

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 7: Lesson 12 Analyze figurative language used in “The Railway Train” by Emily Dickinson

THE RAILWAY TRAIN

I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks,
And then, prodigious, step

Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare

To fit its sides, and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill

And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop-docile and omnipotent-
At its own stable door.

Emily Dickinson

Guided Practice Questions:

1. Reread the first and second stanza. What is the author comparing the train to in this stanza? How do you know?
2. What does the phrase “peer into shanties” indicate about the train’s actions?
3. Reread the third stanza. What imagery and sounds does the author create through the lines, “Complaining all the while/in horrid, hooting stanza;/ Then chase itself down the hill”?
4. What words or phrases in the poem indicate the author is comparing the train to a horse?
5. What words or phrases in the poem support the idea that the train is a more powerful technology than the horse?

Independent Practice: Why does the author compare the train to a horse rather than just describing it more literally?

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