Think of a favorite photo and picture in your mind the scene it shows. What details help you visualize the scene? As you’ll see, through carefully chosen details, a poem can capture the image of a moment in time.

**QUICKWRITE** William Carlos Williams famously remarked that a poem can be made out of anything. With a group, think of an animal or object that could be the subject of a poem. Without naming the animal or object, list details that illustrate its physical qualities and the feeling it creates in people who view it. Then, see if other groups can guess your subject from the details you chose.
TEXT ANALYSIS: IMAGISM

A style can be unique to an author, or it can reflect the shared artistic vision of a literary movement. Imagism was a style embraced by several influential English and American poets in the 1910s and 1920s. Rebelling against structured verse forms like the sonnet, imagists wanted poetry to be “swift, uncluttered, functional.” Different poets interpreted the style in different ways, but most imagist poems include these characteristics:

- simple, unpretentious language
- flexible, natural rhythms instead of strict meter and rhyme
- concise, precise descriptions
- clear, vivid images, usually drawn from everyday life

While many poets use imagery, imagists wrote poems about single striking images or series of images. Every element of a poem—words, rhythm, structure—was carefully chosen to re-create the experience of seeing an image, whose meaning was never stated but only implied.

Imagism borrowed from several poetic traditions, including classical Greek lyric, Japanese haiku, and French symbolist poetry. Free verse, or unrhymed lines with irregular rhythms, was a hallmark of imagist style. As you read, note the elements of imagist style you find in each poem.

READING STRATEGY: VISUALIZE

When you visualize, you form mental pictures based on the details a writer supplies. Visualizing can help you understand the experience an imagist poem presents. Use the following strategies to visualize the scenes in these poems:

- Note sensory details in each poem, such as the “cold, wet leaves” in Amy Lowell’s “The Pond.”
- Think about the mood or idea each detail conveys.
- Sketch the mental images you “see” as you read each poem.

For each poem, use a chart to record descriptive phrases and words and the mental images that they evoke for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: “The Pond”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“cold, wet leaves”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
The **Pond**

Amy Lowell

Cold, wet leaves
Floating on moss-coloured water,
And the croaking of frogs—
Cracked bell-notes in the twilight.

**Imagism**

What elements of imagist style can you identify in this poem?

**Analyze Visuals**

Compare this image with the one on page 897. Which elements, such as color, subject, and composition, help establish the **mood** of each image?
The little boat at anchor
in black water sat murmuring
to the tall black sky.

A white sky bomb fizzed on a black line.
A rocket hissed its red signature into the west.
Now a shower of Chinese fire alphabets,
a cry of flower pots broken in flames,
a long curve to a purple spray,
three violet balloons—

Drips of seaweed tangled in gold,
shimmering symbols of mixed numbers,
tremulous arrangements of cream gold folds
of a bride’s wedding gown—

A few sky bombs spoke their pieces,
then velvet dark.

The little boat at anchor
in black water sat murmuring
to the tall black sky.
The Red Wheelbarrow

William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon

a red wheel
barrow

5 glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens.

VISUALIZE

What visual contrast does this poem present?
Comprehension

1. **Recall** What phrase does the speaker of “The Pond” use to describe the croaking of frogs?

2. **Clarify** What contrast does “Fourth of July Night” include?

3. **Recall** What sensory details does “The Red Wheelbarrow” provide?

Text Analysis

4. **Describe Mood** Amy Lowell’s “The Pond” uses one simple image to communicate its message. Describe the mood of this poem. How does the image chosen help establish this mood?

5. **Interpret Form** In what way does the structure of “Fourth of July Night” mimic the action it describes?

6. **Make Inferences** Reread “The Red Wheelbarrow” without its opening stanza. How does the first stanza change your understanding of the poem?

7. **Visualize** Imagist poems present compact descriptions that leave many details implied or unstated. Choose an image from one of the charts you created earlier. Using the visualization strategy, write a more detailed description of the image.

8. **Evaluate Imagist Style** Use a chart to identify features of imagist style in each poem. Which of the poems is the best example of imagist style? Cite details to support your conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imagist Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concise descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striking images</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text Criticism

9. **Historical Context** In the early decades of the 20th century, Europe and the United States experienced rapid technological and social change, as well as a devastating world war. How might these challenges to established traditions have fueled an experimental artistic movement like imagism?

Can you paint a PICTURE with words?

Would you prefer to use words or images to depict a scene? Why?