

Strangers on the Horizon

At first they were merely small dots on the horizon. My sister and I noticed them as we were gathering palm leaves for weaving baskets. Perhaps they were large canoes, we thought, cutting through the waves from a nearby island. People often visited our island to trade goods and information.

But as these tiny specks came closer, they grew and grew in size. My sister and I dropped our palm leaves and glanced at each other in disbelief when we realized these were not canoes but much larger vessels. The sailing crafts looked to be made of wood and were as tall as several men standing on each other's shoulders. They seemed to have tree trunks rising from their middles with solid white clouds billowing ahead of them in the wind. When I squinted, I could just make out the shapes of people scurrying about on the top of the vessels.

Without another word, my sister and I took off at a sprint along the sandy path to our village. As we approached the common area, we could see dozens of people milling about, the same looks of shock on their faces we had had minutes before. Word of the strange sailing vessels had obviously spread.

I saw my father, who was one of the village elders, make his way into the chief's house. We followed him and peeked through the entryway at the people gathered there. They were all talking excitedly and gesturing wildly at each other. Suddenly, a young man who had been keeping watch on the ships ran in, shouting. The men on the giant ships were lowering small canoes into the water and paddling straight for the shore!

The chief brought the council to order, and quickly a plan was made. A small group of elders, including the chief, would meet the approaching men on the beach. They would offer gifts of fruit, stone bowls, and baskets to the strangers to show they welcomed them in peace. Our people did not wish to have conflicts with others.

My sister and I tried to attract our father’s attention; we wanted to follow the elders to the beach. But a stern look from him soon destroyed our hopes. There was another way, however. While the gifts were being gathered, we snuck through the palms to a small hill above the beach. As we crouched down behind a bush, we could see one of the strangers’ small canoes ride the surf and scrape along the sand before coming to a stop.

The men were very peculiar indeed—like none we had ever seen before. They were pale and weary-looking and covered from head to toe with an odd sort of clothing. As soon as their boat lodged itself into the shore, they lunged onto the sand with cries of joy and relief. Just how long had they journeyed, we wondered, in those giant ships?

One man actually fell to his knees and kissed the sand as if it were a long-lost brother. This man, who seemed to be the group’s leader, then struggled back to his feet and walked on wobbly legs toward our chief. Both men greeted each other in their own languages, and it was immediately apparent that they would have to use hand gestures to communicate. The one thing we could understand was the stranger’s name seemed to be Columbus.

We gathered from Columbus’s sign language and the ragged appearance of his men that they had come a long way across the ocean. It seemed he was looking for new people to trade with. Columbus was impressed with the gifts our chief then presented to him. He even eyed with admiration the bits of gold our chief wore around his neck. Finally, I could see my father and the other elders breathe a sigh of relief.

But just what did the coming of these strangers mean for our people? Would Columbus trade peacefully with us? Would he want to live on our island? Would more of his people come in towering boats from across the ocean? My sister and I could only wonder.

Henry Ford and the Automobile

Some people think Henry Ford invented the automobile, but that is not the case. The first car was actually built in the late 1600s in Europe. It was powered by steam. In 1804, Oliver Evans built the first steam-powered vehicle in the United States. It had a paddle wheel in back and could travel on land and in water! The car was the first of its kind, but it did not become popular as a mode of transportation.

The first car that ran on coal gas was built in Europe in 1860. Its first trip covered only seven miles and took three hours. It would have been faster to walk! By 1885 a more successful gasoline engine was developed in Germany.

Few Americans owned cars in 1900. Only a few streets had been built for cars in cities. The cars looked more like horseless carriages. Some of them ran on gasoline, while others were powered by electricity or steam. No one thought of these cars as serious forms of transportation, though. They were considered a hobby. They broke down often, and fuel was difficult to obtain. A car was considered something fun and exciting, but not very useful.

Then Horatio Nelson Jackson came along. He wanted to become the first person to drive a car across the United States. Jackson started his journey from San Francisco in 1903. He drove across the plains and prairies of America. There were no roads, no gas stations, and no road maps. He was forced to wear goggles to keep the dust out of his eyes. When Jackson came to a town, people lined the street to see a car go by. His car traveled only about twenty miles an hour. To the people, though, it was an exciting invention. After sixty-three days, Jackson arrived in New York City. People began to see that the car might have a future!

