



Student Videos: In Their Own Voices

Recommended Grade Range: Elementary School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Build community through poetry.
- ✓ Create their own Favorite Poem videos.

Lesson Agenda

- ▶ *Note: This project involves filming and recording audio from students. Please gain the necessary permissions and follow the procedures for doing so in your school.*
- ▶ *This is a multi-day unit that relies on students' prior knowledge of poetry; teachers may choose to lengthen or combine a given day's lesson, below, as they see fit. Note that the "days" listed are just estimates.*

Days 1 - 2

- ◆ Spend some time in class introducing students to Favorite Poem Project videos. Tell them that these videos will serve as models for their own video projects.
 - ◆ After each video, discuss your noticings as a class: How did the reader sound when they read their poem? Why did the reader pick this poem? What felt memorable or important about their reasoning?
 - ◆ In your discussion of the videos, point out that (in keeping with the FPP's philosophy) the richness of these videos doesn't come from the poems themselves, but from the reader's vivid, personal reactions to them.
- ◆ End class by asking students to think about their own favorite poems, and to pick a few that might be good options for their own FPP video.

Days 3 - 5

- ◆ After students have gotten a sense of what their videos will look like, spend time helping them select their poem.
 - ◆ If you have not spent much time with poetry in your classroom thus far, you could give students a chance to browse anthologies and collections, bookmarking any favorites.
 - ◆ Students could discuss their options with partners and/or explain in writing why they like a particular poem/ are choosing between a group of poems.
- ◆ Students should end class with their poem selection, and some ideas of how they will explain their connection to it.



Days 5 - 7

Guide students in preparing their videos. This preparation will vary, depending on your students' ages and needs; it will likely take more than one day!

- ◆ Students might try writing out how they want to present their poem first, and make notecards based on that writing.
- ◆ Let students know that their videos might be varied: one student might first read the poem, talk about it in their own words, and conclude by re-reading the poem. Another student might introduce themselves and share their connection first, and end with a reading of the poem.
- ◆ As a way to introduce their segment, students may each design a "title card" which would include the poem's title, the author of the poem, and the student's name.

Days 5 - 7

Finally, film each student reading and sharing about their favorite poem.

- ◆ Videos could be edited using free softwares such as Microsoft's Windows Movie Maker or Apple's iMovie.
- ◆ Students' videos can be rendered individually or edited together into a single class video.

When the videos are finished, hold a class premiere! Depending on scope and amenities, this can be held inside the classroom or at a larger school facility such as an auditorium or cafeteria. This should be used as an opportunity to celebrate the students' hard work and creativity.

Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ As students prepare for filming their videos, they could also create a visual representation of their connection to their poem, such as a collage, drawing, painting, or clay sculpture.
- ◆ Students could also bring in objects that illustrate their connection to their poem. They could select and display family photographs or treasured mementos like seashells and souvenirs, nature collections, a toy from their preschool years, or a gift from a friend or relative.
- ◆ After filming and editing is complete, you might want to share the videos with your school and home community.
 - ◆ This can be done by uploading the videos to a school website or a faculty-run Youtube channel. As an alternative to uploading, the videos can be distributed to students and their parents via thumb drives or file sharing websites such as Dropbox and Google Drive.
- ◆ Students could write a poem inspired by their chosen poem or the poet.
- ◆ Students could reflect on their experience with this project through a discussion or written assignment.

Lesson Resources

Your local or school library, the web (poets.org, poetryfoundation.org, poems.com), or the Favorite Poem Project website are all great places to find poems for this project.

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 Amy Bruns and Kevin Crowley (Johnson Elementary School in Natick, MA), and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

For more lesson plans, videos, and classroom resources
visit www.favoritepoem.org.



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