

Wangchuan Ji/Wheel River Collection
Wang Wei

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10th Grade
English
6 class periods

1. Lesson Objectives

Students will analyze how specific translation choices in a poem create an effect. They will do this by creating their own complete translations of a Wang Wei poem from the raw translations of individual Chinese characters. They will also compare how different professional translators interpret the same Wang Wei poem. Finally, they will write an essay analyzing and comparing how specific language choices create different effects.

Relevant Common Core Standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4](#)
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5](#)
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6](#)
Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D](#)
Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4](#)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.3](#)
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5.A](#)
Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.5.B](#)
Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations (“English Language Arts”).

Relevant Local School District Standards:

- 10.1 Analysis An analysis of style in a text
- 10.2 Analysis An analysis of how an author uses language in a passage to achieve a specific effect.
 - “Students have an opportunity to engage with the rewarding challenges presented by complex verse or drama, not only analyzing the stylistic choices an author or translator makes, but also exploring how those choices achieve particular effects.”

2. Summary

Renowned poet, artist and scholar Wang Wei owned an estate named Wangchuan, located 30 miles southeast of the capital of the Tang empire (Hsieh, “Wang Wei”). He invited his friend Pei Di to join him at the estate, and together they wrote poems inspired by twenty different locations within Wangchuan. The titles of each of the poems indicate the location where they were sitting and have little significance beyond that. This series of poems was collected under the name “Wangchuan Ji,” or “Wheel River Collection” and includes some of Wang Wei’s most famous poems. As Stephen Owen explains in his essay “Poetry in the Chinese Tradition,” the poems which Wang Wei and Pei Di were writing at these twenty locations were *yen chih*, lyric poems that “articulated what was in the mind intensely” (295). Owen goes on to say that poetry in the Chinese tradition “is conceived not as an activity practiced by poets but as a general human activity, something that ‘happens to’ people when they experience feelings of a certain intensity...Poetry comes forth naturally; it cannot be helped” (300). Thus, as Wang Wei sits for long stretches of time in his estate and meditates on nature, intense thoughts and emotions occur within him and he is compelled to record his thoughts and emotions in verse. His poems tend to be only four or eight lines long, with five characters per line. Yet in this brief space, he is able to share his inner world with the reader. And, “The Chinese understood the lyric as speaking not to humanity as a whole but to someone else, some person or group the poet knew or even someone of another age and place, someone the poet would like to know” (Owen 295). If we, the modern reader, bring a “sympathetic nature and [a] willing familiarity” to our reading, we can connect with Wang Wei’s individuality and complexity as a human being through these poems (Owen 296).

3. Historical/Literary Context

Wang Wei was born in China in 701 CE during the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), a high point in Chinese civilization (New World, “Wang Wei”). Wang Wei was a remarkable renaissance man: “A government official in Tang dynasty China, Wang Wei was also a scholar, a painter, and perhaps above all a devout Chan Buddhist and poet who is sometimes referred to in China as ‘the Buddha of the Poets’ (詩佛)” (Stepien). Wang is regarded as one of the three greatest poets of the Tang Dynasty, if not all Chinese history. The two poets commonly mentioned alongside Wang Wei are Li Bo and Du Fu. According to David Hinton, “Of the three, Wang was the consummate master of the short imagistic landscape poem that came to typify classical Chinese poetry.” Wang’s appreciation of the beauty and transience of the natural world aligns his poetry with the Chan (Zen) Buddhism, which was gaining prominence in China at that time. In fact, the three major poets are often considered emblematic of the three major philosophies of China: “While Du Fu’s stoicism embodied Confucian ideals, and Li Bai’s brilliant improvisations exemplified the Taoist attitude that the universe is unknowable and unfathomable, Wang Wei was a Buddhist mystic, viewing the world with a detached compassion” (New World, “Wang Wei”).

The poetry of the Tang dynasty set the standard for poetry in traditional China for the next thousand years (Bohr). The great poets of the eighth and ninth centuries remained the most powerful figures for later ages, reminders of how successful poetry could be in embodying a human personality (Owen 303). “Rather than art that is separate from the common world in

which we live, Chinese poetry tried to be part of life, giving words to complex feelings” (Owen 308).

