



Lesson: Two Poets, One Season

(To follow Amplify CKLA 4, Unit 3, Lesson 10)

At a Glance

Students will read and compare two poems, written by two different poets, about New Hampshire during the spring. In addition to comparing the perspectives of the speakers in each poem, students will look for examples of alliteration.

Primary Focus Objectives

- Students will identify and create examples of alliteration.
- Students will compare the perspectives of speakers in the poems.
- Students will write their own poems about spring in New Hampshire.

Formative Assessment

- Complete Mason's Challenge
- Write a poem that uses alliteration
- Add to vocabulary chart

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Materials

- Focus Text Facts: Amy Lowell and Claude McKay
- Focus Text: "Monadnock in Early Spring" and "Spring in New Hampshire"
- Vocabulary Card: Alliteration

Time Needed

Two 30-40 minute class sessions

Learning Activity

1. **Meet the poets.** Project or provide copies of "Focus Text Facts: Amy Lowell and Claude McKay" and read together as a class. (5 minutes)
2. **Listen to and read the poems.** Provide students with the one-page sheet that includes both poems. Read the poems aloud to students as they read along and then give them time to read them again independently. (10 minutes)
3. **Answer Mason's Challenge.** Direct students to read Mason's Challenge on "Focus Text Facts: Amy Lowell and Claude McKay" and write their responses on the poem page. Discuss responses as a whole group. (10 minutes)
4. **Define "alliteration."** Read the recommended lines in each poem aloud and ask students what they notice about the sounds. Project the Vocabulary Card and review the definition of alliteration. Look for more examples in the poems. (15 minutes)
5. **Write a poem.** Ask students to think about something they do or see in spring. Challenge them to write a brief poem about this springtime experience using alliteration. (20 minutes)



Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

Connection to Amplify

This lesson is adapted from Moose on the Loose, [Lesson 15.4, "New Hampshire Through the Writer's Eye."](#) It reinforces the learning objectives from Amplify CKLA 4, Unit 3, Lesson 10: "Words as Free as Confetti." Students will apply their understanding of the literary device alliteration to poems written about New Hampshire in the spring while also learning about the social studies topic of tourism and its role in New Hampshire history.

Meet the poets

The one-page guide Focus Text Facts provides basic biographical information about Amy Lowell and Claude McKay in addition to context about tourism in New Hampshire. If you have a timeline in the classroom, it may be helpful for students to have a visual reference for when the poets lived and experienced New Hampshire in spring.

Listen to and read the poems

Students will benefit from hearing these poems multiple times, particularly because of the lesson's focus on alliteration. Consider having students read them aloud to each other in addition to listening to the educator read them. Pause to consider any challenging words in the poems and add them to the vocabulary charts.

Answer Mason's Challenge

The speaker in "Monadnock in Spring" seems to be outside, looking closely at the mountain described in the poem. The speaker sees it "cloud-topped and dominating all the little lesser hills" around it. The speaker observes how the mountain in April, covered with trees about to bloom, is still stuck in winter, with snowy crevices. The speaker in "Spring in New Hampshire" seems to be indoors, seeing all the changes happening outside; it's all too beautiful, day or night, to stay inside "wasting the golden hours indoors/washing windows and scrubbing floors."

This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson across two class sessions.

Define "alliteration"

Alliteration is the occurrence of the same letter or sound in closely used words in a text. It creates rhythm or melody in a poem and forces the reader to focus on a particular group of words. Look at Amy Lowell's poem and ask students to look at the line "Of stern, steep rock and startled by the call" and share what they hear when they read it aloud. Explain that the repetition of the same sound in multiple words that are used closely together is called alliteration. Look at Claude McKay's poem and identify examples of alliteration. Talk about how the sound impacts the way you understand what the poem says or see what the speaker is describing.



"Monadnock in Spring" has several instances of alliteration:

- "little lesser hills"
- "bright with April's buoyancy"
- "some shaded wall of stern, steep rock and startled by the call"
- "cast a cloud of crimson"

"Spring in New Hampshire" also has a few instances of alliteration:

- "silver-speckled sky"
- "While happy winds"
- "wasting the golden hours indoors / Washing windows"
- "faintly sweet the first May flowers"
- "fields are fresh"

Consider talking with students about which sounds the poets choose to repeat. They may notice that "s" and "f" and "w" are used multiple times. What do students think about those sounds compared to the hard "c" and plosive "b"?

