**Walt and Emily – A Blind Date**

Your assignment is to set up these two (very different) lovebirds on a date and record what happens. I’ve provided you with some biographical information on each poet so you can successfully depict how they might interact. Finally, you must seamlessly integrate at least five lines of poetry from each poet (10 total) into their conversation as dialogue using MLA formatting of course!

You may write the results of their dialogue in the form of a script or a short story. When writing a short story, be sure to use quotations and commas correctly. This project is worth 100 points.

Tips for quoting up to three lines of poetry:

· Use slashes (/) to indicate line breaks within the poem

· Keep all punctuation intact as it appears in the poem

· Use quotation marks to denote the beginning and end of the quotation

**If you have included the name of the poet elsewhere in your paper, do not include the poet's name in your parenthetical citation. Instead, include the first significant word of the poem's title, followed by the line number(s).** This is especially important if you are quoting more than one poem by the same author in your paper.

*Example*

"Let us go then, you and I / When the evening is spread out against the sky" ("Prufrock" 1-2).

**Rubric**

\_\_\_\_/25 There are a **minimum five lines of poetry** incorporated into the dialogue of the blind date from **DICKINSON’**s poetry. (5 pts. per line of poetry = 25 pts.) HIGHLIGHTED

\_\_\_\_/25 There are a minimum five lines of poetry incorporated into the dialogue of the blind date from **WHITMAN’**s poetry. (5 pts. per line of poetry = 25 pts.) HIGHLIGHTED

\_\_\_\_\_/10 Poetry **is SEAMLESSLY integrated** and flows naturally into the dialogue (10 pts.)

\_\_\_\_\_/10 Proper dialogue format is used; either dramatic play format or short story format (10 pts.)

\_\_\_\_\_/20 Dialogue accurately reflects the biographical information of the poets (20 pts.)

\_\_\_\_\_/10 Few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors are evident (10 pts.)

**\_\_\_\_\_/100**

**Emily Dickinson**

Emily Dickinson was born on 10th December, 1830, in the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. Amherst, 50 miles from Boston, had become well known as a centre for education, based around Amherst College. Her family were pillars of the local community; their house known as “The Homestead” or “Mansion” was often used as a meeting place for distinguished visitors including, Ralph Waldo Emerson. As a young child, Emily proved to be a bright and conscientious student. She showed a sharp intelligence, and was able to create many original writings of rhyming stories, delighting her fellow classmates. Emily’s father was strict and keen to bring up his children in the proper way. Emily said of her father. “his heart was pure and terrible”. His strictness can be shown through his censorship of reading materials; Walt Whitman for example was considered “too inappropriate” and novels had to be smuggled into the house. Emily was independently minded, and quite willing to refuse the prevailing orthodoxy’s on certain issues.

Emily was a bright conscientious student. At Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, she was able to study a range of subjects from Latin to English Literature. However, her studies were often interrupted by ill health. After a persistent cough developed, her father decided to remove her from college and bring her back home. Thus she left without any formal qualifications, but she had at least been able to broaden her education and vocabulary.

Emily Dickinson’s later seclusion from society gives an impression of a life of austerity and simplicity. This has been romanticised, with the frequently cited preference for her wearing all white dresses. However, Emily was both a keen artist and accomplished musician. In her college years she enjoyed singing; making reference to the similarities between poetry and singing. She also had a sharp eye for beautiful art; this visual sense and her appreciation of bright colours being evident in many of her poems.

Emily was said to be beautiful, with a soft voice and dark eyes. She dressed in a relatively simple way and surviving photos show she kept her hair in a simple straightened style (somewhat like the Puritan style). Emily was quick witted and intelligent; she had a good sense of humour, but was often ill at ease in other people’s company. She gave the impression of being somewhat agitated and intense.

Because of her discomfort and shyness in social situations, Emily gradually reduced her social contacts, going out less and less into society. By her late twenties, this has led to an almost complete seclusion; spending most of her time in the family house, rarely meeting others from outside a close family circle. Her sister explains this wasn’t a sudden decision, but a gradual process that happened over a period of time. However, despite the physical seclusion, Emily still maintained written contact with a variety of thought provoking people. It is also clear from her poetry that her decision to live life as a recluse did not close her mind, but in many ways allowed the flow of new avenues of thought and inner experiences.

Emily Dickinson died at the age of 55 from Bight’s disease, which is caused by kidney degeneration. Her doctor suggested that the accumulation of stress throughout her life contributed to her premature death.

By: [T.Pettinger 26/06/2006](http://www.biographyonline.net/contact.html)

Walt Whitman

Born on May 31, 1819, Walt Whitman was the second son of Walter Whitman, a housebuilder, and Louisa Van Velsor. The family, which consisted of nine children, lived in Brooklyn and Long Island in the 1820s and 1830s.

At the age of twelve, Whitman began to learn the printer's trade, and fell in love with the written word. Largely self-taught, he read voraciously, becoming acquainted with the works of [Homer](http://www.poets.org/homer), [Dante](http://www.poets.org/dante), [Shakespeare](http://www.poets.org/wshak), and the Bible. Whitman worked as a printer in New York City until a devastating fire in the printing district demolished the industry. In 1836, at the age of 17, he began his career as teacher in the one-room school houses of Long Island. He continued to teach until 1841, when he turned to journalism as a full-time career.

He founded a weekly newspaper, *Long-Islander*, and later edited a number of Brooklyn and New York papers. In 1848, Whitman left the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle* to become editor of the New Orleans *Crescent*. It was in New Orleans that he experienced at first hand the viciousness of slavery in the slave markets of that city. On his return to Brooklyn in the fall of 1848, he founded a "free soil" newspaper, the *Brooklyn Freeman*, and continued to develop the unique style of poetry that later so astonished [Ralph Waldo Emerson](http://www.poets.org/rweme).

In 1855, Whitman took out a copyright on the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*, which consisted of twelve untitled poems and a preface. He published the volume himself, and sent a copy to Emerson in July of 1855. Whitman released a second edition of the book in 1856, containing thirty-three poems, a letter from Emerson praising the first edition, and a long open letter by Whitman in response. During his subsequent career, Whitman continued to refine the volume, publishing several more editions of the book.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Whitman vowed to live a "purged" and "cleansed" life. He wrote freelance journalism and visited the wounded at New York-area hospitals. He then traveled to Washington, D.C. in December 1862 to care for his brother who had been wounded in the war.

Overcome by the suffering of the many wounded in Washington, Whitman decided to stay and work in the hospitals and stayed in the city for eleven years. He took a job as a clerk for the Department of the Interior, which ended when the Secretary of the Interior, James Harlan, discovered that Whitman was the author of *Leaves of Grass*, which Harlan found offensive. Harlan fired the poet.

Whitman struggled to support himself through most of his life. In Washington, he lived on a clerk's salary and modest royalties, and spent any excess money, including gifts from friends, to buy supplies for the patients he nursed. He had also been sending money to his widowed mother and an invalid brother. From time to time writers both in the states and in England sent him "purses" of money so that he could get by.

In the early 1870s, Whitman settled in Camden, NJ, where he had come to visit his dying mother at his brother's house. However, after suffering a stroke, Whitman found it impossible to return to Washington. He stayed with his brother until the 1882 publication of *Leaves of Grass* gave Whitman enough money to buy a home in Camden.

In the simple two-story clapboard house, Whitman spent his declining years working on additions and revisions to a new edition of the book and preparing his final volume of poems and prose, *Good-Bye, My Fancy* (1891). After his death on March 26, 1892, Whitman was buried in a tomb he designed and had built on a lot in Harleigh Cemetery.