

Death of a Naturalist

Seamus Heaney

Learning Outcome – You will be able to understand the themes and ideas in the poem

Spot the Mistake

Death of a Naturalist

By Seamus Heaney



So what is a naturalist?

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Le_2Np1T7gl
- The title of the poem is quite mysterious.
What questions does the title make you ask?
- Write your question on a post it note and stick it to the white board for later in the lesson.

First read

- Who is the narrator of the poem?
- What happens in the poem?
- What is the outcome of the events in the poem?

Do you think this is a good illustration of events and feelings in the poem?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvdp1IG5uyw>

Yes because

No because

How do you think these frogs would be best illustrated?

- With a partner, pick out quotes from the poem which describe the frogs
- Draw your own frog illustration.
- Stick your drawing to the white board – class to vote on which is best illustration and why. Make reference to the poem.

Can you answer your questions now?

- Look at the post it notes and see if the questions can now be answered.

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Language and Subject Specific Vocabulary

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LO – you will be able to write about the writer's use of language, using literary terms.

Which of these clips best links to the poem 'Death of a Naturalist' and why?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58Pspqx0XGs&oref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D58Pspqx0XGs&has_verified=1

May need to search for black op 3 reveal trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaLsQsCK0Jo>

How does Heaney present the narrator's experience at the dam in stanza 2?

1. Pick out 2 examples of how Heaney presents the atmosphere on that day.
2. Pick out 3 examples of how Heaney describes the frogs and their actions.
3. Pick out 2 examples of how events affect the narrator.

What is an extended metaphor?

- Extended Metaphor Definition
- The term extended metaphor refers to a comparison between two unlike things that continues throughout a series of sentences in a paragraph or lines in a poem. It is often comprised of more than one sentence and sometimes consists of a full paragraph.

Example

“It never takes longer than a few minutes, when they get together, for everyone to revert to the state of nature, like a party marooned by a shipwreck. That’s what a family is. Also the storm at sea, the ship, and the unknown shore. And the hats and the whiskey stills that you make out of bamboo and coconuts. And the fire that you light to keep away the beasts.”

(Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policeman’s Union*. Harper, 2007)

In the extract quoted above, the writer has compared “family” with a “shipwreck”.

What is the extended metaphor in this poem?

Then one hot day when fields were rank
With cowdung in the grass and angry frogs
Invaded the flax-dam; I ducked through hedges
To a coarse croaking that I had not heard
Before. The air was thick with a bass chorus.
Right down the dam gross-bellied frogs were cocked
On sods; their loose necks pulsed like sails. Some hopped:
The slap and plop were obscene threats. Some sat
Poised like mud grenades, their blunt heads farting.
I sickened, turned, and ran. The great slime kings
Were gathered there for vengeance and I knew
That if I dipped my hand the spawn would clutch it

Writing about language

How does Heaney present the narrator's experience at the dam?

Heaney describes the narrator's experience of events at the dam as if it were a battle. He says that the 'angry' frogs had 'invaded' the dam. By using the word 'invaded'...

Are these 2 creatures presented in a similar or different way in the poems you have read?

