

COLLABORATE & COMPARE

POEM

ANIMAL WISDOM

by **Nancy Wood**

pages 133–135



COMPARE THEMES

As you read, focus on discovering themes, or messages about life or human nature, that both poems share. What ideas are communicated by each poem? Which ideas do they have in common?



ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

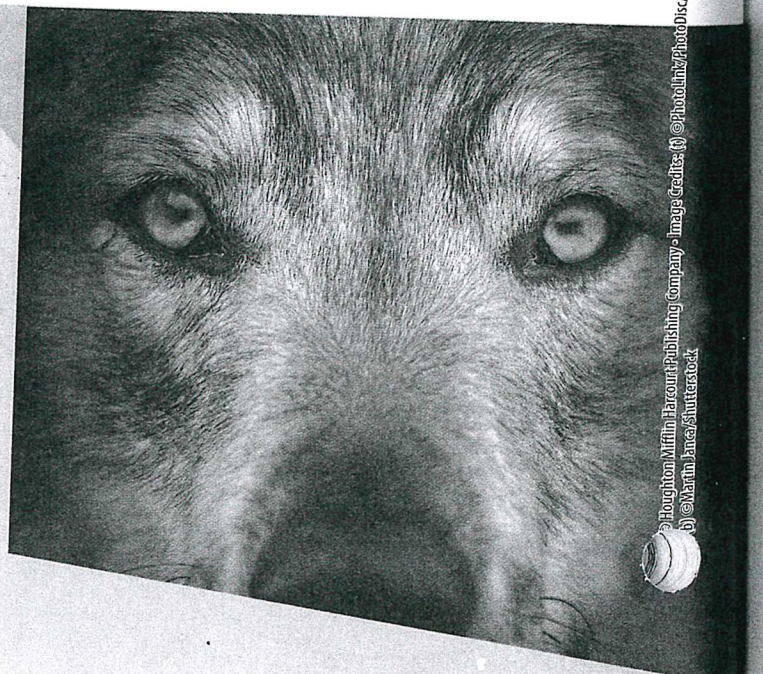
What can you learn by seeing the world through an animal's eyes?

POEM

THE LAST WOLF

by **Mary TallMountain**

pages 136–137



© Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company • Image Credits: (f) © PhotoLink/PhotoDisc/Getty Images; (b) © Alan Tanaka/Shutterstock



QUICK START

People and animals constantly interact with each other. Can you think of a time when you had an interaction in which an animal showed its intelligence? Think about why the interaction left an impression on you. Discuss your experience with your group.

ANALYZE PERSONIFICATION AND IMAGERY

Figurative language is language that has meaning beyond the literal meaning of the words. **Personification**, one type of figurative language, uses words to describe an object or animal as if it has human characteristics. Authors might use personification to emphasize an idea or create an emotional effect. For example, in "Animal Wisdom," a turtle is described as if it were human, talking the way a person would.

GENRE ELEMENTS: POETRY

- may use figurative language, including personification
- often includes imagery that appeals to the five senses
- expresses a theme, or a "big idea" message about life

"ANIMAL WISDOM" EXAMPLE

Turtle crawled up on land. He said:
What's missing is the ability
to find contentment in a slow-paced life.

PERSONIFICATION

The author uses personification to express an idea about what might be missing from the world.

Imagery is the use of words and phrases in a way that allows readers to experience, or imagine, how something looks, feels, sounds, smells, or tastes. To find imagery in a piece of writing, ask yourself, "What details help me experience what the author is describing? What sensory language helps me do that?" In "The Last Wolf," the author uses imagery to describe a wolf entering the city.

"THE LAST WOLF" EXAMPLE

and I heard his baying echoes
down the steep smashed warrens
of Montgomery Street and past
the few ruby-crowned highrises
left standing

IMAGERY

The sensory details in these lines help the reader imagine the sounds of the wolf and view what it sees.

As you read "Animal Wisdom" and "The Last Wolf," analyze the authors' use of imagery and personification to determine their specific reasons for using these techniques.