4. Discussion questions and answers

On “Deer Wattle” (no. 5 in Wangchuan Ji), trans. Daniel Hsieh

An empty mountain, no one in sight,
Only the sounds of human voices;
Returning light enters the deep woods,
Shining once more on the green moss.

- Describe the progression of tone in this poem.

Answer: The “empty mountain” and “no one in sight” observations at the beginning convey a sense of loneliness and isolation within Wang Wei. There is a tinge of sadness in these comments, especially when compared with the final couplet. In those lines, the details of the “returning light” and the “shining...green moss” contrast with the darkness of the deep woods and the empty mountain to express a sense of hope and joy within the poet. The increasing precision of the details Wang Wei notices, culminating in the hyper-focus of the green moss, communicate a gradual awakening within the poet’s senses and awareness.

- What time of day is it when the poet is composing this poem, and why is that significant?

Answer: The phrase “returning light” can be initially interpreted as either the light of the rising sun or the light of the setting sun. Combining the other details of “human voices,” which would most likely be heard during the day time, and “shining once more on the green moss,” we can deduce that Wang Wei has been sitting in the “deep woods” since the morning and now the returning light is the light of the setting sun. When the sun rose over head, it was not able to pierce through the forest canopy, leaving Wang Wei in the gloom of the woods. Now, the light slices through the tree trunks horizontally to illuminate the “green moss” once again. This is significant because we learn Wang Wei has been meditating in the woods the entire day, investing this poem with the weight of an entire day’s worth of contemplation. It is also significant when viewed as a symbolic representation of Samsāra, as explored further in the next question.

- Trace the progression of this poem line by line. Where does it start and where does it end up? What does the poem achieve symbolically? (Hsieh)

Answer:

An empty mountain, no one in sight,

The empty mountain image at the start of the poem is reminiscent of the second line of the Judeo-Christian bible: “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Wang Wei in his meditation is perhaps imagining the amorphous state before creation. This sensation is reinforced by his observation that “no one [was] in sight.” The poet himself

is of course there on that empty mountain, but in his deep meditation, he may have succeeded in shedding his self-hood. Deep in contemplation, he is absorbed in the formless spirit of the universe.

Only the sounds of human voices;

In the second line, evidence of humanity arises, but only in sound, not image or form. Wang Wei is alone in his meditation, and the brief intimations of other humans that enter his consciousness are incorporeal and insignificant.

Returning light enters the deep woods,

Another parallel to the Genesis creation story, line 3: "And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light." However, in Wang Wei's composition the light is returning, not created for the first time like in the Western model. This idea of returning, reincarnation, or Saṃsāra, is essential to Buddhism. This line also contains the only verb of the entire poem: "enters." That word "enters" communicates the mystical process of life being invested into a formless world, spirit into flesh. Thus in this line, Wang Wei is narrating life and temporality being introduced into our world once more.

Shining once more on the green moss.

The poet has been preparing us for the emergence of humans, and yet he focuses his final and most important observation on the green moss being illuminated by the returning light. The moss may then be read as a symbol of creation. Moss is soft, lush, green, and grows without roots. Moss is also humble, distinct from the towering trees or ostentatious flowers. Nevertheless, it is hardy and resilient. Above all, it is alive. Life, even in an organism as inconsequential and overlooked as moss, is miraculous. The direct color imagery of the "green" moss combined with the implied color imagery of golden afternoon light gilds the simple organism in a regal glow.

On "Luan Family Rapids" (no. 13 in Wangchuan Ji), trans. Daniel Hsieh

*Soughing sounds within the autumn rain,
Rushing waters over pebbly rapids flow,
Leaping waves splash one against the other,
A startled white egret rises then falls.*

- What is the dominant motif of this poem? How does Wang Wei create subtle differences within this motif? Consider movement and dynamics.

Answer: The dominant motif of this poem is water. The first line has vertically falling "autumn rain" creating a blanket of "soughing sounds." The second line has horizontally flowing water "rushing...over pebbly rapids." The third line has vertically rising waves splashing up against each other, the river running especially deep and turbulent on this day because of the steady rainfall. Wang Wei has noticed all of the directions in which water can move and we are immersed, like him, in this flowing, dynamic scene.

