



The Poetry We Sing: A Women's Perspective

Curriculum Unit 01.03.07
by Susan Santovasi

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of teaching poetry to students at any level is the fear of poetry in its 'high art' form. The idea of poetry as a form of literature written by 'a bunch of old, dead, English guys' and enjoyed by 'snobbish prep school kids' is a common hindrance to teaching the joys and skills of its works. Students and teachers alike tend to be scared off by the conciseness of poetry and the way that it seems to be far too difficult to really understand or interpret. The goal of this curriculum unit is to offer an approachable way to teach poetry that students can enjoy without fear or resentment. By illustrating to students that they use poetry every day of their lives, in some form or another, students will see that poetry is nothing of which to be afraid. Students will integrate their love and passion for, as well as their level of comfort with and knowledge of, music into their appreciation of reading and writing poetry.

In this unit, students will have many opportunities to really find a connection to the lessons and the activities because the lessons are mostly based upon the interests, opinions, and tastes of the students themselves. Because of this connection, students are likely to be more motivated to learn and share their thoughts and feelings.

This unit has been designed to motivate students to study some of the more advanced and less mainstream poets and poetry that they will be expected to study in college. The possibility of being led into the study of poetry by studying things that are far more approachable and of greater importance to the students is a much greater motivation than a lecture.

The class to which this unit will be taught is rather unique. They are a group of seniors of mixed gender and racial/ethnic backgrounds in an arts and humanities magnet high school's women's literature course. (Phew! Take a breath now.) The core objectives of the course itself are to introduce the fundamentals of literature by women, feminisms, and women's progress in America, while improving the skills of reading for analysis and writing to support assertions about the analysis. The class functions on a similar plane as the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition course in that students are preparing for a highly competitive collegiate experience in literature. (This class carries no requirement of being at an honors or college prep tracking level.)

This unit will serve each of these objectives in the following ways: students will be introduced to a number of

women poets; the ways that each of these women poets changed the scenario for women in poetry, literature, or society will be discussed at length; students will be expected to discuss their readings of the poetry from a women's perspective-whether that be through a particular feminism's perspective or a general gynocentric perspective-and then respond by supporting the assertions that they draw from their readings/interpretations of the literature.

As students will have already spent a great deal of time learning about the various perspectives from which one can interpret and analyze forms of literature other than poetry and the various techniques of doing so, this unit will not have a strong focus on teaching this process to students. Rather, the focus will be on fine-tuning or sharpening the skills that students have already gained prior to the unit and adding to the literary repertoire that the students have been developing.

Objectives

Assuming that all activities are performed well and that all performance objectives have been met, students should walk away from the unit possessing a few important things. Students should:

- Gain the knowledge that poetry and lyrics are of equal value, poetic elements or terms apply to lyrics just as they do to poetry, and great lyricists are actually great poets as well.
- Develop a certain level of comfort with lyrics, poetry, poetic elements and terms, and analysis of literature while losing a good amount of the fear or discomfort that was experienced in prior dealings with poetry.
- Improve upon their ability to work independently, in pairs, and in small groups.
- Improve upon their ability to analyze literature, especially that of poetry.
- Improve their ability to communicate with the class in a positive and safe environment that is open to their thoughts and expressions.
- Gain the insight necessary for developing an idea and seeing it through its creation and presentation.
- Receive the opportunity to work on a group project that requires each individual to focus on his or her personal strengths and interests in the arts, serving as an arena for the school's arts and humanities magnet theme to be interlaced with the humanities' poetry and the arts' concentrations.
- Develop a long-range journal tracking the experiences gained throughout the unit.

Classroom Activities

This unit contains activities that will ask the students to:

- Interpret the lyrics to songs that they enjoy, written and/or performed by a woman, using their prior knowledge of literary analysis.
- Share interpretations of poetry and lyrics with the class.
- Participate in activities designed to teach poetic terms/elements.
- Analyze lyrics with new elements of poetry.
- Read a wide selection of poems written by women.
- Analyze poems with new poetic elements and interpretation skills.
- Write poems/lyrics independently or through modeling.
- In groups, select poems/lyrics to represent the group.
- In groups, design, create, and present accompanying projects utilizing the students' arts concentration areas.
- Create a journal that tracks the student's progress throughout the unit.

