“Snake on the Etowah” by David Bottoms
“Vanishing Species” by Bailey White

**Literary Analysis: Comparing Poetry and Prose**

Literature comes in two major forms—prose and poetry.

- **Prose** is the ordinary form of written language. Prose is usually presented in paragraphs and runs continuously. It includes both fiction and nonfiction. Essays, stories, and novels are all forms of prose.
- **Poetry** is distinguished from prose by its use of precise words, deliberate line lengths, and sound devices such as rhyme and alliteration. Poetry is organized in stanzas and often uses line breaks to emphasize meaning. Poetry is abbreviated, so poets must choose precise words to express their ideas. Poems can rhyme, can be written in free verse, can be lyric, or can tell a story.

Though the two kinds of literature take different form, the writers of both often have the same task—to choose words and images that appeal to the reader and express precise meaning or emotion.

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the following chart to identify the similarities and differences between the presentation of the poem “Snake on the Etowah” and that of “Vanishing Species.”

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<th>Form</th>
<th>Literary Techniques/ Language</th>
<th>Setting/Mood</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<td>“Snake on the Etowah”</td>
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<td>“Vanishing Species”</td>
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**DIRECTIONS:** Use the information from the chart to write a compare-and-contrast paragraph about the differences in the presentation of ideas in the poem and in the prose selection.
Journal: Snake on the Etowah

Critical Thinking

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Respond: Do the images in this poem generate a positive or negative reaction in you? Explain.

2. (a) In what locations does the speaker encounter snakes? (b) Infer: Are such encounters common or unusual for him? (c) Draw Conclusions: What is his attitude toward the snakes?

3. (a) Analyze: In lines 8 and 15, what comparison does the poet use to describe the garter snake and the cottonmouth? (b) Interpret: What do these comparisons reveal about his relationship with nature?

4. (a) Where does the poet encounter the copperhead? (b) Compare and Contrast: How is this meeting with a snake different from the experiences earlier in the poem?

5. What is the secret to reaching someone with words? (a) What sensory details does the poet use to describe his encounter with the copperhead? (b) Has he successfully communicated to you the way this event would feel? Explain.
Journal: Vanishing Species

Critical Thinking

Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. Respond: Would you have wanted to be in the pickup when Mr. Linley recorded the alligator? Why or why not?

2. (a) Why does Mr. Linley come to visit the narrator’s aunt? (b) Infer: What first impression does he give? (c) Compare and Contrast: How does his behavior with the alligator contradict this impression?

3. (a) Once the recording is successful, what does Mr. Linley do? (b) Infer: How do the narrator and her aunt react? (c) Connect: Why does the dog start to howl?

4. (a) What happens to the alligator recording? (b) Interpret: What do Mr. Linley’s reactions show about him? (c) Speculate: What do you think happens to Mr. Linley after this incident?

5. What is the secret to reaching someone with words? (a) How does the narrator’s conversational style and descriptive language help make this story funny for readers? (b) Has she successfully communicated the way this episode took place? Explain.