



Passing Poetry On: Part I

Recommended Grade Range: High School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Understand that poetry originally handed down from one person to another, whether linearly (within a family or tribe) or laterally (by visiting bards).
- ✓ Preserve poetry by passing on a poem to a person of another generation.

Lesson Agenda

Do Now

Begin class with a free write, using the following prompts:

- ◆ Is there a poem that you know because someone shared it or passed it on to you?
 - ◆ Why did that person share it with you?
 - ◆ Do you know why the poem was important to that person?
 - ◆ Why are/were you important to that person?
 - ◆ Would you share the poem with someone else — who?
 - ◆ Is there another poem you'd like to pass on to someone else?
- ◆ If students have not "inherited" a poem from someone in their lives, let them write during this time about something that's been passed on to them — an object, or song or recipe or piece of art.

Share Out

Ask students to share out their free write responses, either as a class or in small groups.

Mini Lesson

Students will choose a poem they wish to share with someone else — not necessarily the poem they wrote about for the Do Now, especially if it's a nursery rhyme or children's poem. They should choose a poem that is relevant to them now, that speaks to their current frame of mind and experience. The person they choose to share the poem with should be someone old enough to read and understand the poem.

- ◆ This decision process could occur in one class period or over multiple.
- ◆ You may ask students to work together, or to share their choices with each other.



Homework

Ask students to find some time to share the poem with their chosen “inheritor” — time enough to read it aloud to him/her and have a real conversation about it.

- ◆ This lesson could lend itself nicely to the “Seeking Poems, Sharing Connections” lesson sequence on the FPP site, which asks students to select a poem they find meaningful.
- ◆ You may wish to explain that poems can be passed on in an ongoing cycle, and tell the student to share their do now response with their inheritor.
- ◆ You may tell the student to invite their inheritor to share the poem with someone else, or to share a poem back.

Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ Students might, after completing the homework assignment, write a short response/journal piece about their experience.
 - ◆ You could ask them: Where do you imagine this poem will “be” by the time a year has passed? Ten years? How many people will be linked together by this poem?

Lesson Resources

- **Students’ chosen poems--see the FPP site for poem ideas for students having trouble picking one to share.**

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 Sean Cusick (Shepherd Hill Regional School, Dudley, MA), Kate Oneschuk (Holliston High School, Holliston, MA), and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

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