Strategies/Unit Sections

Rather than basing the unit on actual daily lesson plans, the unit has been structured around sections of the unit. Each major section of the unit is described in terms of detailed information for each of the activities. The number of days, or lessons, that each section of the unit will take is open and flexible at this point for the purpose of quality rather than quantity. It is far more important that each aspect of each of the sections is fully understood and absorbed into the students than each class, each minute of the unit being on a strict schedule.

Section One

Prior to actually beginning on the unit, I will distribute bound journals to students. I will discuss the value of journals as a means of evaluating one's experiences and capturing the experiences for later perusal. Students will be informed of the requirements for the journals and how they will be assessed. Students may fill the

journal with any form of media or expression that they wish to have in the journal. On a daily or weekly basis, students will be expected to place things in the journal that represent the activities or experiences that were gained during that time period. Students may wish to include pictures from magazines, personal photos, drawings, copies of poems they enjoyed, original poems or writings, etc. The important thing is that students do fill the journal on at the least a weekly basis. What they fill it with is of lesser importance and subject to each student's desires. The journals will be assessed upon their overall appearance and amount of effort that went into the creation of the completed journal. For the first day of the unit, I will prepare by asking students to bring in a copy of the lyrics to a song that they enjoy, which was written or performed by a female artist. It is imperative that students bring in the work of female artists because that will be the prime focus or theme of the unit. On the day in which they bring the lyrics to class, I will have the room prepared for group work in pairs (or threes).

Students will need to get into groups of two (or three). Once in groups, each student will need to share the lyrics that he or she brought to class by reading through the verses. Each student will also state the title of the song and the name of the artist who wrote and/or performs it. Each student will then need to discuss why he or she chose the particular song. I will lead them to open up about this by asking questions like: Is there a particular idea or theme that you relate to in the song? Do you connect with the message or story that the song suggests? Are there particular instances of imagery or metaphors that you really enjoy? The students will then need to discuss possible interpretations of the lyrics. How does the student who shared the lyrics feel the lyrics should be interpreted? How does his or her partner(s) interpret the song? Students will have complete control of the discussion provided that they stay on-task.

Students will then have the option of sharing with the class the song that they chose and the interpretations that their group discussed. Other students will now have the opportunity to add any additional interpretations, comments, and concerns about the interpretations of the songs.

This section of the unit acts as an easy introduction to the unit. Students can get engaged in the unit because they feel such a strong connection to the music and lyrics of the songs and they control the material that they are studying. From past experience, I have learned that many students get excited after this activity and that this helps carry over the involvement throughout the remainder of the unit.

Section Two

The second section of the unit will focus on the poetic terms or elements that are necessary for the in-depth analysis of the lyrics and poems that they are going to study in the unit. I will provide students with a written handout that will provide them with the terms and definitions that will be used as a standard for the class. (There is a study sheet with a list of terms and definitions located in the appendix.) This section may take one day to teach or it may take a number of days, depending upon the level and number of students in the class. Again, students have already learned a great deal about analyzing and interpreting literature and various theories from which to do so and many have had a brief introduction to poetry at some point so the terms and activities will be explicitly related to the way that this unit will study poetry. I will need to spend some time discussing each of the terms or elements with which I want the students to be familiar. I may also produce an overhead sheet that has the terms and definitions so that students can see various items when reviewing the sheet.

I plan to use an extraordinary activity that helps students reach their inner poet. It requires them to really use the elements or terms. The students craft their own metaphors or use personification in a personal context. I will ask them to create a line based upon synesthesia. What I really mean is: I will assign them the homework

assignment of creating an example of each of the terms on their own. I will really impress upon them the importance of doing these examples on their own. I will remind them that they are going to be asked to write poetry later on in the unit, so practicing with each of the elements can only help them and copying someone else's examples can only hurt them. Being that this is an arts and humanities magnet school, most of the students are likely to find this idea of great importance as a great number of them are involved in some form of writing, whether it be creative writing, playwriting, songwriting, or journaling.