- The final lines of short Chinese poems are especially crucial for the poem's meaning. Explain the significance of the final line of this poem.

Answer: The egret is a water fowl that would be completely at home in the rush of water happening all around it. So, it cannot be the splashing water that startles the bird. The only other element of this scene that might startle the bird is the poet himself. The bird notices the poet and rises up in fright. However, it presently lowers itself back to the river, indicating that it has not been frightened enough to fly away. It must have sensed that the poet was no threat, and that perhaps he had become an organic part of this flowing environment. The subtlety with which the poet indicates his presence within this scene and his diminishing distinction from the natural world as seen in the egret's assured return to the river conveys the poet's experience of achieving communion with nature.

On "My Hermitage in the Bamboo Grove" (no. 17 in Wangchuan ji), trans. Chang Yin-nan

Deep in the bamboo grove, sitting alone,
I thrum my lute as I whistle a tune.
No one knows I am in this thicket
Save the bright moon looking down on me.

- What is the tone of this poem?

Answer: Although Wang Wei is alone and no one knows where he is, there is a joyfulness in his situation. He is playing his music and whistling his tune for no audience but himself. The moon also adds a friendly aspect, being described as "bright" rather than a more lonesome term such as "cold" or "high." It is also personified through its act of "looking down" at Wang Wei. The tone is one of contentedness in solitude.

- What is the significance of the bamboo? What does it reveal about the author's state of mind?

Answer: Bamboo grows in tight clumps and is hard to navigate through. Wang Wei starts the poem by noting he is "deep" within the bamboo grove, meaning he was very deliberate about finding a secluded spot where no one else would be found. And yet his rejection of the company of other humans is not a harsh misanthropy; he brings his lute with him to create music and fill the thicket with his human presence. In other translations of this poem, the word "thicket" in the third line is alternatively rendered as "woods" or "forest." This reveals that the bamboo grove exists in the middle of a forest, which means Wang Wei had to penetrate multiple layers of nature to reach his isolated spot. He has sought an enclosure that is completely walled off from the terrestrial world, but as bamboo shoots have a narrow leaf canopy, his enclosure enables a direct view of the heavens above.

- Explain the significance of the final line of this poem.

Answer: After deliberately distancing himself from other people, Wang Wei finds a connection with the moon as he plays his lute and whistles his tune. The connection can be seen through the details of the moon being "bright" and "looking down" on him.

After a period of meditation and isolation, Wang Wei is able to find communion with the natural world. He feels kinship even with the heavens. As a Buddhist, Wang Wei seeks to dismantle the distinction between self and the world outside. He accomplishes that here in his late-night concert.

Key Thought Questions:

- How does Buddhism play a role in Wang Wei's poetry?
Answer: Many of Wang Wei's poems capture his mindset after he has meditated for a long period of time. The act of meditation is a tenet of Ch'an or Zen Buddhism. Wang Wei tries to poetically capture not only the serenity and empty mind he experiences after meditating, but also the elements of the natural world that have contributed to his relaxed state. Additionally, Wang Wei invests his poems with foundational Buddhist principles, such as Samsara. His poem, "Deer Wattle" documents the rebirth of the entire world around Wang Wei as the sunlight returns to the forest, paralleling the cyclical nature of souls in the Buddhist cosmology.
- How does the form of Wang Wei's poetry contribute to the overall effect?
Answer: Wang Wei's poems in "Wang River Collection" are all quatrains, with five characters per line. These quatrains, similar to the Shakespearean sonnet, or the Japanese tanka, typically have a "punchline" or vital insight in the final lines. Thus, the final lines of Wang Wei's poems offer a critical juxtaposition of some element of the three prior lines, or at least some sort of surprising elaboration. Being so short, there are no wasted words in Wang Wei's poems, so each image should be carefully studied for development and resolution of a theme.
- What are key similarities and differences between Wang Wei and the other major Tang Dynasty poets, Du Fu and Li Bai?
Answers: All of these poets demonstrate a brilliant employment of sharp external detail to reveal the inner emotional world. For example, Du Fu, in his poem "Thoughts While Moored at Night," examines the "fine grasses on a breeze whispered bank" and "the steep mast of a lone boat in the night." In these images, Du Fu creates a gentle swaying motion in both the natural world and the human space of the boat, and places himself within this vacillating space. The poem concludes with Du Fu defining himself as a "lone gull between Heaven and Earth," echoing the earlier vacillation established in the concrete details. Li Bai similarly captures "bamboo of wilderness split through blue haze, a cascade in flight, hung from an emerald peak" in his poem "Visiting the Recluse on Mount Tai-t'ien and Not Finding Him In." Li Bai freezes a rushing waterfall in motion and describes the shock of seeing a gorgeous green bamboo grove in the middle of a hazy mountain landscape. The poem narrates Li Bai trying to seek out a wise recluse up in the mountains and not finding him, but the brilliant images of the bamboo and waterfall indicate that Li Bai has indeed succeeded in finding the same elevated awareness as the recluse himself (Owen 304).