Why then do we usually think of Henry Ford when we think about automobiles? Ford did not invent it, but he did make it popular. That is because he figured out a way to mass-produce it. This made cars affordable for more Americans.

Henry Ford grew up on a Michigan farm. He did not like farm work and was more interested in mechanics. He got his first job in Detroit working with machines. By 1896, Ford had built his own car. Within a few years he started his own company.

Ford and his partners organized the Ford Motor Company in 1903. The new company sold its first car one month later. Ford showed their car at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. People liked the car so much that Ford built a factory in St. Louis and began selling cars there. At that time no more than twelve cars were in that area of the country!

The company designed the Model T in 1908. It cost the American buyer about \$850. Then Ford got his greatest idea. He invented the assembly line. Ford divided the work of building a car into small jobs. Workers would build only one part of the car before it moved down the line. The next person would install the next part. Parts were delivered to the workers on moving belts. In this way, each car was built. The assembly line made it possible to build cars much faster and for less money. By 1916 Ford had lowered the cost to about \$350 for a Model T. Many families could finally afford to buy one.

At first, workers did not like the assembly line. They had to repeat the same task over and over again. They found the work to be boring. To keep the workers happy, Ford more than doubled their pay to five dollars a day. He also reduced their workday to eight hours. Ford shared profits with his workers. He gave them extra money as the company made more money. His ideas caught on, and the standard of living for American families increased.

Two years after introducing the assembly line, the Ford Motor Company had sold 735,000 Model Ts. More than fifteen million Model Ts had been sold by 1927. Ford had become the world's leading producer of automobiles.

As more Americans began to buy cars, suburbs began to grow in size and increase in number. A national highway system developed which allowed people to drive more easily from place to place. The car made it possible for people to travel wherever and whenever they wanted. Although Ford did not invent the automobile, his use of the assembly line to mass-produce cars forever changed America and the rest of the world.

Vocabulary

FOCUS Review the selection vocabulary words from “The Transcontinental Railroad.”

civilization
fatal
groundbreaking ceremony
harsh
haul
ravines
rugged

surveyors
telegram
transcontinental
transverse
trestles
wicker

PRACTICE Read each question. Choose the vocabulary word that answers the question and write it on the line.

1. If a person sent a message by telegraph, would the message be wicker or a telegram? _____
2. If a society of people had agriculture, trade, government, and art, is it a civilization or a groundbreaking ceremony? _____
3. If someone dies in an accident, was it fatal or rugged? _____
4. If a basket is made of thin twigs woven together, is it civilization or wicker? _____
5. If two people study the land in great detail, are they surveyors or trestles? _____
6. If animals move across a stream, do they haul or traverse the water? _____

7. If a mountainside has a sharp, rough surface, is it rugged or transcontinental?

8. If a store has an event marking its construction, is the event a groundbreaking ceremony or a telegram? _____
9. If you see frameworks holding up a railroad, are they surveyors or trestles?

10. If a loud sound is rough or unpleasant, is it harsh or rugged?

11. If you are traveling on a highway crosses the continent, is it traverse or transcontinental? _____
12. If your family goes on a hike in deep narrow valleys, are you traveling in ravines or trestles? _____

APPLY Read each sentence. Answer each question by explaining the underlined term in your own words.

13. The mountain paths are rugged. What does that mean? _____

14. The patio furniture is made of wicker. What does it look like? _____

15. You haul your clothes to the laundry. What are you doing? _____

16. You can traverse the field by foot. What does that mean? _____

A Transcontinental Trip

“Jacob,” said Granny, “Please haul these decorations up to the attic.” She pointed to two bins with labels that said THANKSGIVING, which Jacob lifted carefully and carried upstairs. Granny pointed out where they belonged, between her fall and winter decorations. As Jacob turned around, he accidentally hit a small wicker basket. It looked like a picnic basket with a flat wooden lid on top.

“Granny,” said Jacob, “Is that a picnic basket? Is there anything inside? I have never seen you use it, but you still use most of the things stored up here.”

“Well, this was my grandmother’s wicker basket. My grandparents took it on a transcontinental trip when they were first married, and I have placed all the items relating to that trip inside. It was quite an adventure for them. Would you like to hear the story?” asked Granny. Jacob nodded, so Granny told him to bring the basket downstairs.