This section of the unit is really designed to get students on the same page in their understanding of the terms necessary for interpreting and analyzing in the unit. Once students can own each of the terms and their usage in the analysis of poetry, the unit can progress.

Section Three

Section three revolves around the teaching of poetry itself. The use of rhyme patterns, rhythm, meter, feet, etc. are discussed in great detail in this section. Short lines of poetry are used to illustrate the elements in such a way that students can immediately see the element in use.

Rhyme and Rhythm in Poetry

As poetry is defined as metrical writing or verse by Webster's Dictionary, it is important for students to see metrical writing or writing that incorporates meter. The six basic rhythms of varying stressed and unstressed syllables are meters known as iambs, trochees, spondees, pyrrhic, anapests, and dactyls. Each unit of rhythm, regardless of what pattern it may follow, is called a foot of poetry. The meters with two-syllable feet are iambic, trochaic, spondaic, and pyrrhic feet. The meters with three-syllable feet are anapestic and dactylic.

(chart available in print form)

Most uses of iambs, trochees, anapests, and dactyls comprise the entire line of poetry, although it is not a rule. Spondees and pyrrhics are almost always variations in a line of poetry that otherwise follows another more common type of feet. They are used to vary the speed of the lines and call readers to pay special attention to the varying words. Spondees slow the pace of a line as pyrrhics speed the pace of a line.

The number of feet in each line of the poem tells us what type of meter the poem follows: one foot is a monometer, two feet is a dimeter, three feet is a trimeter, four feet is a tetrameter, five feet is a pentameter, six feet is a hexameter, seven feet is a heptameter, and eight feet is an octameter. The number of total syllables in a line of poetry depends upon the rhythm pattern and the meter. If a line of poetry uses the iambic pattern and has five feet of such iambs, it would be called iambic pentameter and it would have a total of ten syllables.

"So long / as men / can breathe / or eyes / can see" iambic, 5 feet-iambic pentameter

"My moth / er groand! / my fa / ther wept" iambic, 4 feet-iambic tetrameter

"Train wreck " spondaic, 1 foot-spondaic monometer

"Lo! to the / vault" dactylic, 2 feet-dactylic dimeter

Another option for introducing this section is to utilize nursery rhymes and children's songs that are universal and carry with them a specified flow of stressed and unstressed syllables. For instance, "Humpty Dumpty" is

an excellent way to look at the ways that variances affect lines of poetry and song.

Humpty / Dumpty / sat on / a wall	1st 3 feet are trochaic, 4th is iambic	
Humpty / Dumpty / had a / great fall	same as line 1	
All the King's / horses and / all the King's / men	1st 3 feet are dactylic, 4th is irregular put / Humpty to / gether a / gain	Couldn't because it is an extra (masc.) syllable

There is a great piece describing all of the poetry elements/terms from section two and the use of feet and meter in poetry along with examples from poetry we will use in the *A Contemporary Guide to Literary Terms* listed in the student resources. My class will use these tools to study these two sections, but the above information serves as an illustration of what the sections will actually cover.

This section serves to give students a better comfort-zone concerning poetry before they begin to study lyrics and poetry as in-depth as they will during the course of this unit.

Section Four

In the fourth section of this unit, students will use the new terms or elements of poetry with which they have become familiar. Students will use these terms and apply them to the lyrics that they were working on during the first day of the unit. At this point, I will make it clear to the students that the poetry they sing in each of the lyrics that they have chosen to bring in to work on in class is of as much value as the poetry that has been printed in their literature anthology. I will also have copies of a selection of lyrics, both contemporary and classic, in case students forget their lyrics or if it seems that having everyone work on the same piece all at once would be more beneficial to their understanding. A few suggested lyrics for study include: "American Pie" by Don McLean, "Fuel" by Ani DiFranco, and "Everything" by Lauryn Hill. Although Don McLean is clearly not a woman artist, this song is an excellent example of poetic elements in action in pop music lyrics. "American Pie" by Don McLean is a wonderful piece to use in order to illustrate the use of allusion and imagery as well as multiple combinations of rhymes. I will start by studying the rhymes-both end rhymes and internal rhymes-in the verses. The end rhymes are the most apparent rhymes in the song and follow a rather basic pattern that students can pick up on without becoming too frustrated. An interesting detail to point out, or see if students can point out, is that, not including the chorus or refrain verses, the last line of every verse is the same: "The day the music died" (Damsker 42-45). It is the only line in the entire song that does not have a matching end rhyme in the same verse.

