

SEEKING POEMS SHARING CONNECTIONS
PART I:
INITIATING ACTIVITY FOR A POETRY UNIT



LESSON PLANS | EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES | VIDEOS | POETRY

THE FAVORITE POEM PROJECT IS DEDICATED TO CELEBRATING, DOCUMENTING
AND ENCOURAGING POETRY'S ROLE IN OUR LIVES. **FOR MORE LESSON PLANS
AND RESOURCES VISIT**

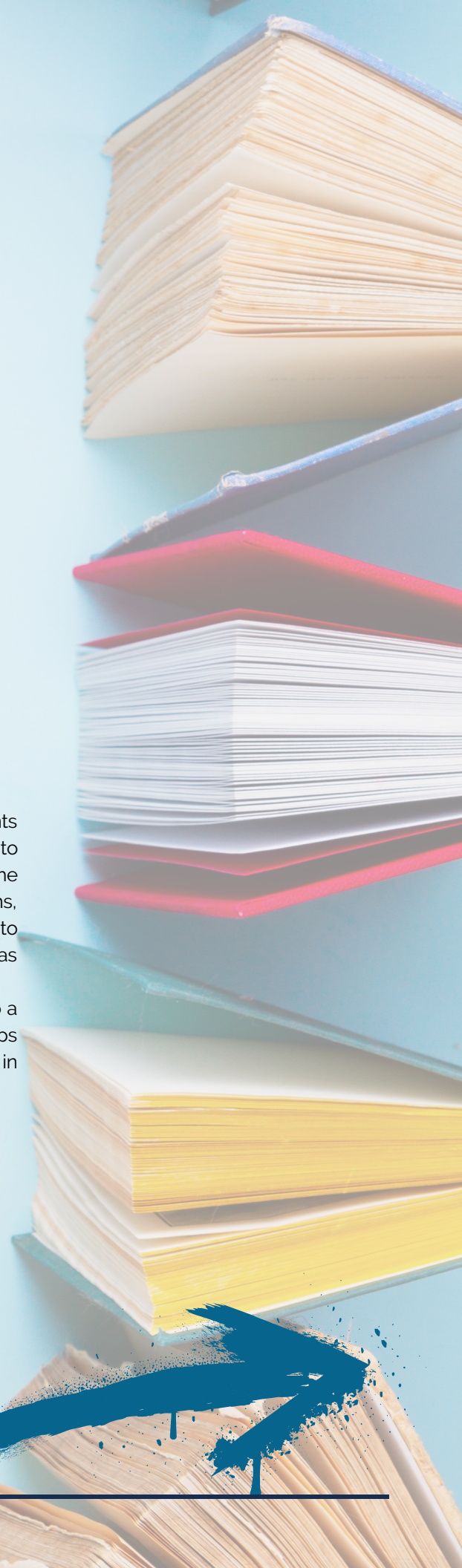
[FAVORITEPOEM.ORG](https://www.favoritepoem.org)

Outcomes

We have taken very much to heart the question of the ordering of events within a poetry unit, or a year-long poetry study. This lesson seeks first to help students find an immediate connection to a poem. We hope that the unit as a whole will move them towards a deeper consideration of poems, while still maintaining a visceral attachment to them, and we feel that to underscore the democratic spirit of this unit, it is important that, as far as possible, the teacher should participate alongside the students.

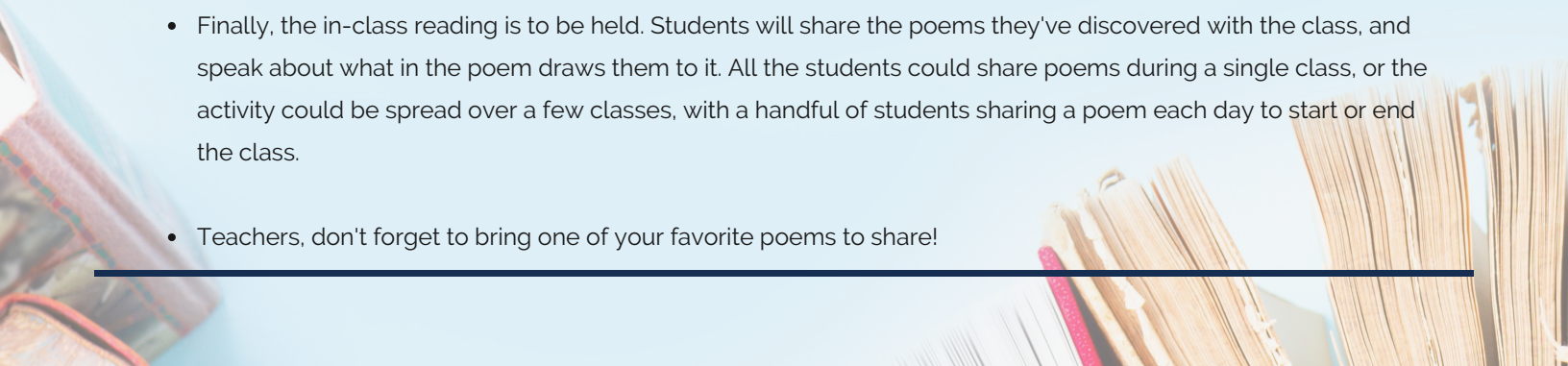
We see this activity leading naturally into a unit that is student-driven to a considerable degree, which could culminate in students working in groups to produce their own favorite poem videos, either within the school, or in the wider community.

This lesson was made possible by submissions from Kelly Aravian (Needham High School, Needham, MA), Ronna Frick (Wellesley High School, Wellesley, MA), Mary Henry (Veterans Memorial High School, Peabody, MA), and Emma Leslie (Newton South High School, Newton, MA)





Ideas and Methodologies

- With very little preamble, show 6 - 10 Favorite Poem Project video segments. You should select these according to the needs and tastes of your class.
 - Ask students to write a response to a single segment that spoke to them strongly.
 - Ask them to discuss what appealed to them, what they noticed, etc. Ask in particular about what they feel makes a good reading of a poem.
 - Ask the students "What poetry is in your head?" — anything at all, from Shel Silverstein, to snippets of Shakespeare, to song lyrics. Ask, "Is there a poem you know well enough to recite?" Encourage students to recite any poems they know.
 - For homework, have the students find a poem that they enjoy. They should be ready to read the poem in front of the class and talk about why they like it. Teachers whose students may need more guidance and encouragement might want to pause at this point to accompany their students to the library for a period of searching for poems. Otherwise, teachers could send their students to their bookshelves at home, the library, the Internet, or classroom books.
 - Once students have selected their poem, they should write it legibly and by hand. It is not sufficient to bring in a sheet printed from the Internet, or a book with a bookmark in it. Students should look up any unfamiliar words in the poem and prepare definitions.
 - Students should practice reading the poem aloud at least three times. It may be helpful to remind them that punctuation marks serve as a sort of score, with commas as breaths and periods as full beats, and that it's not necessary to pause unnaturally at each line-ending, especially those that are enjambed (where the syntax of one line runs into the next without punctuation). Remind them, too, to check pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
 - Students should think carefully about (but not write out) what they will say about the personal significance of this poem.
 - Finally, the in-class reading is to be held. Students will share the poems they've discovered with the class, and speak about what in the poem draws them to it. All the students could share poems during a single class, or the activity could be spread over a few classes, with a handful of students sharing a poem each day to start or end the class.
 - Teachers, don't forget to bring one of your favorite poems to share!
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