

Art and Literature Integration:

Shakespeare Sonnet Comparison of “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” and “My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing like the Sun” and Gustav Klimt’s *The Kiss* and Grant Wood’s *American Gothic*

Step 1: Begin with a T-chart. Students will discuss in pairs or groups the pros and cons of a sunny summer day. Example pros may be “no school,” “swimming,” “playing with friends.” Example cons may be “sunburns,” “sweaty,” “hot.” Every time I have taught this, the pros outweigh the cons. Overall, the students agree that a sunny summer day is good thing!

Step 2: Tell students they will be reading a Shakespeare sonnet called [“Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day.”](#) (If you aren’t ready, discuss what a sonnet is and its components.) Read together as a class while annotating and discussing what the different lines mean. I point out if it hasn’t come up already in discussion that the speaker is saying his mistress is MUCH better than a summer’s day. This is quite a compliment--given all the wonderful ideas students came up with in Step 1 about the pros of a sunny summer day.

Step 3: Tell them they will be reading another Shakespeare sonnet: [“My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing like the Sun.”](#) I ask students to read this by themselves. I love the reaction in the room. They are shocked. I ask if it is a love poem. There is a mixed reaction or a resounding “NO!” I then have them break down the lines one-by-one, annotating as we go along and discussing their meaning--like we did for the first sonnet. Then, I ask them if this was meant to be a love poem, the reaction may still be mixed, but overall the students see the speaker’s intent to show his true love for the mistress.

Step 4: Show Klimt’s *The Kiss*. Think-Write-Pair-Share--What sticks out to you? What do you notice first? Then, as a class, discuss. Be sure to have them notice the gold (a common element in Klimt’s paintings), the circles on the woman’s clothing and the squares on the man’s clothing.

Step 5: Show Wood’s *American Gothic*. Think-Write-Pair-Share--What sticks out to you? What do you notice first? Then, as a class, discuss.

Step 6: Think-Write-Pair-Share--Which painting goes with which and why? Be sure that they discuss how Wood’s is more realistic like a photograph like the second sonnet is more realistic about his mistress’ attributes. Also, be sure to discuss how the Klimt painting is not realistic and how the gold makes the two shine like a perfect summer’s day (without the sunburns, sweat, or overheating).

Step 7: Think-Write-Pair-Share--Which poem would you prefer to receive?