The use of internal rhyme is also an interesting aspect of the lyrics. The most obvious use of internal rhyme lays in the chorus or refrain. There is "Bye, Bye" and "pie" as well as "Chevy" and "levee." Another very clear use that students are sure to pick up on is in the fourth verse-counted by skipping the refrains-where the repetition of the sound '-elter' comes up a few times, in the first line three times "Helter," "skelter," "swelter," and in the second line once, "shelter," merging internal and end rhymes.

Although the rhyme patterns are wonderful in these lyrics, perhaps the most important device used in this song is the use of allusions. The allusions to the holy trinity-"The Father, Son and Holy Ghost"-of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and The Big Bopper color the entire song. The first verse begins with a reference to "February made me shiver / with every paper I'd deliver" meaning the newspaper headlines the morning after the crash of the airplane that was transporting the three men between concert venues and the follow-up stories that traced the status of "the widowed bride" of Buddy Holly. This is a good time to inform students that the phrase "the day the music died" in reference to the day of the crash actually originated from a journalist's newspaper

headline. The importance of this idea is reinforced by the fact that this, again, is the only line that does not have a matching end rhyme in the same verse. The allusions to The Beatles ("the quartet" and "the sergeants"), Bob Dylan ("the jester"), and The Rolling Stones ("Jack Flash") all point to the speaker's views of the changing face of music and the effect that has on (pop) culture in general. A number of events from the time period are also alluded to within the lyrics, such as the Red Scare and Communism ("Lennon/Lenin" and "Marx" in the third verse), the threat of attack due to the Cold War ("fallout shelter" in the fourth verse), and the trouble at Altamont during a Rolling Stones concert ("No angel born in hell" in the fifth verse). There are also clear uses of metaphors, imagery, symbolism, and sound qualities such as consonance, alliteration, and assonance. These lyrics can be found in *Rock Voices* by Damsker, listed in the teacher's bibliography.

"Fuel" by Ani DiFranco is a song that is actually closer to spoken word poetry than music itself. It contains a range of play on sounds and political philosophies through the use of alliteration, assonance, consonance, metaphor, irony, satire, and personification. Its spin on the corrupt, hypocritical, and idiotic institutions of government and media creates a great resource for students to break down literal meanings and figurative meanings. Lyrics can be found from the Ani DiFranco website listed in the teacher's bibliography.

Lauryn Hill's "Everything" is a song that will easily be recognizable and most likely enjoyed by most high school students. Lauryn Hill found her sounds filtering into the ears of listeners of all races, genders, ages, and creeds after the release of the much-acclaimed record *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*. This song in particular hosts a variety of sound qualities often used in rap and hip-hop music such as internal and end rhymes, alliteration, consonance, and differing rhythm patterns. A number of lyrics can be found in the issue of *Writing!* listed in the teacher's bibliography as well as on any of the Lauryn Hill Internet fan sites.

Students will first individually approach the lyrics they have brought in to study. They will be asked to apply the terms to the lyrics by really breaking down each stanza of the lyrics, line-by-line, word-by-word. I will ask students to analyze places where they see that the artist uses particular elements. Students will do so on a separate piece of paper or, most effectively, if the lyrics have been printed out from the internet or copied from the CD jewel case, students can use the lyric sheet itself to analyze the lyrics. In this case, students can utilize their ability to underline, circle, highlight, place arrows, write notes, etc. directly on the words or phrases to which they are referring. Students should be able to find a great deal of the elements or terms in use in the lyrics they have chosen. After some individual time, students will partner up again. At this point, students will share their findings about their lyrics with the partners they had earlier in the unit.

