English Language Arts 10-2

Unit 2: Comprehend and respond to texts

Respond to a Canadian paddle poem

The ending of a poem

- E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), in The Song My Paddle Sings (1895, public domain), writes: And up on the hills against the sky, a fir tree rocking its lullaby, swings, swings, its emerald wings, swelling the song that my paddle sings.
- Personal response: the rocking tree can feel like company on a long effort. That sentence is about the reader, and it has to be marked as such.
- Analytical response: swings twice and emerald wings make the tree move with the paddle, so the land seems to join the song.
- This is Canadian content because Johnson was a Canadian poet, Mohawk and English, writing a Canadian river scene. The label comes from the creator, and a maple leaf sticker proves nothing.

Johnson's paddle song

And up on the hills against the sky,

A fir tree rocking its lullaby,

Swings, swings,

Its emerald wings,

Swelling the song that my paddle sings.

> The repeated swings rock the fir tree and join the tree to the paddle's song.

Feeling and evidence

- A personal response here might be the sense of company from a tree that rocks like a lullaby. It is allowed to be about you.
- An analytical response cites swings or emerald wings and says what those words do to the paddle.
- The speaker’s motive is to keep singing with the paddle and to fold the land into that song. You can compare it with a time you kept a rhythm going.
- Canadian content is Johnson’s authorship and the river world she writes. Recognizing it is part of the reading.

Key terms

personal response

What the text stirs in you, said so a listener can tell it from a summary.

analytical response

A reading that points back to words in the text and says what those words do.

Canadian content

Work by a Canadian creator, or work clearly set in Canada, recognized as such.

Comparing motives

- The speaker carries the tree into the song the paddle already sings, so the motive is to keep that song going.
- A fair comparison: I keep a beat in my head on a long shift so the work stays lively. Both motives use rhythm to stay with a task.
- An unfair comparison: the poem is really about my shift. That erases her river.
- If your perspective was that old poems are only assignments, notice whether the lullaby line changed that. Say so.



Two sentences and a label

- Personal: the lullaby makes the work sound less lonely to me.
- Analytical: swings, swings and emerald wings rock the tree into the paddle's song.
- Motive: she keeps the song going with the stroke. I use a playlist on a long bus so the ride keeps a beat. The tasks differ. The rhythm is the likeness.
- Canadian content: E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), a Canadian poet, 1895.

A ferry on the Fraser

- Original paragraph written for this course: On the Fraser, the ferry’s horn answers a train on the far bank. Mira keeps the clipboard dry under her coat and counts the crossings she still owes her crew.
- This is Canadian content because the Fraser River is in British Columbia. The author of this paragraph is the course; Johnson wrote the poem.
- Give a personal sentence, an analytical sentence about the horn, and a motive comparison.

Review

- Cover Johnson and the ferry.
- Original lines: At a prairie rink outside Red Deer, the scoreboard buzzes and sticks. Evan skates the last shift because he told the bench he would.
- Say how you know this is Canadian content, and give one analytical detail plus one personal sentence.

Image credits

Unknown photographer, Portrait of E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) (I0023616), public domain