



Seeking Poems, Sharing Connections: Initiating Activity (Variation 1)

Recommended Grade Range: High School

Learning Objective(s)

Students will be able to...

- ✓ Form a personal connection to a poem.
- ✓ Articulate their connection to a poem verbally and/or in writing.

Lesson Agenda

Do Now

Begin by asking students to think about poems they know or have heard in the past, from Shel Silverstein to Shakespeare. Ask them: **“What poetry is in your head?”**

- ◆ You may choose to discuss this question immediately, or have students write their answers down first, then share out.
- ◆ As a follow-up question, ask students: **“Is there a poem you know well enough to recite?”** Encourage students to recite any poems they know.

Mini Lesson

Briefly introduce the Favorite Poem Project to your students: **“Today we will watch a few videos from the Favorite Poem Project (FPP). The FPP showcases Americans reading and speaking personally about the poems they love. As we watch a few videos from the FPP, think about how the videos and poems make you feel!”**

- ◆ You may decide to model this process for your students by first showing one video you personally feel strongly about, and then share with them how it makes you feel; or, you may decide to jump right in and show a few Favorite Poem Project videos.
- ◆ You should select your videos according to the needs and tastes of your class. You can browse the full selection on the FPP website [here](http://www.favoritepoem.org).

Individual Reflection

- ◆ Ask students to write a response to a single segment that spoke to them strongly.
 - ◆ Some students may not know how to begin. If necessary, provide follow up questions such as: What was your favorite poem from today’s videos? What did you like about it? Could you personally connect to any of the speakers in the videos? Explain why.



Share Out

- ◆ Ask students to share out their responses, either as a whole class or in small groups.

Homework

Ask students to find a poem that they enjoy, write it out by hand, and practice reading it aloud, to bring to your next class together.

- ◆ Students can utilize their bookshelves at home, the library, the Internet, or classroom books.
- ◆ Once students have selected their poem, they should write it legibly and by hand. It is not sufficient to bring in a sheet printed from the Internet, or a book with a bookmark in it. Students should look up any unfamiliar words in the poem and prepare definitions.
- ◆ Advise students that they should be ready to read the poem in front of the class and talk about why they like it.
 - ◆ Students should practice reading the poem aloud at least three times.
 - ◆ It may be helpful to remind them that punctuation marks serve as a sort of score, with commas as breaths and periods as full beats, and that it's not necessary to pause unnaturally at each line-ending, especially those that are enjambed (where the syntax of one line runs into the next without punctuation). Remind them, too, to check pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
- ◆ Students should then think carefully about (but not write out) what they will say about the personal significance of this poem.
- ◆ Teachers with students who may need more guidance and encouragement might want to turn this homework assignment into a classroom activity, and accompany their students to the library for a period of searching for poems.

Suggestions for Next Steps

- ◆ This lesson's homework assignment lends itself nicely to an informal in-class reading. Students can share the poems they've discovered with the class, and speak about what in the poem draws them to it. All the students could share poems during a single class, or the activity could be spread over a few classes, with a handful of students sharing a poem each day to start or end the class.
- ◆ We see this lesson leading naturally into a unit that is student-driven to a considerable degree, which could culminate in students working in groups to produce their own favorite poem videos, either within the school, or in the wider community.

Lesson Resources

[Favorite Poem Project Videos](#)

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 Kelly Aravian (Needham High School, Needham, MA), Ronna Frick (Wellesley High School, Wellesley, MA), Mary Henry (Veterans Memorial High School, Peabody, MA), Emma Leslie (Newton South High School, Newton, MA), and Rachel M. Dillon (NYC Public Schools).

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



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