



Listening for Tone

Recommended Grade Range: High School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Discern meaning through tone of voice, inflection and context.
- ✓ Recognize that part of being a good reader of poetry is following intuition.

Lesson Agenda

Do Now

Begin by playing the FPP Video of Glaisma Perez-Silva's reading in Spanish of "Ay, Ay, Ay de la Grifa Negra" (you'll have to forward the segment to the point where she reads in Spanish).

- ◆ The first time, students will simply listen to the sound of the words. You may ask them to take note of any sounds or patterns they notice.
- ◆ The second time, ask students to write as they listen, guessing what the reader may be saying and what the poem may be about, listening closely to her voice and to the sounds of the words.
- ◆ If there are Spanish-speakers in the class, they can write a reflection about some of the more powerful lines in the poem.

Share Out

Ask students to share out their observations, then discuss: how can we tell what words might mean even if we have no idea what they are saying?

- ◆ This discussion can serve as a way to introduce tone, sound, inflection.

Mini Lesson

Have one student read Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" aloud.

- ◆ Pass out paper copies of the poem to all students.
- ◆ In small groups, ask students to define the nonsense words in context based upon their sounds and placement within sentences, and insert "synonyms."



Homework

Have students share their “new” Jabberwocky poems, where the nonsense words are replaced with words in English.

- ◆ Discuss: How do the groups’ poems differ? Do they all have the same tone?
- ◆ Connect their noticings to their lives by asking the following:
 - ◆ Do students speak differently when they are in different social situations?
 - ◆ How can we read people by the tone of their voice? Why is this important?

Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ Use this lesson to segue to *Beowulf*, *Canterbury Tales*, or other potentially daunting material--students can use their skills of identifying tone to approach difficult language.
- ◆ Incorporate tone into vocabulary lessons, stressing defining meanings of words from context.

Lesson Resources

- Glaisma Perez-Silva’s reading in Spanish of “Ay, Ay, Ay de la Grifa Negra” (FPP Video)
- “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll

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



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