Read with a Purpose Read these poems to discover new ideas about words.

A word is dead

by **Emily Dickinson**

A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.

I say it just
Begins to live
That day. Ⓐ

Ⓐ **Read and Discuss** What point is the poet making?

The Word

by **Manuel Ulacia**
translated **by Jennifer Clement**

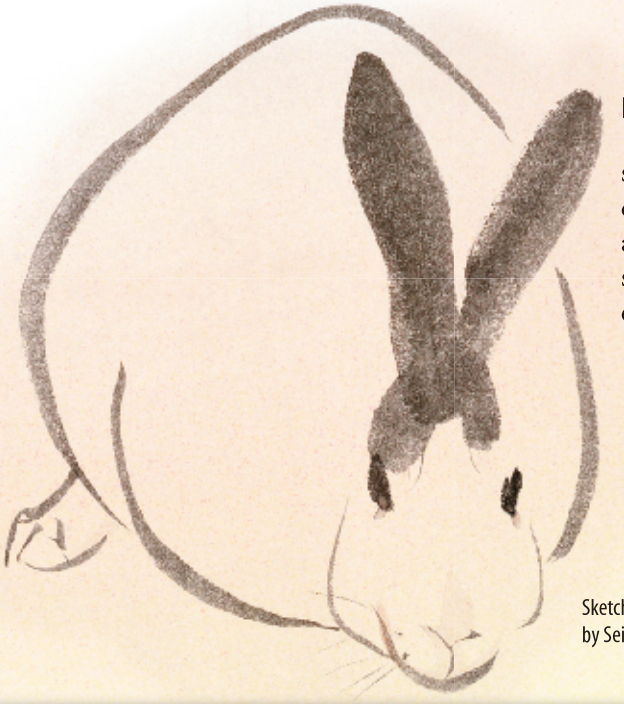
comes out from the pen
like a rabbit from a magician's hat
astronaut who knows itself alone
and weightless suspended on a line
in space Ⓑ

Ⓑ **Literary Focus** **Figures of Speech**
To what does the speaker compare words? What do these comparisons tell us about words?

La palabra

por **Manuel Ulacia**

sale de la pluma
como el conejo del sombrero de un mago
astronauta que se sabe sola y sin peso
suspendida en una línea
en el espacio



Sketch of a Rabbit (c. 1900–1925) by Seiho Takeuchi.

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Students may need help identifying figures of speech and understanding that they are not meant to be taken literally. Identify the figurative language in each poem.

- Dickinson uses personification in writing that a word is dead and that a word begins to live. This describes a nonhuman thing (a word) as if it is human (and thus mortal). Point out to students that Dickinson is writing figuratively and that she does not literally mean that words live and die like plants, humans, or other animals.
- Ulacia uses a simile in writing that a word is "like a rabbit from a magician's hat." He also uses a metaphor by calling a word an astronaut. Point out to students that this language is meant to give readers a mental image and better explain Ulacia's point about words.

Direct Teach

Think About/Talk About

Read with a Purpose Have students read the Read with a Purpose statement. Ask what they expect poets to say about words.

Comprehension

Ⓐ Read and Discuss

Possible response: *The speaker is saying that some people think a word loses its full meaning and originality once it is spoken. She then offers the contrasting point of view that a word takes on a life of its own once it is said.*

Analysis

Ⓑ Literary Focus

Possible response: *The speaker compares words to a rabbit from a magician's hat and an astronaut being alone in space. This tells us that words are magical, sudden, and powerful. They are also alone until connected to other words.*

? Extend the Discussion

Analyzing Figures of Speech What quality does the poet illustrate about a word by comparing it to a rabbit pulled from a magician's hat? Explain.

Possible response: *This comparison illustrates the way that words can surprise and delight readers. However, the poet, like the magician, must work hard to make this "magic" appear effortless.*

Review

Independent Practice

Reading Focus

Answers:

1. *Words are magical yet powerful.*
2. *Final impressions may include the following: "A word is dead" describes the power words have once spoken. "The Word" describes the surprise found in the formation of words.*

Literary Focus

Possible Responses:

3. *A "dead" word is spent and used up, with no power or vitality.*
4. *Like an astronaut who is "alone" and "weightless," a word is solitary and free until it is joined by others.*
5. *I agree with Dickinson. Words live on after they are spoken.*
6. *"Tremble" seems alive to me; it conveys a sense of movement.*
7. *Dickinson would likely disagree because she feels that words are powerful. I agree with her.*
8. *People remember the words that others speak.*
9. *The similes make me visualize a word that has come from nowhere and is completely alone.*
10. *The rabbit image appeals to the senses of sight and touch. The astronaut image also appeals to sight and touch.*

Applying Your Skills

A word is dead / The Word/La palabra

Respond and Think Critically

Reading Focus

Read with a Purpose

1. What ideas do these poems convey about words?

Reading Skills: Re-reading

2. Review the charts you completed as you read the poems. Now, add a row to each chart with your final impression of each poem.