The poets differ in their attitude toward the world. Wang Wei is characterized by his solitary meditations in nature and the synchrony he finds between his spirit and the natural world. Li Bai focuses more on the sadness inherent in being a mortal within

time. In his poem, “Bring in the Wine,” he concludes, “Take your dappled horse and 1000 dollar furs, Call your boy to exchange them for fine wine, And let us together drown the sorrows of 10,000 years.” He recommends a lifestyle of knowing hedonism, embracing the comradery of a drunken night with friends as the only way to honor the curse of existence. Du Fu, in contrast, ascribes to the Confucian ideal of an ordered and functioning human society and is left distraught by broken human relations. The harmony of the natural world to Du Fu only serves as a harsh reminder of the discord of the human world. “The country is destroyed but hills and rivers remain,” Du Fu remarks bitterly in his poem “Spring Yearning.” He believes that a human can only really come to his fullest potential when he is placed in an orderly society. Until then, as long as war persists, “My white hair, through scratching, is still shorter; It very nearly fails to support my hairpin” (Tu Fu 52).

5. Activities

1. Students create their own translation of Wang Wei’s poem “Deer Enclosure” (Appendix A, one 45 minute class period)
2. Students compare different translations of Wang Wei’s poetry (Appendix B, one 45 minute class period)
 - a. Divide the class into 6 or 12 groups, and give each group a translation comparison sheet A to F.
 - b. Students compare the three translators’ approach to the same words, phrases, and features using the capture sheet “Comparing Different Translations of Wang Wei’s Poetry.”
3. (Optional) Students are given all the translation comparison sheets A-F and the discussion questions from above. They then answer the questions in pairs or individually. (Discussion questions and answers, one 45 minute class period)
4. Students write a 4 paragraph essay comparing the effects of two translations of the same poem. (Appendix C, three 45 minute class periods)
 - a. Students can use their own translation of “Deer Wattle” as one of the versions for comparison.
 - b. Students can use the capture sheet from Appendix B as support.
 - c. Students should expect to follow the writing process of rough draft, peer revision, editing and final draft.

6. Connections to other literary works

This lesson plan can easily be paired with other canonical translated texts. For example, once students understand that any translation of a classic text is filtered through the unique sensibilities of the translator, they can critically examine different versions of *The Odyssey*, *Oedipus Rex*, or *Antigone*.

7. Citations

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8. Appendices--Appendix A

Explanation: Below is Wang Wei's famous poem "Deer Enclosure" in the original Chinese, transliterated into pinyin (the English pronunciation of Chinese words), and also translated character for character into English. Notice how the poem does not yet make sense in English. A translator's job is to interpret the poem's full meaning and convey the sound and sense of the poem in English. You will see that a translator has many different options for how to write the poem in English, so the final way she chooses to translate it is significant. You can listen to the poem spoken in Chinese [here](#).