After some time for partner discussion, students will be asked to nominate lyrics and analyses that they found particularly interesting in terms of the poetic elements and interpretations. Only a few selected analyses will be shared at this time.

This section will give students the opportunity to use all of the elements that they have been working with on a piece of writing that they know. It is an excellent icebreaker for the section to follow that focuses on studying the traditional poetry in the same manner.

Section Five

Section five is when the unit begins with the work of professional, published poets. The poetry that will be used is directed toward the focus and theme of the course. In this case, the focus is a women's (literature) perspective. The poets and poems that will be taught will be a varying selection of women poets throughout the years. Poets that I am considering using include Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese," Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," Anne Bradstreet's "Upon the Burning of Our House," Kate

Rushin's "The Bridge Poem," Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool," Anne Sexton's "In Celebration of My Uterus," Adrienne Rich's "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers" and "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law," and Sylvia Plath's "The Disquieting Muses" and "Daddy." This section will take the longest amount of time because of the number of poems and poets that I wish to cover. A number more may be added or substituted during the actual teaching of the unit. Students will read the poems, either in texts or from the overhead projector accompanied by handouts. I will approach one poem at a time. Once I feel that the class has conquered the poem, it will be a great time to move on to the next poem.

After reading each poem on their own, a few students will be asked to read the poem aloud. After all of the readings of the poem, students will be asked to conjecture the interpretation of the poem. Some prompts for the activity may be: What do you think the poem is about? Why do you think the poet chose to write this poem? What in the poem leads you to believe that this is the meaning of the poem? What is the theme of the poem? What is the tone of the poem? What other elements of poetry seem to leap out at you as you read it or hear it being read?

Student responses will vary, but the questions and responses will create a dialogue that will make it easier to transition into an actual analysis of the poem. After the thoughts are really flowing out of the students, I will ask the students to continue through the process of analysis to see just how much they can find packed into the poem. What poetic elements can you find? Where do you find them? Why do you think that the poet chose to use those? Students can refer back to their notes or handouts on poetic elements to follow along in their analyses.

For instance, in studying the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, I will begin by teaching students of the relationship she and Robert Browning shared in spite of her strict father's upbringing. All of the details of her past bring to light the poems that she has written at various periods of her life. After reading a few sonnets from the collection, we will discuss what we see, hear, and think about the poems.

During the study of the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, I will approach the themes of the poems by first discussing the time in which she wrote. I feel that it is crucial to realize that Brooks was a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1950. This was an extreme honor for an African American poet-as she was the first African American to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize-and for a female poet. Her work would probably have been an important piece of the education of leaders such as John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. at that time. Although her earlier work was not as explicitly racially themed as her later work, it carried with it many messages that were easily interpreted through racial and social perspectives among others.

Sylvia Plath's poetry will be an important aspect of this unit as it will precede the study of *The Bell Jar*. I will introduce Plath as the author of one of the most recognized feminist books in the country-one in which we will be studying later on in the year-so it would be in the best benefit of the students to be as attentive as possible to her poetry. I will begin by discussing the details of her background and history, including her suicide and her continual struggle with the negotiation of her desire to follow the prescribed path for a woman-family, etc.-and her desire to be a successful writer and scholar.

In studying Adrienne Rich's poetry, I will use a poem from earlier in her career-"Aunt Jennifer's Tigers"-and a poem from later in her career-"Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law"-in order to illustrate the dramatic shift in the poetry of Adrienne Rich after she walked away from the cold formality of 'male poetry' and embraced the personal, revealing poetry when she became more open to her womanhood existing in her poetry.

Before the end of each poem's class period, I will ask students to volunteer their analyses to the class. Each

analysis must be considered a unique perspective on the poem with no possibility for argument or critique so long as each claim is supported within the poem itself. Each analysis will assist the students in reclaiming their grasp on poetry and their ability to analyze it for content and context.

