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.

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.

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

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