

STUDENT FAVORITE POEM VIDEOS



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

One thing the camera brings to the reading of a poem is the opportunity to watch a person saying a poem. Especially if the poem is something the reader treasures, you can see and hear a distinct change in face, voice, even the mildest gesture, when the person says the poem aloud. It would not be very interesting to watch someone looking at a piece of art or watching a film, dance or play — one reason art viewers and audience members all face the same way and are often in the dark. The same way one can witness pleasure and intensity in the face and movement of a musician singing or playing a song, one can gain things by watching the reader of a poem, whose instrument is the body. The difference is that the reader of a poem need not be a skilled performer.

Making videos of students saying poems aloud will emphasize the significance of poetry as a visceral, vocal art.





Ideas and Methodologies

- First, students will have to find a poem that means something to them — on their own, with access to various resources. (The project would be far less rich and beneficial if each student read the same poem, or if students were limited to choosing from just a few poems).
- In the videos we've made for the Favorite Poem archive, each reader speaks briefly about a poem's personal significance and then reads the poem aloud on camera. One way to incorporate different learning tools would be to pair students, having one act as videographer while the other reads, then switching roles. The emphasis should not be on performance but on the experience of saying a poem one loves aloud.
- A more advanced assignment, perhaps in a high school media class, could require some shooting on-location and some editing. We suggest that the videos don't attempt to illustrate the poems, but focus on the act of reading as the interest and pleasure of the piece.
- An entire class period or two could be dedicated to watching the finished videos — to seeing and hearing peers read poems aloud and speak about the poems personally and thoughtfully.
- The same way that the Favorite Poem Project videos create a portrait of the United States through the lens of poetry, videos in schools can make a lasting portrait of a particular class. If teachers choose to make the videos a yearly assignment, the school will eventually have a large, valuable archive, which could be made available to all students for viewing in an A/V lab or to check out from the library.





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