Purpose: Upon completion of this activity, students will have practiced interpreting a poem. This DLA should take approximately 45 minutes to complete.

1. Read the following poem:

“Cutting the Cake” by Virginia Hamilton Adair

Gowned and veiled for tribal ritual  
in a maze of tulle and satin  
with her eyes rimmed round in cat fur  
and the stylish men about her  
kissing kin and carefree suitors  
long she looked unseeing past him  
to her picture in the papers  
print and photoflash embalming  
the demise of the familiar  
and he trembled as her fingers  
took the dagger laid before them  
for the ceremonial cutting  
of the mounting tiers of sweetness  
crowned with manikin and maiden  
and her chop was so triumphant  
that the groomlike figure  
from his lover at the apex  
toppled over in the frosting  
where a flower girl retrieved him  
sucked him dry and bit his head off.

2. Answer the following questions:

A. What is the poem’s situation?
B. What are some examples of violence in the poem? List at least five.
C. Why do you think the author uses such violent terms to describe this scene?
D. How many sentences are in the poem? Why does the author make this choice?
E. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? Why does the author make this choice?
F. What is the bride looking at before she cuts the cake? Why is this important?
G. The poem mentions “tribal ritual” and “ceremonial cutting.” Why are these terms important to the meaning of the poem?

3. Take this sheet and meet with an instructor or tutor to go over your answers and discuss the poem. Have that person sign below.

Attach a confirmation sheet or get a signature below: