



Seeking Poems, Sharing Connections (Culmination/Extension Activity)

Recommended Grade Range: High School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Consider what makes a poem a poem.
- ✓ Make personal connections to a poem of their choosing.
- ✓ Explain why they are drawn to a particular poem.

Lesson Agenda

Do Now

Begin by asking students to write down their best definition of what poetry is.

- ◆ If students have trouble, you may ask them to consider...
 - ◆ How poetry looks on the page
 - ◆ How poetry sounds
 - ◆ What poetry might talk about

Share Out

Ask students to share out their definitions of poetry.

- ◆ You may choose to record their definitions on the board as they share.

Mini Lesson

- ◆ Read aloud one of the poems suggested in the "Lesson Resources" section of this lesson plan--don't provide hard copies of the poem, yet!
- ◆ Then, ask the class how this poem might differ from, or correspond to, their definitions of poetry.
- ◆ After students have shared, distribute copies of the poem; ask them to take a moment to annotate what they notice about the poem's shape and form, as well as which elements of the poem they like or dislike.
- ◆ Ask students to share out their noticings.



The next section of the lesson can be completed in the second half of the class period, OR the next day of class, depending on your students' needs.

Extension

- ◆ Take students to the school library, or distribute poetry anthologies in class--then, ask them to browse and select one poem that appeals to them.
 - ◆ You may choose to set aside a folder of pre-selected poems for indecisive or struggling students.
- ◆ Once students have selected their poem, ask them to write it out by hand.
 - ◆ This will allow them to familiarize themselves with the language and movement across the page.

Homework

Students should write a short reflection on why they like their chosen poem — what in particular makes it a good poem, what in it speaks directly to them.

- ◆ You may warn students that, in a subsequent class, each student will read his or her poem aloud and will offer some thoughts on it.
- ◆ You may ask students to watch one of the following FPP videos as a model for their presentation:
 - ◆ "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" by Emily Dickinson, read by Yina Liang, Student, Decatur, GA
 - ◆ "Minstrel Man" by Langston Hughes, read by Pov Chin, Student, Stockton, CA
 - ◆ "Nick and the Candlestick" by Sylvia Plath, read by Seph Rodney, Photographer, Long Beach, CA

Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ Over the next week, a few students (3-6) will read and explain their chosen poems each day. Part of the class period will be devoted to the presentations.
- ◆ The readings will be used as a discussion starter, and students will develop a list of words, phrases and ideas that come in handy when discussing poetry.
- ◆ Expanding on their intuitive sense of poetic tools, students will begin to learn the names for those tools. The teacher may offer some particular terms.

Lesson Resources

We recommend the following poems as particularly well-suited for the mini-lesson (all from Americans' Favorite Poems):

- "Mansion" by A.R. Ammons
- "The Bean Eaters" by Gwendolyn Brooks
- "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll
- "The Rain" by Robert Creeley
- "The Bee" by James Dickey
- "The Pebble" by Zbigniew Herbert
- "Strawberries" by W.S. Merwin
- "The Night Dances" or "Polly's Tree" by Sylvia Plath
- "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke
- "The Snow Man" by Wallace Stevens
- "Pot Roast" by Mark Strand
- "My Fly" by C.K. Williams

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 Holly Bugoni (Hyde School, Woodstock, CT), Michalene Hague (Veterans Memorial High School, Peabody, MA), Margaret LaRaia (Needham High School, Needham, MA), Jenny LaVigne (Chelsea High School, Chelsea, MA), and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

For more lesson plans, videos, and classroom resources
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