Section Six

This section introduces students to writing poetry or lyrics of their own. Students will be instructed in the process of writing poetry and finding topics and inspirations. Before beginning this section, students will have been asked to bring in any poetry that they may have written and wish to work on in the workshop. Those students who bring in their own poetry will pick up the lesson that focuses on the editing of poetry while other students work on the creation of a poem.

The Creation of a Poem/Lyrics

In order for students to be prepared to create a poem/lyrics, they must first abandon all thoughts of logic and structure in order to find their inspiration or topic. I will use an adaptation of the exercises that Kenneth Koch employs in his teaching of poetry. In his text, *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry*, Koch focuses on a much younger class of students than this unit's focus on high school seniors. The intent and path of reaching students and bringing them to reach the readiness to craft poetry are still quite valid and easily adaptable. Consider, for instance, Koch's belief that the very hearing or reading of poetry can ignite the inspirations of other poets. After hearing the poems of their musical idols and the literary masters, many students may already have their own ideas in their heads. It is my mission to help those who do not have their own ideas develop some ideas. I will try to get students to focus on as small an experience or thing as possible. Perhaps it is about a color, a food, an article of clothing, a time when they felt alone, a time that they felt undefeatable, etc. I will link my strategy for filling the students with inspiration to the topic or theme of the previous unit of literature or the following unit on which they will be working. This unit will most likely follow a unit on *The Joy Luck Club* and precede a unit on *Wuthering Heights*. Perhaps prompts will be to focus on the theme of parent-child conflicts, such as those that are clearly encountered among the characters in *The Joy Luck Club*, or unrequited love, such as the case of the calloused Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*.

I will also use an activity I often employ, which is to have students work with lists to elicit thoughts and inspirations. I will ask them to list six colors, six objects, six feelings, six images from the day before, six enjoyable places, etc. and then ask them to make up a poem using one thing from each of the six categories on the list. After the first draft, I would tell them that they can disregard that poem altogether and go ahead with any ideas that they came up with from doing the exercise or tinker with the first draft and mold it into a poem that they want.

Once those 'machines' of ideas are working, students can really stretch their imaginations, really utilize all of the elements that they have learned in the unit. Students that really require form can structure the poem as much as they see fit and students that are clearly free and abstract thinkers can have as few limitations and confining form or structure rules as possible. Students decide what it is that they wish to write about and how they wish to do so.

Once the initial thoughts and ideas get put down on paper, it will seem as if the poems will be written on their own. I will make myself as available as possible to the students without looking over their shoulders as they are expressing their feelings and thoughts.

The Editing of Poetry/Lyrics

At this point, the students who have brought their poems or lyrics and those that have just written them are able to meet each other again. Students will break into their partner groups again in order to focus on their partners' poems. Students will analyze the poems in the same way that they analyzed the lyrics and professional poems. They will write short responses or outlines of what they find in the poems in terms of poetic elements and their interpretations of the poems. Students will then take their poems and their partners' analyses of the poems and study the perspectives that their peers expressed. Students will have the opportunity to revise their poem based upon the new insights gained from the partner activity. Students may follow the suggestions of their peers or they may develop their own ideas for improvement when they read their peers' responses. The second stage of revision will take place after students turn in their poems to me. I will read over each original poem and first revision as well as the notes given by the poet's partner. After reading, I will suggest ways that the student may improve the poem rather than recreate the poem. That is, I will look for areas where I think the student can expand or clarify rather than scrapping the poem altogether and starting from scratch. Once students see the comments for improvement I suggest, they can begin their second revision of the poem. At this time, students should be focusing on the finer points of poetry such as imagery, sound qualities, diction, and figures of speech in order to express their ideas.

The process of revision may go as short as two revisions and as long as five revisions depending upon the commitment of the students and their interest in fine-tuning their expressive poems. I will wait until beginning the revision process so that I can assess how useful a longer revision process would be for this class.