Granny went to the shelf in the family room and picked up an old scrapbook and then sat down in her big, comfy chair. Jacob sat the wicker basket at her feet and sat down on the floor beside her. Granny opened the basket and on top were some small, thin papers with faded writing. Before Jacob could ask, Granny said, “These telegrams tell where my grandparents went on their trip. They sent these to their parents to let them know they had arrived at each city. You will notice that there are only a few words on them. They were like text messages that arrived on paper, although they were charged per word.”

Granny continued, “My grandmother’s family lived in New York, and my grandfather’s family lived in California. They were married in New York, but most of my grandfather’s family could not make the trip, so they set off to visit them in California. They wrote to their family when they reached Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with this telegram. It reads: *ARRIVED IN PITTSBURGH STAYING THREE NIGHTS THEN CHICAGO.*”

Granny pulled out the scrapbook and pointed to a picture on the front. It showed a train traversing a large ravine. It was high atop a wooden trestle bridge stretched between two mountain tunnels. She explained, “My grandfather took this picture on the way to Pittsburgh at the beginning of their trip. He was amazed at the high and wide trestles between mountaintops.”

Then Granny opened the scrapbook and showed the smiling photos of her grandparents with handwritten captions. One caption read: *Attended the groundbreaking ceremony of a new shop. Free food!* “It was quite expensive to take such a long trip across the country, so they were happy when they came upon this public ceremony that served sandwiches to all who attended.

“Where did they go next, after Pittsburgh?” asked Jacob. Granny picked up and read the next telegram: *FATAL ACCIDENT CLOSED RAILWAYS CAUSED DELAYED ARRIVAL TO CHICAGO ONTO DENVER TUESDAY.*

“I forgot that they arrived in Chicago, Illinois, two days later than they expected because of a bad accident. My grandparents were not involved in the accident, but it was in all the newspapers and shut down the railroad traffic for a couple of days. They were glad when they finally headed to Denver, Colorado, thinking they would be over halfway to California then.”

Granny turned the page and showed some more photographs in the scrapbook. One of the photos showed the young couple in front of a small lake with tall trees surrounding it. The caption below read: *Enjoying life far from civilization.* Granny explained, “They stayed at a small cabin outside of Denver, far from all the conveniences they were used to in the city. They enjoyed the time to themselves, but they found it hard to sleep without all the city noises they were used to hearing!”

The next pages were filled with photographs while riding on the train. The pictures captured the harsh ruggedness of the land between Colorado and California. The caption below a photograph of a stone-faced mountain read: *Looking at the beautiful, rugged landscape.* Granny explained, “They were surprised at how different the land looked during this part of the trip, so they took many pictures.”

Granny picked up the final telegram in the pile and read: *ARRIVED IN CALIFORNIA WITH FAMILY NOW SEND OUR LOVE.* “They had a lovely visit with grandfather’s family. When they arrived, there were surveyors on the property. They surveyed the land to check property lines and determine the best place to build a new house. Grandfather’s family offered them a place to build a house, if they wanted to stay in California. As you know, they ended up back in New York, but this trip was one they never forgot.”

Classify and Categorize

- FOCUS**
- To **classify** is to identify the similarities that objects, characters, or events have in common with each other, and then group them by their similarities.
 - To **categorize** is to organize the objects, characters, or events into groups, or categories.

PRACTICE On the lines below, items are categorized into personal writing and public writing. Classify the items listed in the box by placing them in the appropriate category.

telegram	letter	book	proclamation
text message	document	news article	journal entry

1. Personal Writing

2. Public Writing

APPLY Classify the character traits listed in the box by placing them into their appropriate categories in the chart below.

jumpy	kind	cruel	hopeless	worried	generous
gloomy	rude	anxious	caring	sorrowful	thoughtless

