

Write an Ode (to an Everyday Item)

How can poetry help you express appreciation for the everyday world around you?

Poetry about Everyday Art and Beauty

Read the poem “Ode on a Grecian Urn” by John Keats. In it, Keats looks at a Grecian urn, or an ancient piece of pottery decorated with human figures and events. He refers to this urn as a “historian” and thinks about the scenes captured upon it.

Over the course of five 10-line stanzas, Keats asks the urn about the various characters it depicts and imagines what their stories might be. For example, he sees a group of men chasing a group of women in the first stanza and wonders if they are men or gods and if the women flee as part of an amusing game or in a desire to escape. He also wonders about the figure of a piper, his music frozen in time, and a group of villagers on their way to sacrifice a cow to the gods and the empty village they left behind.

In the poem, Keats plays with many themes and ideas. For example, while the urn does not change over time, each new generation of people viewing it can look at its artwork and tell a different story about what the art on it means. Keats also muses on how the figures in the urn’s artwork are both frozen in time and yet timeless and free from time’s effects (like aging).

Read the Poem

- [Ode on a Grecian Urn](#) on Project Gutenberg
(Note: HMH is not responsible for the content of third-party websites.)
- Use the attached Anchor Chart to help you analyze Keats’s poem.
- As you read the poem, what questions might you ask about the urn’s decoration?

Make Your Own Everyday Object Poem

Having read the poem, go and find a common everyday item around your house—it could be a can opener, a ruler, a poster, or a toothbrush, for example—and write an ode to that item containing at least two to three 10-line stanzas. Talk about the item’s utility, beauty, and impact on your life. Imagine how your life would be different without it and praise its best and most helpful features.

Evaluate Structural and Stylistic Aspects of Poetry

LOOK CLOSELY AT

Language

What **WORDS** stand out to you?

WHY do you think the poet chose those words?

a **speck**
of dust



Sounds

What **SOUNDS** are repeated?



proof **of** their **life**

Line breaks

What do the **LINE BREAKS** make
you pay attention to?

and pretend
that I
am not also
breaking into bits

Capitalization and punctuation

What **CHOICES** did the poet make?

What is the **EFFECT**?