鹿 柴

Lù Chái

空山不見人

Kōng shān bú jiàn rén

但聞人語響

Dàn wén rén yǔ xiǎng

返景入深林

Fǎn jǐng rù shēn lín

復照青苔上

Fù zhào qīng tái shàng

鹿

Deer

柴

Firewood (Enclosure)

空

Empty

山

Mountain

不

Not

見

See

人

Person

但

But

聞

Hear

人

Person

語

Speak

響

Sound

返

Returning

景

Sunlight

入

Enters

深

Deep

林

Forest

復

Again

照

Shines

青

Green

苔

Moss

上

Upon

("Wang Wei Index")

Let's practice translating "Deer Enclosure" into English line by line. How would you word this first line so that it makes sense?

| | | | | |
|-------|----------|-----|-----|---------|
| 空 | 山 | 不 | 見 | 人 |
| Empty | Mountain | Not | See | Person, |

Great! Now translate the second line.

| | | | | |
|-----|------|--------|-------|--------|
| 但 | 聞 | 人 | 語 | 響 |
| But | Hear | Person | Speak | Sound. |

Awesome! Reflect a minute on your strategy for making sense of the fragmented words. Did you try to write the two lines as concisely as possible, or did you add some poetic features to give the lines a richer meaning? Explain below:

Let's go on to the third line. Please translate this phrase into full English:

| | | | | |
|-----------|----------|--------|------|--------|
| 返 | 景 | 入 | 深 | 林 |
| Returning | Sunlight | Enters | Deep | Forest |

Round out your translation with the final line. How will you order these words so they make sense?

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|-------|------|------|
| 復 | 照 | 青 | 苔 | 上 |
| Again | Shines | Green | Moss | Upon |

Now it's time to gather all four lines of your translation into one poem. Create your full version of the poem below. Feel free to modify your word choice or syntax from your initial translations to create a more cohesive poem.

“Deer Enclosure” by Wang Wei, translated by: _____

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

Line 4: _____

Great! You have now translated a Chinese poem into English!

As you can probably see, the more you know about the poet, the specific occasion when the poem was written, or Chinese language and culture in general, the more accurately your translation can capture what Wang Wei originally wrote..

“Deer Enclosure” is one of the most translated poems in Chinese literature and no two translations are alike. Let's compare our translation with some professional translations and see how they decide to bring Wang Wei's poem into English.

Appendix B

Comparing Different Translations of Wang Wei's Poetry

| Title of Poem: | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Name of translator 1 _____ | Name of translator 2 _____ | Name of translator 3 _____ | |
| Word, phrase or feature | Word, phrase or feature | Word, phrase or feature | Explain the effect of the words or phrases that you have chosen to explore. |
| <i>"relaxing"</i> | <i>translator omits</i> | <i>"reclined"</i> | <i>"relaxing" captures both the physical <u>and</u> emotional ease of the speaker, and the verb tense lends a sense of immediacy.</i> |

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison A—Wang Wei’s “Deer Fence”

Deer Wattle—trans. Daniel Hsieh

An empty mountain, no one in sight,
Only the sounds of human voices;
Returning light enters the deep woods,
Shining once more on the green moss.

The Deer Enclosure—trans. C. J. Chen and Michael Bullock

On the lonely mountain
 I meet no one,
I hear only the echo
 of human voices.
At an angle the sun’s rays
 enter the depths of the wood,
And shine
 upon the green moss.

Deer Enclosure—trans. Pauline Yu

Empty mountain, no man is seen.
Only heard are echoes of men’s talk.
Reflected light enters the deep wood
And shines again on blue-green moss.

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison B—Wang Wei’s “Deer Fence”

Deer Fence—trans. Stephen Owen

No one is seen in deserted hills,
only the echoes of speech are heard.
Sunlight cast back comes deep in the woods
and shines once again upon the green moss.

Deep in the Mountain Wilderness—trans. Kenneth Rexroth

Deep in the mountain wilderness
Where nobody ever comes
Only once in a great while
Something like the sound of a far off voice,
The low rays of the sun
Slip through the dark forest,
And gleam again on the shadowy moss.

Deer Camp—trans. Gary Snyder

Empty mountains:
 no one to be seen.
Yet—hear—
 human sounds and echoes.
 Returning sunlight
 enters the dark woods;
Again shining
 on green moss, above.

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison C—Wang Wei’s “Deer Fence”

The Form of the Deer—trans. W.J.B. Fletcher

So lone seem the hills; there is no one in sight there.

But whence is the echo of voices I hear?

