TERMS FOR THE TOOLS OF POETRY

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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

Outcomes

In order to do well on examinations such as the MCAS and AP, students must have an understanding of the tools poets use and must know the terms for those tools, and be able to apply them in reading and discussion. Improving their familiarity with poetic terms will also help students establish a common, precise language with which to talk about poetry, and the means for achieving a deeper understanding and appreciation of the poet's art. The informing principle of this unit on poetry is that the order of teaching is crucial. We feel that terms are necessary and useful, but should be taught only after an introductory lesson or lessons that help students establish personal connections with particular poems. After those ties are established, students may want to reflect further upon and delve more deeply into the poems they have selected. As transition into a unit on poetry, we suggest a lesson on poetic terms, which will provide students with a common language for discussing poems.

Ideas and Methodologies

The teacher will create a list of key poetic terms (see below for suggestions) from which each student will select (or be assigned) a term that they are to teach to the rest of the class. Each student should have a visual aid, with the term, its definition, and an example and/or illustration. Their task is to make the term "memorable" to their classmates. They will be graded on their presentation.

Put students in groups of four and ask them to select one of their four favorite poems (from a previous lesson) to look at more closely. (Variation: each student could do the assignment individually, depending on class size). The teacher will provide a second poem to each group, along with a list of three or four terms that are useful in a focused discussion of poems. (The terms may vary from group to group, with some overlap.

The teacher may consider which terms will be most useful to each group, considering their poems for discussion). Each group will develop a presentation defining and illustrating the poetic tools and terms using examples from the two poems to teach the class.

Before the presentations, students will look up definitions for the assigned terms, then search for examples in the poems while the teacher acts as coach for the groups. Students will read the poems aloud before each presentation. Groups can be urged to be as creative as possible with the presentations, possibly using pictures, dramatization, music, etc.

Suggested Poetic Tools For Study

- 1. Voice
  - Speaker
  - Tone
- 2. Diction
  - Denotation
  - Connotation
  - Idiom
- 3. Imagery - appeal to the senses
  - Visual
  - Aural
  - Tactile
  - Olfactory
  - Gustatory
- 4. Figures of Speech
  - Literal Language
  - Figurative Language
  - Metaphor
  - Simile
  - Hyperbole
  - Litotes
  - Oxymoron
  - Synecdoche
  - Metonymy
  - Personification
  - Apostrophe
- 5. Symbolism and Allegory
- 6. Syntax
- 7. Rhyme
  - End
  - Internal
  - Exact or Perfect
  - Slant
- 8. Alliteration
  - Assonance
  - Consonance
  - Onomatopoeia
- 9. Rhythm and Meter
  - Foot
  - Kinds of feet: Iamb, Trochee, Anapest, Dactyl, Spondee, Pyrrhic foot
  - Meter determined by number of feet in line: Dimeter, Trimeter, Tetrameter, Pentameter
- 10. Form and Free Verse
  - Sonnet
  - Sestina
  - Villanelle
  - Lines (varying kinds in free verse)

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