3. Nice

4. Mean

5. Nervous

6. Sad

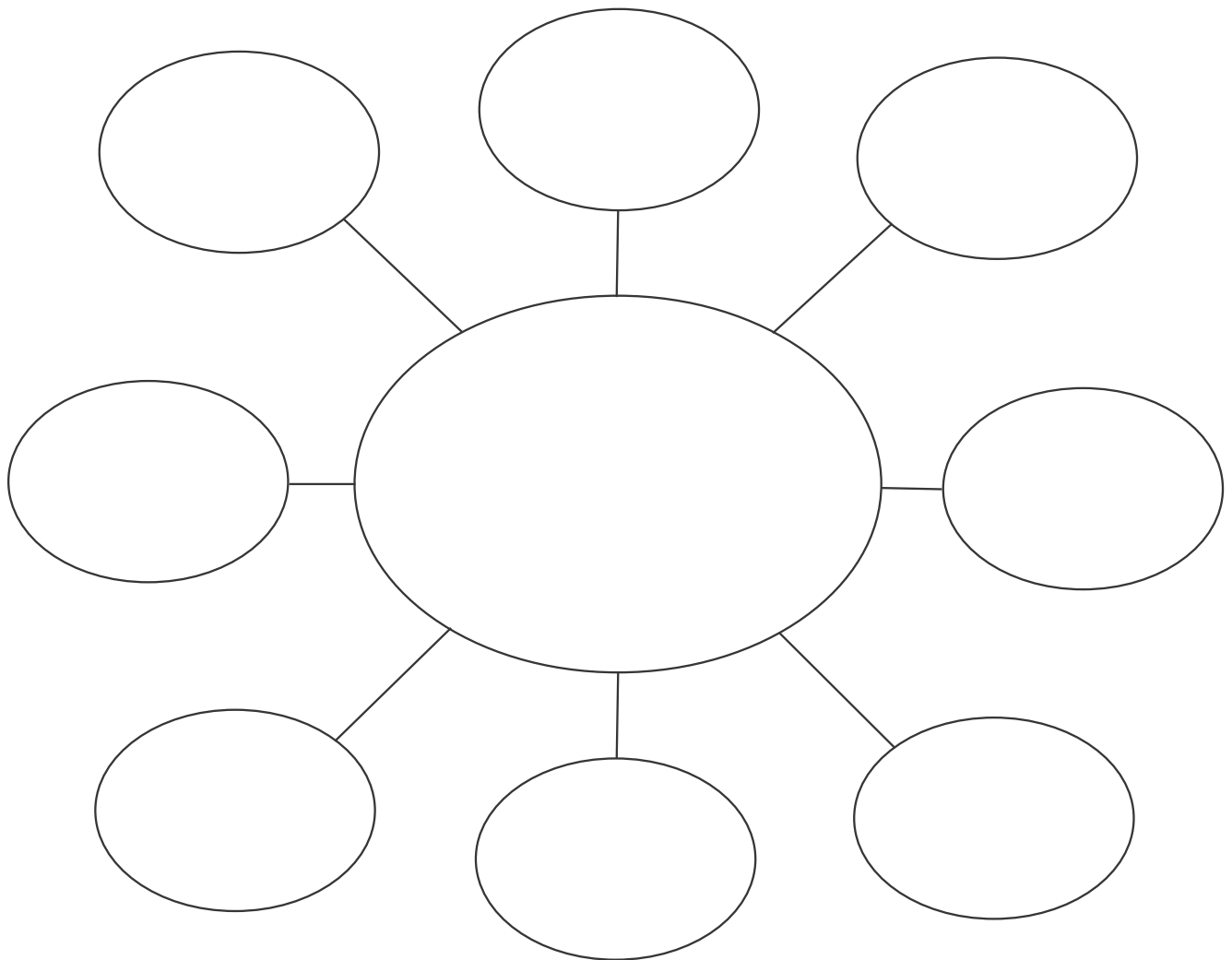
Writing a Lyric Poem

Think

Audience: Who will read your lyric poem?

Purpose: What is your reason for writing a lyric poem?

PREWRITING Write the topic of your poem in the center of the diagram. Record feelings, figurative language, and sensory details around it.



REVISING Use this checklist to revise your poem.

- Does your poem show your true feelings about your topic?
- Does your poem have a musical rhythm?
- Did you use poetic techniques, such as alliteration and repetition?
- Did you use vivid sensory details and figurative language, such as similes and metaphors, to describe your subject?
- Did you add precise word choices to make your poem more vivid?

EDITING/PROOFREADING Use this checklist to correct mistakes in your poem.

- Did you use a consistent method for capitalization and punctuation in your poem?
- Are the form (line, stanzas, and so on) and graphic elements of your poem as you meant them to be?
- Did you use a consistent rhyme scheme?
- Did you correctly use adjectives, adverbs, and action verbs when describing your subject?
- Did you check for correct use of homophones?

PUBLISHING Use this checklist to prepare your poem for publishing.

- Write or type a neat copy of your poem.
- Read your poem aloud to others.