English 10/11  
PLO: B12 (meets both English 10 and 11 requirements)  
Class time: 60 minutes  

Gloss and Analysis of “Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll  

Intention:  
By the end of the lesson, students will have the tools to analyze a poem break it down into digestible pieces. This lesson will also serve as a review of important poetic devices such as onomatopoeia, rhyme, and alliteration.  

Activities:  
1. The Hook (10 minutes) – I will animatedly read aloud “Jabberwocky” to the students to elicit a reaction. With the playful, nonsense words, this will hopefully arouse some curiosity. What is this about? What is a Jabberwock? What are these crazy words? After a copy of the poem is dispersed to each student, they will have a few minutes to discuss in pairs what they believe this poem is about. I want to have the students hear the poem first before reading it to get a sense of the different sounds and rhythm, hence the delayed distribution of the poem.  

2. Visuals and Thoughts (10 minutes) – I will unveil some photos of what a Jabberwock is thought to look like, and ask the class to share some of their interpretations. What do you make of the word choice? What function do the nonsense words play?  

3. Poetic Device Review (5 minutes) – A brief review of key poetic devices will be run through in the form of a classroom discussion. What is a simile? Can you give me an example? This “ask and answer” discussion will serve to jog the memories of the students before we begin glossing.  

4. Glossing (25 minutes) – “Jabberwocky” will be shown on the overhead. Going through each stanza, I will ask students to tell me what they notice. Is there rhyme? What is the rhyme scheme? Points of interest will be written down – “glossed” – in different coloured pens so that they can be deciphered for easier reading. Step by step, from rhyme to alliteration to onomatopoeia, the poem will begin to look more marked up. It will be visually evident to the students that we are making progress taking apart a poem.  

5. Final Discussion and Homework Task (10 minutes) – I will ask a few volunteer students to re-read aloud stanzas of the poem. This serves to hear the poem one last time with a new perspective having “glossed” over the poem. Any lingering questions and concerns will be dealt with in the discussion. For homework, students will need to select a short poem of their own
choice and complete a gloss to demonstrate that they are making connections and understanding the process.

**Evaluation:**

The short discussion at the end of the class will serve as a way to gauge progress. Learning how to break down a poem and pull out meanings and interpretations takes practice so this lesson aims to provide tools for this ongoing process. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify concerns. The homework task will show students' progress with glossing in a non-judgemental environment; the task is for homework participation, not severe grading. The idea is to get used to glossing. It is a work-in-progress and instant clarity when reading a poem is not expected – ambiguity is okay as long as a student can pick out some of the poetic devices and show that they are grasping the purpose of glossing.

**Resources:**
- Poem (overhead copy and student hardcopies)
- Pictures (overhead copies)
- Coloured pens for glossing
JABBERWOCKY

Lewis Carroll

(from Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There, 1872)

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?"
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.