Poems to Memorize

1. **The Hollow Men** *T.S. Eliot*
2. **Journey of the Magi** *T.S. Eliot*
3. **The Four Quartets—**choose a section of one of them *T.S. Eliot*
4. **The Second Coming** *W.B. Yeats*
5. **You Do Not Have to Love Me** *Leonard Cohen*
6. **Keeping Quiet** *Pablo Neruda*
7. **The Chariot** *Emily Dickinson*
8. **Axe Handles** *Gary Snyder*
9. **Hay for the Horses** *Gary Snyder*
10. **On the Other Side of the Door** *Jeff Moss*
11. **Wild Geese** *Mary Oliver*
12. **Steps** *Naomi Shihab Nye*
13. **You Reading This, Be Ready** *William Stafford*
14. **Stillborn** *Sylvia Plath*
15. **A Contribution to Statistics** *Wislawa Szymborska*
16. **The Poem That Took the Place of a Mountain** *Wallace Stevens*
17. **Mother to Son** *Langston Hughes*
18. **my father moved through dooms of love** *e.e. cummings*
19. **i carry your heart with me** *e.e. cummings*
20. **Sonnet 18** *William Shakespeare*
21. **The Owl and the Pussycat** *Edward Lear*
22. **Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night** *Dylan Thomas*
23. **Two Songs For Hedli Anderson—**first song only *W.H. Auden*
24. **Still I Rise** *Maya Angelou*
25. **Howl—**excerpt from part 1 *Allen Ginsberg*
26. **One Art** *Elizabeth Bishop*
27. **The Resemblance Between Your Life and a Dog** *Robert Bly*
28. **a song in the front yard** *Gwendolyn Brooks*
29. **at the cemetery, walnut grove plantation, south Carolina, 1989** *Lucille Clifton*
30. **Happiness** *Robert Hass*
31. **Annabel Lee** *Edgar Allan Poe*
32. **Ozymandias** *Percy Bysshe Shelley*
33. **Kubla Khan** *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*
34. **The Highwayman** *Alfred Noyes*
35. **Gunga Din** *Rudyard Kipling*
36. **Paradise Lost—**One or two stanzas *John Milton*
37. **Whoso list to hung** *Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder*
38. **The Faerie Queen—**One or two stanzas *Edmund Spenser*
39. **Astrophil and Stella 1** *Sir Phillip Sidney*
40. **Canterbury Tales Prologue—**In Middle English *Geoffrey Chaucer*

Poem Memorization Assignment

# What poem should I memorize?

You can choose to memorize almost any poem!

You could choose from the poems in your blue reader, the poems from the poetry centers, or any poem that has been a starter. If none of these appeal to you, there’s a list on the back of this page of other suggested poems. Alternatively, you could choose a poem from any of the books on the table—just confirm with me before you start memorizing.

**Poem Choice Due: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

# How do I memorize a poem?

The first step to memorizing a poem is to understand it. You need to read, annotate, and work the poem until you feel like you have a deep understanding of what that poem is trying to say. Once you have reached that understanding, here are some simple steps to follow:

1. Read and say the poem over, slowly, aloud. Fill its shape in your lungs, your heart, your throat.
2. With an index card or piece of paper, cover everything but the first line of the poem. Read it. Look away, see the line the air, and say it. Look back. Repeat until you’ve got it.
3. Uncover the second line. Learn it as you did the first line, but also add the second line to the first until you have both lines down.
4. Then it’s on to three. Always repeat the first line on down, until the whole poem sings.
5. Do the same process in 3-4 line chunks.
6. Once the poem is memorized, start working on gestures, vocal intonations, and body language.

# How will this be assessed?

You will be assessed on two things: your spoken performance, and your written analysis of the poem.

**Spoken Performance:** This will be assessed in three categories.

1. **Fluidity—**Are you reading this poem fluidly, using the punctuation as a guide, without unnecessary hesitations or pauses?
2. **Accuracy—**Do you speak every word of the poem, and pronounce everything correctly?
3. **Body Language—**Is your body language confident, comfortable, and enhancing your reading of the poem?

**Written Analysis:** Your written analysis should be three typed paragraphs, in final draft form. QUOTE THE POEM to provide evidence for what you are saying! This is due the day you are scheduled to recite your poem. In your written analysis, you need to answer the following questions:

1. What is this poem trying to communicate? In other words, what is the unique perspective this poet offers? (1 paragraph)
2. How does the poet use specific techniques to develop and enhance their message? (2 paragraphs)

*(HINT: In this section you will likely want to spend time talking about specific techniques the poet uses, and what makes their style unique.)*