The rays of the sunset pierce slanting the forest,

And in their reflection green mosses appear.

Deer Park—trans. David Hinton

No one seen. In empty mountains,

a hint of drifting voice, no more.

Entering these deep woods, late sun-

light ablaze on green moss, rising.

Deer Forest Hermitage—trans. Chang Yin-nan and Lewis C. Walmsley

Through the deep wood, the slanting sunlight

Casts motley patterns on the jade-green mosses.

No glimpse of man in this lonely mountain,

Yet faint voices drift on air.

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison D—Wang Wei's poem about a bamboo dwelling

The Bamboo Grove Pavilion—trans. Andrew W.F. Wong

- 1 Alone I sit in the shade of bamboos serene,
- 2 I pluck my strings, and long I whistle, I sing.
- 3 Deep in the forest, no one knows I exist,
- 4 None but the moon, to me she comes a-shining.

Bamboo Lodge—trans. Pauline Yu

Alone I sit amid the dark bamboo,
Play the zither and whistle loud again.
In the deep wood men do not know
The bright moon comes to shine on me.

My Hermitage in the Bamboo Grove—trans. Chang Yin-nan

Deep in the bamboo grove, sitting alone,
I thrum my lute as I whistle a tune.
No one knows I am in this thicket
Save the bright moon looking down on me.

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison E—Wang Wei's poem about a bamboo dwelling

Lodge in Bamboo—trans. Stephen Owen

I sit alone in bamboo that hides me,
plucking the harp and whistling long.
It is deep in the woods and no one knows—
the bright moon comes to shine on me.

Bamboo Lane House—trans. Gary Snyder

Sitting alone, hid in bamboo
Plucking the lute and gravely whistling.
People wouldn't know that deep woods
Can be this bright in the moon.

Bamboo-Midst Cottage—trans. David Hinton

Sitting alone in the recluse bamboo dark
I play a *ch'in*, settle into breath chants.

In these forest depths no one knows
this moon come bathing me in light.

(Boyce)

Translation Comparison F—Wang Wei’s “Luan Family Rapids”

“Luan Family Rapids”--trans. Daniel Hsieh

Soughing sounds within the autumn rain,
Rushing waters over pebbly rapids flow,
Leaping waves splash one against the other,
A startled white egret rises then falls.

“Golden-Rain Rapids” – trans. David Hinton

Wind buffets and blows autumn rain.
Water cascading thin across rocks,

waves lash at each other. An egret
startles up, white, then settles back.

“The Luan Family Rapids” –trans. William P. Coleman

In a blast, the wind drives the autumn rain;
the downpour flows, slithering, shallow over rocks.

Waves jump up, splashing into each other;
an egret startles, white, then it’s down again.

Appendix C

Wang Wei Translation Comparison Essay

Your task: Choose any two translations of a single Wang Wei poem and compare the effects of their translation choices in a 4 paragraph essay. You may use your own translation of “Deer Wattle” as one of the two translations if you wish. However, you must discuss diction and syntax choices no matter which poems you select. You may also consider examining sound, pacing, omissions, and imagery. Top essays will synthesize all of the discrete observations about translation choices into convincing statements on the overall tone and effect of each poem.

- 5** The essay presents a focused and enlightening comparison of the nuances and overall effect of each translation of the poem. The main argument is original, clearly stated, and fully supported with carefully selected details from both poems. Organization is organic and natural; overall style and voice demonstrate an ear for the subtleties of language.
- 4** The essay is focused and developed, presenting a logical comparison of the translations of the poem. The main argument is original, clearly stated, and supported with sufficient details from both poems. Organization is logical and easy to follow; overall style and voice are sufficiently engaging.
- 3** The essay is moderately developed, presenting an adequate comparison of the translations of the poem. Though it may be obvious or limited, the main argument is clearly stated and supported with some details from both poems. Organization is solid yet predictable; overall style and voice are mostly consistent.
- 2–1** The essay is limited or incomplete, presenting a flawed or undeveloped comparison of the poems. The main argument is confusing or unclear and lacks detailed support from the poems. Organization is unbalanced and may obscure meaning; overall style and voice are inconsistent or ineffective.