Write a poem

Before students begin, remind them about their answer to Mason's Challenge. How does being outside versus being inside looking out at the blooming of spring impact the tone of the poem? Before they begin writing, ask them to choose a perspective. Will they describe spring while begin surrounded by it all or by looking at it from a distance?



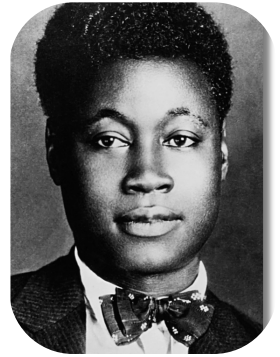
TWO POETS, ONE SEASON: AMY LOWELL AND CLAUDE MCKAY



Amy Lowell in 1916, credit: Houghton Library, Harvard University

Amy Lowell (1874–1925) was part of a wealthy family in Massachusetts. Her family had lived in New England for a long time. She had a summer house in Dublin, New Hampshire, close to a mountain called Mount Monadnock. Even though Amy didn't get the same education as her brothers because she was a girl, she was able to travel and follow her love for art. She became very important in modern poetry and won a big award called the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Claude McKay (1889–1945) Claude McKay was born in Jamaica, where his family were successful farmers. After college, Claude worked in a hotel in Hanover, New Hampshire, for a little while. Then, he moved to New York City where he became a big part of a group of artists and writers called the Harlem Renaissance. He was called the national poet of Jamaica and got a special award called the Order of Jamaica for his great work in writing.

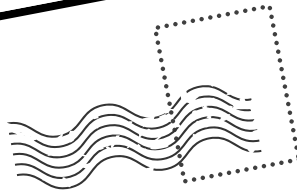


Claude McKay in the 1920s, credit: *New York Times*

POSTCARD

Amy Lowell and Claude McKay lived during the time when New Hampshire became a popular tourist destination. People came from all over the country and the world to experience the landscape in person. Railroads and improved auto roads made it easier for people to visit places like Mt. Washington, Mt. Monadnock, and Franconia Notch.

People stayed in grand hotels or in family camps near New Hampshire's lakes and rivers. Some people turned old farm houses into summer homes. Children began attending a new destination called summer camp!



NEW HAMPSHIRE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

30 PARK STREET

CONCORD, NH 03301



Tourists enjoy a view of Monadnock in this 1890 painting. Credit: New Hampshire Historical Society



The Mount Washington Hotel in the early 1900s. Credit: New Hampshire Historical Society



**MASON'S
CHALLENGE**

After you read the two poems, think about the speaker's perspective. Who is out in nature? Who is indoors, wishing to be out enjoying spring in New Hampshire? How do you know?



Two Poets, One Season

“Monadnock in Early Spring” by Amy Lowell

Cloud-topped and splendid, dominating all
The little lesser hills which compass thee,
Thou standest, bright with April’s buoyancy,
Yet holding Winter in some shaded wall
Of stern, steep rock; and startled by the call
Of Spring, thy trees flush with expectancy
And cast a cloud of crimson, silently,
Above thy snowy crevices where fall
Pale shrivelled oak leaves, while the snow beneath
Melts at their phantom touch. Another year
Is quick with import. Such each year has been.
Unmoved thou watchest all, and all bequeath
Some jewel to thy diadem of power,
Thou pledge of greater majesty unseen.

“Spring in New Hampshire” by Claude McKay

Too green the springing April grass,
Too blue the silver-speckled sky,
For me to linger here, alas,
While happy winds go laughing by,
Wasting the golden hours indoors,
Washing windows and scrubbing floors.

Too wonderful the April night,
Too faintly sweet the first May flowers,
The stars too gloriously bright,
For me to spend the evening hours,
When fields are fresh and streams are leaping,
Wearied, exhausted, dully sleeping.



ALLITERATION

Part of speech: noun

Definition: the repetition of a starting letter or sound in words used closely together in a poem

How to use it: Bright and bold, the banner waved above.