

# Family Introduction to the Favorite Poem Project

Recommended Grade Range: Elementary School



## Learning Objective(s)

### Students will be able to...

- ✓ Consider how and why people make personal connections to poetry.
- ✓ Understand and discuss the universality of poetry; ie, that it is for people of all ages and backgrounds.

▶ *This lesson is meant for the beginning of the school year, as it is designed to introduce parents and students to the Favorite Poem Project and to inspire families to read poetry together.*

## Lesson Agenda

### Do Now

- ◆ Begin class with a short explanation of the Favorite Poem Project. Then, show videos 1-3 from the "Lesson Resources" section of this lesson plan.
- ◆ Ask students to make observations about the poems and the readers, as they will be sharing their noticings and any questions after the videos end.
  - ◆ Some students, depending on age and ability, may want to record their questions/observations on a worksheet or piece of scrap paper in order to remember them.

### Share Out

- ◆ Ask students to share what they noticed about the people and poems in the FPP videos.
  - ◆ Discuss the broad range of people (young and old, different backgrounds, famous and not famous) who like poetry and the differences between the types of poetry they chose (short poems, long poems, poems in translation, humorous or serious poems).

### Mini Lesson

- ◆ Repeat the process above with videos 4-7. This time, ask students to pay attention to the emotions people bring to poetry, and how poetry helps people express emotion.
  - ◆ After watching the video, ask students to share (in small groups or as a whole class) about the emotions they noticed.
  - ◆ At this point in the lesson, you may want to ask students for any personal connections they can make to poetry.



### Wrap Up

- ◆ Share out a favorite poem of your own, and explain your connection to it.

### Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ In a later lesson, introduce a small packet of poems that can be used as a foundation for students' personal anthologies.
  - ◆ Encourage families to read these poems together and to add their own poems to the anthology. Emphasize that the poems included should be those they can share as a family, and that the students enjoy. The poems may be written in any language.
  - ◆ Poems can be added at home and at school. These personal anthologies should travel with the students and be shared and added to often! Try to maintain a weekly homework assignment to add to the anthology.
  - ◆ Maintain a poetry bulletin board that highlights selections from the students' personal anthologies.
- ◆ Hold a poetry open house. Ask staff, families, and community members to contribute their favorite poems. Display poetry books for review as well as a bulletin board devoted to poetry from many cultures, and invite families, community members, and staff to come discuss their noticings and celebrate poetry.

### Lesson Resources

#### Select Favorite Poem Project Videos:

- "The lower leaves of the trees" by Sone-no Yoshitada (translated from the Japanese by Kenneth Rexroth). Read by Kiyoshi Houston, Student, Santa Monica, CA.
- "Concord Hymn" by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Read by William Jefferson Clinton, Former President of the United States, Washington, DC.
- "The Sloth" by Theodore Roethke. Read by Katherine Mechling, Student, Lexington, MA.
- "Dulce et Decorum Est" by Wilfred Owen. Read by Mary McWhorter, Accountant, Stockton, CA.
- "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer. Read by Lee Samuel, Student, Atlanta, GA.
- From "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman. Read by John Doherty, Construction Worker, Braintree, MA.
- "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" by Emily Dickinson. Read by Yina Liang, Student, Decatur, GA.

The Favorite Poem Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating, documenting, and encouraging poetry's role in our lives.



This lesson was made possible by submissions from Jennifer Hauck and Merri Jones (Frank Sokolowski School, Chelsea, MA), and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

For more lesson plans, videos, and classroom resources  
visit [www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org).



Stay up to date with news and events by  
following [@FAVEPOEM](https://www.instagram.com/FAVEPOEM)