**Shakespeare: Sonnet 130: Figurative Language in Poetry**

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**I. Prediscussion**

Discuss as a class:

1. How do you feel about poetry in your first language? Why do you feel this way?
2. Do you think you could read and understand a poem in English? Why or why not?
3. What are the benefits of reading or writing poetry? What are the benefits of using poetry to practice English?

**II. Pronunciation**

You will be assigned one or two lines to read in the poem. Circle the line(s). As you listen, mark the thought groups in your line(s). After you have listened, the class will read the poem out loud. Practice using intonation that expresses the emotion of the poem.

SONNET 130

1. My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
2. Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
3. If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
4. If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
5. I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
6. But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
7. And in some perfumes is there more delight
8. Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
9. I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
10. That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
11. I grant I never saw a goddess go;
12. My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
13. And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
14. As any she belied with false compare.

**III. Reading**

Take notes on the two terms below.

*Literal Language*

*Figurative Language*

Now, read the poem. Fill in the chart on the next page with Shakespeare’s description of each of his lovers’ features. In the second column, paraphrase the description making use of the figurative language. In the third column determine if the comparison is positive or negative. Review your chart with the class.

SONNET 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips' red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she belied with false compare.

dun= a dull, gray color

roses damask’d= soft pink or red roses

reeks= smells strongly and unpleasantly

belie= fail to give a true impression of

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Physical Characteristic | Shakespeare’s Description | Your Paraphrase | Positive or negative description? |
| Eyes | My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun | Her eyes don’t compare to the sun/The sun is brighter than her eyes. | Negative |
| Lips |  |  |  |
| Breasts |  |  |  |
| Hair |  |  |  |
| Cheeks |  |  |  |
| Smell |  |  |  |
| Voice |  |  |  |
| Way she walks |  |  |  |

**IV. Discussion**

1. How do the last two lines of the poem change the meaning of the poem as a whole?

2. How would you feel if someone wrote a poem like this about you?

3. What kind of poem would you write for someone you love?

4. Describe your experience reading a poem in English. How does it compare to what you expected the experience to be like?

5. Can you think of any additional benefits to reading English poems now that you have read one yourself?

**V. Final Reading**

Go back to the poem and read it one last time as a class. Use your knowledge of the poem’s content and the intonation patterns that you already practiced to read the poem with emotion and intention.

For homework, record yourself reading the whole poem on your phone. Send the audio file to your teacher. You will receive feedback on your pronunciation.