	A word is dead	The Word
1st Reading	This is a simple poem about words.	
2nd Reading		
3rd Reading		
My Final Impression		

Literary Focus

Literary Analysis

3. **Interpret** In Dickinson's poem, what do people mean when they say "A word is dead/ When it is said"?
4. **Interpret** In "The Word," how can a word be like an astronaut in space?
5. **Make Judgments** Do you agree with either Dickinson's or Ulacia's point of view about words? Explain.
6. **Extend** Name a word that seems "alive" to you. Why does it seem so?
7. **Extend** A children's rhyme goes, "Sticks and stones / Can break my bones / But names can never hurt me." How would Dickinson feel about that saying? How do you feel about it?

Literary Skills: Figures of Speech

8. **Interpret** Dickinson uses personification when she says that a word "begins to live." How do you think a word might begin to "live" after it is spoken?
9. **Interpret** What do the images in lines 2–4 of Ulacia's poem make you see?

Literary Skills Review: Imagery

10. **Analyze Imagery** appeals to the senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. In Ulacia's poem, to which sense does the image of a rabbit coming from a magician's hat appeal? To which senses does the image of an astronaut "weightless suspended on a line in space" appeal?

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Use It in Your Writing Look back at the figures of speech you jotted down in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*. Now, write a paragraph expressing your views on words. Like these poets, use figures of speech to get your ideas across. You might start the same way that Dickinson did: "A word is. . . ."

What Do You Think Now? How have these poems changed your thoughts about the importance of words? Explain.

SKILLS FOCUS pp. 700–701

Literary Skills
- Analyze figures of speech.
- Analyze imagery.

Reading Skills
- Re-read to understand and analyze a poem.

Writing Skills
- Write to express.
- Write a poem.
- Describe a person.

Vocabulary Skills
- Understand denotation and connotation.

Listening and Speaking Skills
- Organize and present oral interpretations: poems.

Writing Focus

Alternative Prompt for Writers Gaining Proficiency Students may struggle to write about an intangible subject. Instead, invite them to write a paragraph expressing their views on an activity they enjoy.

What Do You Think Now?

Have students put the poems into their own words. Then, have them react to the ideas that the poems contain.

Wrap Up

Poetry and Feeling

Vocabulary Development

Connotations

Connotations are the meanings, associations, or emotions suggested by a word. A word's connotations can be different from its **denotation,** or dictionary definition. For example, imagine that "Birdfoot's Grampa" had instead been titled "Birdfoot's Grandfather." The title's connotations would have been very different, even though the basic meanings of *grandfather* and *grampa* are the same.

Often, a word's connotations affect shades of meaning or intensity. For example, in line 44 of "My Mother Pieced Quilts," Acosta uses the word *sobbing,* rather than *crying*. While *sobbing* basically means the same as *crying,* it is associated with greater intensity. Here are more examples.

Word	Words with Stronger Connotations	
talk	chatter	slander
thin	skinny	skeletal

Your Turn

For each word in the left-hand column below, write a word or two in the right-hand column that has a similar denotation but different connotations.

1. afraid
2. happy
3. relaxed
4. careful
5. house

CHOICES

As you respond to the Choices, use these **Academic Vocabulary** words as appropriate: intent, evoke, associations, interpretation.

REVIEW

Create a Multimedia Presentation

TechFocus Ulacia and Dickinson offered clever interpretations of words; now write your own poem about thoughts. Use figures of speech to portray what thoughts do and how they are created and grow. Use presentation software to present your poem to the class, and be sure to incorporate sound files and images.

CONNECT

Write a Personal Essay

Timed Writing Some poems you have just read celebrate the wisdom and nurturing offered by older relatives. Write a personal essay about your relationship with an older relative or friend. What gift has this person passed along? Did he or she give you something tangible, tell you a story, give you advice, or teach you by example?

EXTEND

Analyze a Translation of a Poem

"Sweater" and "The Word" were originally written in Spanish and then translated into English. If you know Spanish, read each poem in both languages. How are the original Spanish versions different from the English translations? Has anything been lost in translation? Explain.

Learn It Online

Find action-packed vocabulary lessons online:

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Independent Practice

Choices

Review: Homework
Create a Multimedia Presentation

- The poem should clearly convey the student's interpretations of thoughts.
- The presentation should effectively use technology.

Connect: Timed Writing 40–50 minutes

- The essay should focus on the chosen person and the gift he or she gave to the writer.
- Students should include appropriate supporting details.

Extend: Homework
Analyze a Translation of a Poem

- Students should compare and contrast the poems.
- Students should explain what was lost in the translation.

Assess

Collection 7 Resources, Selection Test, p. 14

ThinkCentral Online Assessment, Selection Test

Teacher One Stop™, editable Selection Test

Reteach

ThinkCentral Online Remediation

Vocabulary Development

Your Turn

Possible responses:

1. *terrified, scared*
2. *gleeful, overjoyed*
3. *calm, placid*
4. *cautious, concerned*
5. *home, dwelling*

WordSharp: An Interactive Vocabulary Tutor

Learn It Online

WordSharp: An Interactive Vocabulary Tutor provides additional support for vocabulary development. Multimedia tutorials show students how to apply vocabulary skills to unfamiliar words—and how to make those words their own. Preview at **go.hrw.com**.

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