Teacher Lesson Guide
Milwaukee Public Museum Student Poetry Competition, 2015-2016

Theme: “The Ancient World”

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The theme
To celebrate the Milwaukee Public Museum’s new permanent exhibit, *Crossroads of Civilization—Ancient Worlds of the Near East and Mediterranean*, the theme for the Museum’s eighth annual poetry competition is “The Ancient World.”

Past Museum poetry competitions have tackled such topics as archaeology and mummies, but there’s really much more to ancient civilizations. Topics for this year’s competition may include such wonders and treasures of the ancient world as the Great Pyramids of Giza, Hadrian’s Wall, the lighthouse at Alexandria, the Coliseum in Rome, the Pantheon, the Rosetta Stone and the city of Jerusalem. Students may be likewise inspired by such celebrities of antiquity as Cleopatra, King Tutankhamun, Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great, among others.

Other topics may include the Roman Empire, the Olympic Games, the origins of modern democracy in Greece and the eruption of Vesuvius that buried the city of Pompeii in 79 CE. Poems may focus on the many gods of Egypt, Greece and Rome such as Zeus and Apollo, Jupiter, Mars and Osiris, Anubis, Horus and Bastet—the ancient Egyptian cat god—to name just a few.

And ancient technologies like the arch, the aqueduct, chariots and writing materials such as parchment and papyrus may also prove inspiring.

The ancient world is also a great source for fun facts to inspire poems: Did you know that the Egyptians had nearly 2,000 different gods? Or that Alexander the Great never lost a battle and named over 70 cities for himself, and one after his horse? Did you know that the Greek Hoplite warriors got their name from their special shields, the *hoplon*, or that the ancient Romans would sometimes flood the Coliseum and stage miniature naval battles as entertainment?
The Museum’s exhibits of ancient civilizations also extend to the Americas with our pre-Columbian galleries featuring the cultures of southern Mexico and northern Central America circa 2,500 BCE to 1,500 CE. Prominent among these are the Maya, the Aztecs and Olmecs—only a few among dozens of Meso-American cultures known for monumental artistic, architectural and intellectual achievements.

Students are encouraged to visit *Crossroads of Civilization*, located on the third floor of the museum, and the *pre-Columbian gallery* on the third floor mezzanine. They may also search for ideas on-line using the *Crossroads press kit*.

Additionally, the Museum’s curatorial staff participates in the Akhmim Mummy Studies Consortium, an organization focused on the advancement of knowledge of Egyptian mummification. More information can be found at the *Consortium’s website*.

Join us as we continue to ask the indelible question posed in the spirit of great ancient thinkers like Cicero, Plato and Aristotle: What will you find?

**Competition Overview**
The Milwaukee Public Museum’s annual poetry competition provides teachers with a tool to construct an interdisciplinary approach to achieving learning objectives. The creation of an original piece of poetry can be inspired by—and linked to—the Museum’s exhibits, collections and fields of research. Curriculum framed around the competition can support literacy, the writing process, research skills and critical thinking. Collaboration and small group work experience are also supported through this activity.

**Student Objectives:**
1. Students will research a cultural or natural history exhibit or theme that will serve as the basis of inspiration for an original poem.
2. Encourage student creativity, originality, imagery, artistic quality, and sense of poetic expression through a competition format.

**Assessment:**
1. The student can identify and provide contextual background on an exhibit or theme used as the subject, or inspiration, for an original poem.
2. Original piece is written that demonstrates creativity, imagery, artistic quality and a sense of poetic expression.

**Teacher Preparation**
Thoroughly review the Poetry Competition Teacher Lesson Guide, including the submission guidelines, and cover it with your students. Any style of poetry is acceptable. Please note, however, that all poems must focus on the competition theme, and may not exceed 30 lines in length. (See “Submission guidelines,” below.)

**Teachers are strongly encouraged** to review a selection of winning poems from past competitions which may be found at 2014 poems and 2015 poems.
**Vocabulary:**

Alliteration—repetition of initial consonant sounds in a group of successive words.

Ekphrasis—poetry—or other literature—written about works of art such as a painting, sculpture, vase, etc.

End-stopped line—a line of verse which ends with a grammatical break such as a comma, colon, semi-colon or period, for example.

Enjambment—the continuation of a sentence or phrase across a line break, as opposed to an end-stopped line.

Free verse—poetry that does not follow a fixed metrical pattern.

Iambic pentameter—a line of verse that consists of five iambs (an iamb being one unstressed syllable followed by one stressed, such as "before.")

Imagery—the creation of visual images using words in a poem or other literary form.

Line break—the end of a line of poetry. The technique with which a poet decides where to end a line of poetry.