PARAPHRASE

Paraphrasing is restating text in your own words, which can help you **monitor comprehension** and ensure that you understand the text as you're reading. A paraphrase is written in simpler language and is about the same length as the original text, and an accurate paraphrase must keep the logical order and meaning of the original text. The chart below shows a paraphrase of a section of "The Last Wolf."

ORIGINAL TEXT	PARAPHRASE
he laid his long gray muzzle on the spare white spread and his eyes burned yellow his small dotted eyebrows quivered	The wolf put his head on the bed and stared with intense emotion.

Be sure your paraphrase accurately reflects the meaning of the original text, but avoid using the exact wording, or even the same sentence structure, of the text you are paraphrasing. If you do include exact words in your paraphrase, enclose those words in quotation marks.

ANNOTATION MODEL

NOTICE & NOTE



As you read, note examples of imagery and personification that move or surprise you. You can also paraphrase difficult passages in the side margin. In the model, you can see how one reader marked the first stanza of "Animal Wisdom" and made notes.

<p>At first, the wild creatures were too busy to explore their natural curiosity until <u>Turtle</u> crawled up on land. He <u>said</u>: What's missing is the ability 5 to find contentment in a slow-paced life.</p>		<p>A turtle talking! I wonder why? Paraphrase: The animals did not take time to discover the world around them until turtle pointed it out to them.</p>
--	--	---



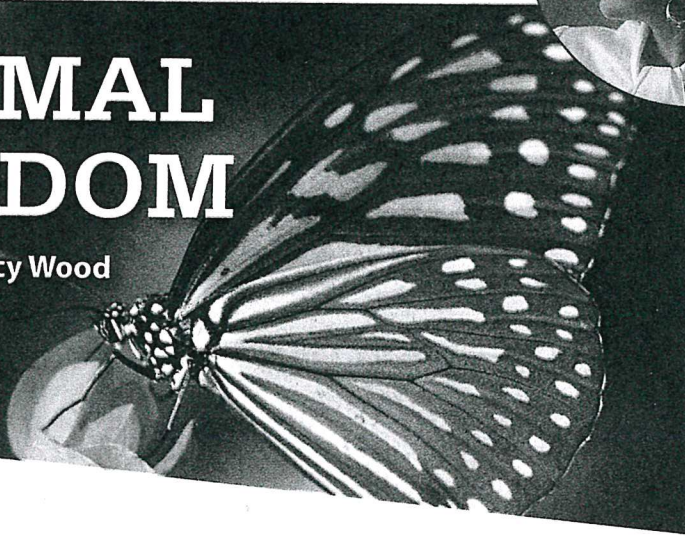
BACKGROUND

People and animals are in constant interaction with each other. It is not surprising, then, that animals have long been a favorite focus of poets and storytellers—such as **Nancy Wood** (1936–2013). In particular, Native American literature and culture express a strong reverence for animals and the land, air, and water they share with us. Nancy Wood was a poet, novelist, and photographer who lived in Colorado and New Mexico, where she was inspired by Native American culture and the wilderness.



ANIMAL WISDOM

Poem by Nancy Wood



PREPARE TO COMPARE

As you read, note the ways the different animals in Wood's poem demonstrate their intelligence. Think about the speaker's view of nature and what it suggests about seeing the world through an animal's eyes.

At first, the wild creatures were too busy
to explore their natural curiosity until
Turtle crawled up on land. He said:
What's missing is the ability
to find contentment in a slow-paced life.

Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.



NOTICE & NOTE

ANALYZE PERSONIFICATION

Annotate: Mark an example of personification in lines 6–11.

Infer: What can you infer about the bear through the poet's use of personification?

AHA MOMENT

Notice & Note: What does Eagle realize about the animals? Mark what Eagle says.

Describe: What does Eagle recognize about disagreement? How might his recognition help others?

ANALYZE IMAGERY

Annotate: Mark two examples of imagery related to the natural world in lines 23–34.

Interpret: What ideas about nature does the poet convey through these images?

PARAPHRASE

Annotate: Mark the final thought expressed in the poem.

Interpret: Restate the final thought in your own words.

