



THE MERANTI COLLECTIVE

THE SLOW VIOLENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE IN
WORLD POETRY

CONTENT

OBJECTIVES, CONTEXT & ASSUMPTIONS

STRUCTURE & RATIONALE

MAIN PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES:
CONNECTIONS WITH CRITICAL THEORIES & 2019 MOE SYLLABUS





SECTION ONE:

OBJECTIVES, CONTEXT
& ASSUMPTIONS

OBJECTIVES

This unit, “Ecological Justice in World Poetry”, capitalises on Literature’s capacity to deepen the environmental consciousness of our youth as one of, if not the most pressing issue of their time.

This package aims to:

1. Highlight the concept of climate change as slow violence: a set of unfolding crises that is difficult to grasp because it transpires over a timescale beyond the individual human lifespan.
2. Sensitise students to the interconnectedness of climate change and how it breaks down boundaries between the natural / physical, animal and human worlds.
3. Underscore the global nature of climate change by considering the systemic issues of climate change, global equity and social justice.

In cultivating Empathetic and Global Thinkers sensitive to Literature’s ethical dimension, this package aims to foster a more nuanced understanding of climate change that considers how individuals may enact unseen violence upon human and animal others in the world alongside environmental destruction.

Students will conclude this unit with an understanding of the connections between environmental and social stewardship and a renewed sense of responsibility as local and global citizens.





CONTEXT

This poetry package is designed for a class of 20-40 mid-to-high progress Secondary Three Express students in a mainstream government school offering Pure or Elective Literature.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS & IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS

The lessons blend Small Group and Whole Class Teaching strategies to appeal to the students' visual and kinaesthetic learning styles.



SECTION TWO:

STRUCTURE & RATIONALE

STRUCTURE

The unit is organised into seven double-period lessons of 70 minutes as follows:

No.	Lesson Title	Poem Title	Origin	Skills Focus
1	Climate Change: Introduction to Eco-poetry	Risa Denenberg, "Ice Would Suffice"	American	Generating text-to-self readings of eco-poetry
2	Climate Change: Visualising Eco-poetry	Ann Ang, "Inuka"	Singapore	Identifying key concerns and developments in an eco-poem
3	Understanding Nature: Interconnectedness	Ow Yeong Wai Kit, "Elegy for a Silent Stalker" and Ann Ang, "Koel Calls"	Singapore	Metaphor and Word Choice / Representation and Perspective
4	Environmental Justice: India's Bhopal Disaster	Jayanta Mahapatra, "24"	India	Symbolism / Representation and Perspective
5	Environmental Justice: Niger Delta Negligence	Ogaga Ifowodo, "XLV"	Nigeria	Juxtaposition / Representation and Perspective
6	Consolidation 1: Maya Angelou's "On the Pulse of Morning"	Maya Angelou, "On the Pulse of Morning"	African-American	Constructing critical responses to Eco-poetry
7	Consolidation 2: Maya Angelou's "On the Pulse of Morning"	Maya Angelou, "On the Pulse of Morning"	African-American	

RATIONALE

The first two lessons sensitise students to slow violence: how the natural world's timescales stretch beyond their own, as a means of understanding how our actions have lasting, albeit unintended consequences.

The third lesson expands student perspectives by focusing on the oft-uncritically adopted politics of representing the non-human animal and how this affects our relationship to the "environment".

The fourth and fifth lessons unearth the uneven distribution of environmental impact through exploring the poetry of environmental disasters situated in the global south.

Taken together, students understand how environmental concerns require us, as global citizens, to reframe our understanding of planetary time, the non-human animal and those considered less-than-human.

Lastly, the sixth and seventh lessons use Maya Angelou's "On the Pulse of Morning" as a model of environmentally conscious poetry that coheres the three earlier unit themes in a single work of poetry.

