

Making connections with what we read is an important strategy. In this lesson, you will practice **making connections** with ideas that are both childlike and serious. Sometimes poets play with language as a way of making you think in creative ways. That's what Pablo Neruda does in the poems you will read in the next two lessons.

Pablo Neruda (right), a Chilean poet, was also a politician. He won a Nobel Prize for his poetry but was exiled from his country for his politics. The movie *Il Postino*, or *The Postman*, shows part of his life in exile. Neruda's poems reflect his ideas about life and politics. The poems in this unit are from his book called *The Book of Questions*. All the poems in this book are composed in question form.

As you read these three poems by Neruda, write your own questions, connections, and annotations in the **Response Notes** column.



Poems VII, XVI, and XXIV by Pablo Neruda

VII

Is peace the peace of the dove?
Does the leopard wage war?

Why does the professor teach
the geography of death?

What happens to swallows
who are late for school?

Is it true they scatter
transparent letters across the sky?

XVI

Do salt and sugar work
to build a white tower?

Is it true that in an anthill
dreams are a duty?

Do you know what the earth
meditates upon in autumn?

(Why not give a medal
to the first golden leaf?)

Response Notes

*What makes the dove
a symbol of peace?*

XXIV

Is 4 the same 4 for everybody?
Are all sevens equal?

When the convict ponders the light
is it the same light that shines on you?

For the diseased, what color
do you think April is?

Which occidental monarchy
will fly flags of poppies? ❖

1 Reread Neruda's poems. To which poem did you make the strongest connection? What were the connections?

2 Use the connections to spin off your own questions about a serious topic. Pose playful and hypothetical questions.

Questions

What if everyone in the world got along?

- 3 Use your questions to draft a poem. You might start your poem with *Imagine* or *What if*.

- 4 Read your draft. Mix up the questions to see if you like the flow better. Share your revised draft with a partner.

- 5 Revise your poem again by listening to the comments of several classmates. Write a final draft and include a title.

What is the value of making connections with what you read?