Metaphor—a direct comparison of unlike things without using the words “like” or “as.”

Meter—the regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables that make up a line of poetry.

Onomatopoeia—a word that imitates the sound it represents, such as “pop,” “boom” or “bang,” for example.

Personification—giving human qualities or characteristics to objects.

Repetition—using the same words or phrases in the same poem or stanza of a poem.

Rhyme—a pattern of words that contains similar sounds at the end of the line.

Rhyme scheme—a repeated pattern of rhymed words at the end of the line.

Simile—comparing two dissimilar things using “like” or “as.”

Stanza—a group of poetic lines.

Verse—either a definite number of lines of poetry, or a general term for poetic composition.

**Competition Details**

**Theme:** The Ancient World
Deadline: April 15th, 2016

Who is eligible: The competition is open to all Wisconsin in grades 3-12.

Criteria: Entries will be judged on creativity, originality, imagery, artistic quality, and sense of poetic expression.

Awards: Two winning students will be chosen from each of the following grade categories: 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Winning poems will be published on the Museum’s web-site.

Reading: Winners will be invited to read their poems at the Museum on, Saturday, May 14th, as part of the 2016 Wisconsin Museums Week. A certificate of achievement and additional prizes will be awarded at the reading.

Entering: All submissions must be received by April 15th, 2016. Submissions received after this date will not be considered. Electronic submissions are now welcome. See poetry competition main page to submit students’ work electronically. Please note that we will continue to accept submissions by regular mail to:

MPM Poetry Competition
Richard Hedderman
Education Section
800 W. Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233-1478

Submission guidelines

- Submissions will be accepted from grades 3-12 only.
- All submissions must be word-processed and double-spaced.
- Poems may not exceed 30 lines.
- All submissions must show the student’s name and grade level at the top right corner of the page. The name of the school, the moderating teacher’s name and e-mail address and school phone number must appear at the top right corner of the page.
- Each poem must have a title.
- Poetry must be the original work of the student and may not have been previously published anywhere.
- Please avoid: decorative fonts, illustrations and colored paper which make submissions more difficult to read.
- NOTE: Each poem should focus on the theme of “The Ancient World.” Poems not focusing on this theme will not be considered.
- We are sorry, but we cannot return original entries or comment on submissions.
- Teachers will be notified by e-mail or phone if their students have won.

For more information: contact Richard Hedderman at (414) 278-2718 or hedderman@mpm.edu
Poetry Competition Judges

Richard Hedderman—MPM Poetry Competitions Coordinator/Lead Judge

Richard Hedderman is currently the Education Programs Coordinator at the Milwaukee Public Museum. He graduated from the University of San Francisco with a B.A. in English Literature and Theatre, and earned a M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of New Hampshire where he studied with U.S. Poet Laureate, Charles Simic. He was a three-time Poetry Fellow with the New York State Writers Institute under the direction of John Montague, and his poetry has appeared in several national and international journals. Publications include poems in The Chautauqua Literary Journal, South Dakota Review, Eclipse, Rattle, Cutbank, Verse Wisconsin, Steam Ticket, Front Range Review, Kestrel and Midwest Quarterly Review, and he was a guest poet at the Library of Congress for the Poetry at Noon series. His poem series based on Beowulf appeared in the Welsh language literary journal Skald, and his poetry has been collected in The Anthology of New England Writers and In a Fine Frenzy: Poets Respond to Shakespeare (University of Iowa Press). He is the author of a collection of poetry, The Discovery of Heaven (Parallel Press.)

Al Muchka—Judge

Al Muchka has been on staff in the Milwaukee Public Museum History Section since 1991 and is currently the Associate Curator of American History. He earned a Master of Arts degree in American History/Public History and a Certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is a life-long resident of Milwaukee County, residing in West Allis and serving on the West Allis Public Library Board. Research emphasis focuses on issues of local history and the development of communities and businesses of southeast Wisconsin through 1860 and upper Great Lakes industries from the fur trade to iron mining and shipping and government institutions through the early 20th century. Al has also developed and built a variety of programs and exhibits for small historical societies and civic groups in the Milwaukee area. He is also an instructor in Museum Studies in the combined Milwaukee Public Museum/UW-Milwaukee Museum Studies Program.

Chris Rundblad—Judge

A former English major, Chris holds degrees from the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin. She currently guides visitors as a docent in the MPM Geology hall and helps write the “rhymes” for the museum’s Clue Crew Case Sheets. After years as an English teacher and librarian, she finds that she finally has exactly the qualifications needed for the most important position of all in the language arts: a knowledgeable and enthusiastic appreciator.