As the oceans receded, fish sprouted whiskers.
Certain animals grew four legs and were able
to roam from shore to shore. Bear stood
upright and looked around. He said:
10 What's missing is devotion
to place, to give meaning to passing time.

Mountains grew from fiery heat, while
above them soared birds, the greatest
of which was Eagle, to whom penetrating
15 vision was given. He said: What's missing
is laughter so that arguments
can be resolved without rancor.¹

After darkness and light settled their
differences
20 and the creatures paired up,
people appeared in all the corners of
the world. They said: What's missing
is perception.² They began to notice
the beauty hidden
25 in an ordinary stone,
the short lives of snowflakes,
the perfection of bird wings, and
the way a butterfly speaks
through its fragility.³ When they realized

30 they had something in common with animals,
people began saying the same things.
They defended the Earth together,
though it was the animals who insisted
on keeping their own names.

¹ **rancor** (räng'kər): long-lasting resentment or anger.

² **perception** (pər-səp'shən): the ability to understand something, usually through the senses; also insight, intuition.

³ **fragility** (frə-jīl'ī-tē): easily broken, damaged, or destroyed; frail.



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions about “Animal Wisdom” before moving on to the next poem.

- 1 The imagery in the poem suggests the animals are —
 - A silly
 - B angry
 - C tired
 - D curious

- 2 Which of the following is an example of personification?
 - F *above them soared birds*
 - G *animals were able to roam from shore to shore*
 - H *as the oceans receded*
 - J *darkness and light settled their differences*

- 3 An important message in “Animal Wisdom” is that —
 - A animals understand the earth
 - B people know more than animals
 - C eagles have excellent vision
 - D animals have many names



NOTICE & NOTE

BACKGROUND

Mary TallMountain (1918–1994) was born in a small village along the Yukon River in Alaska. After her Athabaskan mother became seriously ill, TallMountain was adopted and taken away from her village. Living far from her family and home, TallMountain felt like an outsider.

Many of her poems and stories reflect her struggles to reconnect with nature and her lost home. Her writing is highly praised as part of the renaissance of Native American literature during the last few decades of the 20th century.



THE LAST WOLF

Poem by Mary TallMountain

Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

PARAPHRASE

Annotate: Mark any unfamiliar words and phrases in lines 1–8. Use a dictionary to determine their meanings.

Interpret: Restate lines 1–8 in your own words. Remember to maintain the order and meaning of the original text.

PREPARE TO COMPARE

As you read, look for details and ideas that illustrate the speaker's perspective on wild animals and the environment.

the last wolf hurried toward me
through the ruined city
and I heard his baying echoes
down the steep smashed warrens¹
5 of Montgomery Street and past
the few ruby-crowned highrises
left standing
their lighted elevators useless

passing the flickering red and green
10 of traffic signals
baying his way eastward
in the mystery of his wild loping gait
closer the sounds in the deadly night
through clutter and rubble of quiet blocks

¹ warrens (wôr'ənz): overcrowded living areas.



15 I heard his voice ascending² the hill
 and at last his low whine as he came
 floor by empty floor to the room
 where I sat
 in my narrow bed looking west, waiting
 20 I heard him snuffle³ at the door and
 I watched
 he trotted across the floor
 he laid his long gray muzzle
 on the spare white spread
 25 and his eyes burned yellow
 his small dotted eyebrows quivered

Yes, I said.
 I know what they have done.

² ascending (ə-sĕn' dĭng): rising up.

³ snuffle (snŭf' əl): sniff.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions about "The Last Wolf" before moving on to the **Analyze the Texts** section.

- In "The Last Wolf," what has happened to the city?
 - Animals have attacked it.
 - People have ruined it.
 - A big storm has destroyed it.
 - It is being rebuilt.
- Which line in "The Last Wolf" appeals to the sense of sight?
 - and I heard his baying echoes*
 - in the mystery of his wild loping gait*
 - and at last his low whine as he came*
 - I heard him snuffle at the door and*
- The line "their lighted elevators useless" emphasizes —
 - the emptiness and ruin of the city
 - the height of the buildings
 - the size of the wolf
 - the darkness of the city

ANALYZE IMAGERY

Annotate: Mark striking examples of imagery used to describe the wolf in lines 15–26.

