse, rhyming, lyrical, haiku. You should keep to the same ideas found in both poems, but put your own spin on the topic.