

LISTENING FOR TONE



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THE FAVORITE POEM PROJECT IS DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING, DOCUMENTING AND ENCOURAGING POETRY'S ROLE IN OUR LIVES. **FOR MORE LESSON PLANS AND RESOURCES VISIT** [FAVORITEPOEM.ORG](https://www.favoritepoem.org)

Outcomes

The lesson, which focuses on vocal renderings of poems, will:


- Encourage students to discern meaning through tone of voice, inflection and context.
- Emphasize that part of being a good reader of poetry is following intuition.

Based on a lesson by Frances Ashe, Kate Oneschuk (Holliston High School, Holliston, MA), Monica Hiller (Watertown High School, Watertown, MA) and Allyson Sklover (Boston Latin Academy, Dorchester, MA)





Ideas and Methodologies

- Have students listen to Glaisma Perez-Silva's reading in Spanish of "Ay, Ay, Ay de la Grifa Negra" on the Favorite Poem Project Video (you'll have to forward the segment to the point where she reads in Spanish). The first time, they will simply listen to the sound of the words. The second time, they will write as they listen, guessing what the reader may be saying, what the poem may be about, listening closely to her voice and to the sounds of the words. (If there are Spanish-speakers in the class, they can write a reflection about some of the more powerful lines in the poem).
 - Discussion - how can we tell what words might mean even if we have no idea what they are saying? Introduce thinking about tone, sound, inflection .
 - Have one student read "Jabberwocky" aloud. Repeat exercise, having students (in groups) define the nonsense words in context based upon their sounds and placement within sentences and insert "synonyms."
 - Have students share their "new" Jabberwocky poems, where the nonsense words are replaced with words in English. How do the groups' poems differ? Do they all have the same tone?
 - Discussion - tone and choice in students' lives: Do students speak differently when they are in different social situations? How can we read people by the tone of their voice? Why is this important?
 - **Additional Ideas:**
 - Use lesson to segue to [Beowulf](#) or [Canterbury Tales](#) where students can use the skills they have developed to explore potentially daunting material.
 - Incorporate into vocabulary lessons stressing defining meanings of words from context.
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Lesson Resources

"Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll

"Ay, Ay, Ay de la Grifa Negra" by Julia de Burgos, on Favorite Poem
Project Video



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