Infer: What does this use of imagery suggest about how the last wolf feels?



ANALYZE THE TEXTS

Support your responses with evidence from the texts. NOTEBOOK

1. **Cite Evidence** Reread lines 1–17 of “Animal Wisdom.” How does the use of personification affect the way you perceive the animals? Cite text evidence in your response.
2. **Interpret** Paraphrase lines 29–34 of “Animal Wisdom.” Why do you think the animals “insisted on keeping their own names”?
3. **Analyze** Reread lines 1–8 of “The Last Wolf.” What mood or feeling does the imagery in these lines create?
4. **Evaluate** Reread lines 9–26 of “The Last Wolf.” How does the poet’s use of figurative language and details suggest that the wolf is intelligent? Is this use effective? Cite text evidence.
5. **Notice & Note** State in your own words the meaning of the last two lines of “The Last Wolf.” How do these lines reflect a change in the speaker of the poem? How might the lines affect a reader?

RESEARCH

The action of Mary TallMountain’s poem takes place in a “ruined city,” which is not a place one would expect to find a wolf. Do research and complete the chart below, providing details about wolves in your answers. Be sure to add your own questions and answers to the chart.

RESEARCH TIP

Consider using your textbooks from other subject areas as a source of information. For instance, you can search the index or table of contents of your science textbook to see whether it contains information about wolves.

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
What is a wolf’s natural habitat? Where do wolves usually live?	
What do wolves eat?	
My own questions:	

Connect In “The Last Wolf,” the author presents the wolf outside its natural environment. What is TallMountain suggesting about humanity’s relationship to the natural world? What other texts do you know that feature wolves, and how do those texts differ from “The Last Wolf”?



CREATE AND PRESENT

Discuss the Poems Hold a group discussion on how the different animals in the poems demonstrate their intelligence and what this suggests about each poet's view of wildlife.

- Discuss how the poets present the animals' intelligence in each poem. Support your ideas with details from the poems.
- Take notes about your ideas and other students' thoughts.
- As a group, identify points of agreement or disagreement, and then draw a conclusion on how each poet feels about wildlife.

Present Imagery With your group, create a poster on which you share your interpretation of key images from the poems.

- With your group, choose three images from the poems that struck you as especially memorable. Illustrate and display the examples of imagery on a board for your class to see.
- Indicate the sense to which each image appeals.
- Note the meaning conveyed by each image.
- Explain why the images you chose are memorable to you.



Go to the **Speaking and Listening Studio** for more on holding a discussion.

RESPOND TO THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

? What can you learn by seeing the world through an animal's eyes?

Gather Information Review your annotations and notes on "Animal Wisdom" and "The Last Wolf." Then, add relevant details to your Response Log. As you determine which information to include, think about:

- what the imagery suggests about the animals
- how animals and humans relate in the poems
- how the writers portray the animals in the poems

At the end of the unit, use your notes to write an argument.

UNIT 2 RESPONSE LOG	
Use this Response Log to record your ideas. Write how each of the items on Unit 2 relates to an Essential Question.	
7 Essential Question: What can you learn by seeing the world through an animal's eyes?	
Poem Title	
Ess	
Does Animal Change The Wayday World of Wildlife Speas	
Animal Wisdom	
The Last Wolf	
Wild Animals Aren't Pre	
Let People Own Create Activites	
82	Response Log

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

As you discuss and present your ideas about the poems, be sure to use the Academic Vocabulary words. Check off each of the words that you use.

- benefit
- distinct
- environment
- illustrate
- respond



ANIMAL WISDOM
Poem by Nancy Wood

THE LAST WOLF
Poem by Mary TallMountain



Collaborate & Compare

COMPARE THEMES

"Animal Wisdom" and "The Last Wolf" are poems about animals, nature, and human beings. Although the poems share similar topics, they may express different themes. A poem's **theme** is its "big picture" idea, or its message about life or human nature. When you ask what a poem means, you are asking about theme.

Poets do not generally state themes directly. It is up to you to **infer** a theme based on a poem's significant details. As you review the poems for details that hint at a theme, you might consider:

- key statements that the speaker or characters may make
- significant events that occur in the poem
- memorable images that describe the characters or setting

With your group, complete a chart with details from both poems.

	ANIMAL WISDOM	THE LAST WOLF
Key Statements		
Significant Events		
Memorable Images		

ANALYZE THE TEXTS

Discuss answers to these questions with your group.

1. **Compare** With your group, review the images that you cited in your chart. In what ways are the images similar? In what ways are they different? Explain.
2. **Infer** Both poems contain themes about the way humans relate to the natural world. Compare these themes. Cite text evidence in your discussion.
3. **Evaluate** In "Animal Wisdom," the animal characters speak as humans do. In "The Last Wolf," the wolf communicates without speaking. Discuss which portrayal you find more effective. Why?
4. **Interpret** Reflect on how human beings benefit from the wisdom of animals. Listen and learn from others in your group, and adjust your opinion, if needed.



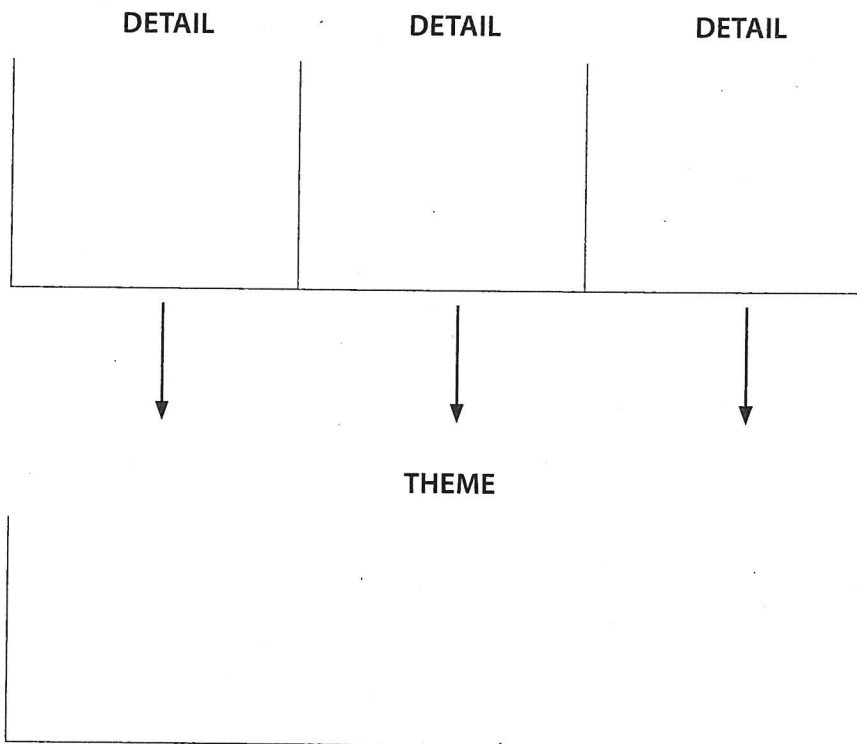
COMPARE AND PRESENT

Now your group can continue exploring the ideas in these texts by identifying and comparing their themes. Follow these steps:

- 1. Decide on the most important details.** With your group, review your chart to identify the most important details from each poem. Identify points you agree on, and resolve disagreements through discussion, basing your decisions on evidence from the texts.
- 2. Create theme statements.** State a theme for each poem, using complete sentences. Remember, it is up to you and your group to infer the themes based on details. You can use a chart like the one shown here to determine the theme each writer suggests.



Go to the **Speaking and Listening Studio** for help with giving a presentation.



- 3. Compare and contrast themes.** With your group, discuss similarities and differences in the themes of the poems. Listen actively to the members of your group, take notes, and ask the group to clarify any points you do not understand. Identify points of agreement or disagreement before you present your ideas.
- 4. Present to the class.** Now it is time to present your ideas. State your conclusions about the themes of the poems. Discuss points of similarity and difference in themes. You may adapt the charts you created or use other visuals to help convey your ideas and information to the class.