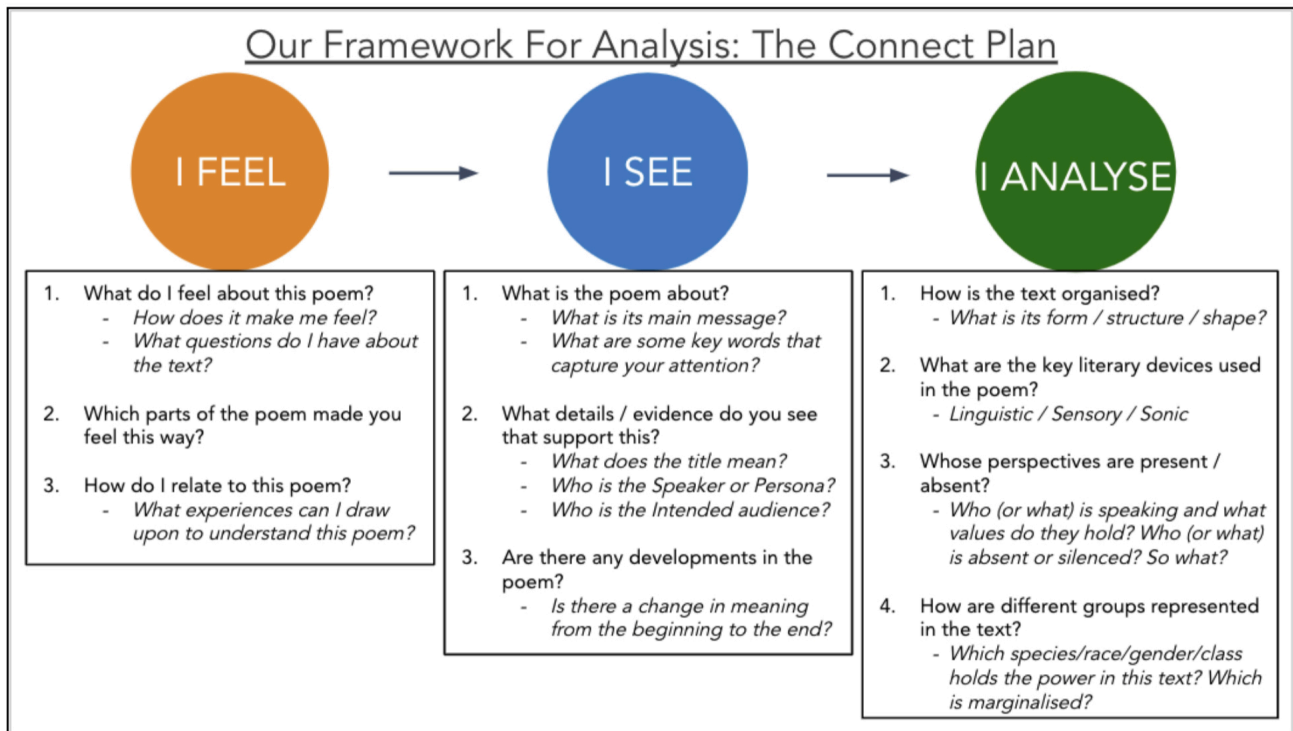




SECTION THREE

MAIN PEDAGOGICAL
APPROACHES

PEDAGOGY & CONNECTIONS



This unit progressively introduces *The Connect Plan* framework for analysing poetry, which is informed by critical approaches to Literature and the Four Principles of Literature Teaching and Learning (4PTL).

The first lesson focuses on “I-FEEL”, which primarily adopts the questioning and responding skills emphasised in **Reader Response Criticism**. Tapping on students’ existing schema on climate change, the first lesson encourages **(1) personal engagement** and **(2) meaningful connections** through a *Line to Image* activity, where students search for online images that represent their engagement with the text.

The second lesson deepens this initial response to consider what “I-SEE”. Students begin the **(3) critical appreciation** of the poem by understanding a poem’s plot development through a *Storyboarding* activity.

The third lesson guides students through “I-ANALYSE”, introducing the skills of evaluating perspective and representation. *Pictures of You* examines the interconnectedness of man and nature and uses a **Poststructuralist** approach to deconstruct the human/non-human binary. The second activity, *Figuratively Speaking*, borrows from the **New Critical** emphasis on sensitivity to text and equips students with the skills of identifying and analysing the effect of figurative language and diction in the poem.

The fourth lesson pressures students' ability to analyse references from geographies far removed from their own. An *opinionnaire* challenges students to reconsider their own roles in environmental degradation. As part of "I-ANALYSE", students deepen their understanding of symbolism through the use of a *Photo Prompt* and strengthen their ability to move from denotation to connotation even with unfamiliar references.

The fifth lesson focuses on juxtaposition. This skill corresponds with the students' exploration of the theme of social inequality in the effects of environmental degradation. Students use the poem's material to *debate* and refute the teacher's assertions about the nature of oil extraction in the Niger delta. The fourth and fifth lessons bring an **ethical** dimension into studying Literature.

The sixth and seventh lessons provide students with the crucial opportunity to practice *The Connect Plan* in its entirety through the use of Maya Angelou's long form poetry. Through the use of *literature circles*, students are able to practice the skills of exploratory talk and independent inquiry.

The unit's range of assessments enable teachers to engage in **(4) reflective practice**, by capturing student learning through a variety of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies. These include:

- literature journal free response task to an evocative line or phrase (lesson 1)
- single PEEL paragraph (lesson 3)
- single PEEL paragraph and a thematic journal entry (lesson 4)
- 2 guided PEEL paragraphs (lesson 5)
- individual writing task of 2 PEEL paragraphs on one poem in the unit and an individual creative task (lessons 6 and 7)