Section Seven

After all revisions have been made and the final poem has been printed, students will begin the next section of the unit. This section requires that students get into larger groups of five or so students. Students share their poems with one another and discuss what each member finds in the poems. Groups will select one of the poems or lyrics from the group members to represent their group. This poem will be the focus of the group project. Students will need to work together with their group in order to design a multi-media presentation of the poem or lyrics. This project requires that each student use his or her capabilities and talents in his or her chosen arts concentration area. I will not give too much structure for this project because the point is for students to create a project that they are committed to creating, not one that I am committed to them making.

For instance, a group's focus may be lyrics that were written by a creative writing student. The two music students decide to sing the song and accompany it with music as one is a vocal musician and the other is an instrumental musician. The two visual arts students concentrate on film and painting accordingly; the group may decide to create a full-length video to accompany the song in which case the film student may direct and film the video while the painting student may prepare the set and props. The dance student may wish to choreograph and perform a dance within the video. Each of the six students has the opportunity to use his or her strengths in the arts to design and create the project. I will spend an extended amount of time on this piece of the unit in order to give groups the opportunity to create extraordinary projects. I will also try to work along with the arts instructors in order to give groups access to the materials or spaces that they need in order to produce the projects.

The last step to this section is the presentation of the project to the full class. Student groups may wish to perform their project for the class or show a video presentation of the project. In either case, I will make all of the necessary arrangements for the groups to present their projects through any medium that they choose.

Assessment

Semester Journals

The journals will be assessed upon their overall appearance and amount of effort that went into the creation of the completed journal. What they fill it with is of lesser importance and is subject to each student's desires. The important thing is that students do fill the journal on at the least a weekly basis. There will be weekly checks of journals, which will be on a very loose basis: checks, check-pluses, check-minuses, and incompletes. The final check will be at the conclusion of the unit and will be weighed as greatly as one test grade. It will be a quantitative grade based upon a rubric.

Lyric/Poetry Assignments

Throughout the studying of the lyrics and poetry, various assignments and progress checks will take place. Each assignment will be graded on a check-system basis. At the conclusion of the unit, each of the assignment grades will be combined and averaged-a check average would be an 85, a check-plus a 95, a check-minus a 75, and an incomplete a 0-with the average weighing as greatly as one test grade.

Group Project

The group project will be graded as three separate test grades. The first grade will be a group grade, based upon a rubric set by the objectives. The second grade will be an individual grade on the incorporation of the student's arts concentration, based upon a rubric set by the objectives. The third grade will be an individual grade on the understanding of the poetry and poetic elements, based upon a rubric set by the objectives. Unit Grade Breakdown

- Journal 1 Test Grade
- Lyric/Poetry Assignments 1 Test Grade
- Group Project
- Group Grade
- Arts-Individual Grade
- Poetry-Individual Grade 3 Test Grades 5 Test Grades

Appendix

Literary Terms/Elements

(Also, a great collection of these terms, definitions and applicable uses with course literature is located in the literary terms guide in the student resources list.)

Alliteration-the repeating of consonant sounds, most often at the beginnings of words

Allusion-a reference in a work of literature to a character, place, or situation from another work of literature, music, or art

Analogy-resemblance of properties or relations or relations; similarity without identity

Anapest-a line of verse in which the metrical foot consists of two short or unaccented syllables followed by one long or accented syllable

Aphorism-a brief statement that expresses an observation on life, usually intended as a wise observation

Apostrophe-a figure of speech wherein the speaker speaks directly to a person or personified thing, either present or absent.

Assonance-the repeating of vowel sounds, especially in a line of poetry

Ballad-a short, musical, narrative poem, usually focused on a single dramatic situation

Blank Verse-poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameter

Cacophony-an unpleasant combination of sounds intended to create an effect

Caesura-a pause-metrical or rhetorical-within a line of poetry that may affect meter count

Concrete/Sensory Language-words that appeal to the senses

Concrete Poetry-usually resembles something concrete, poem shaped to look like object

Connotation-unspoken/unwritten meanings associated with a word beyond its denotation

Consonance-repetition of consonant sounds with differing vowel sounds in near words

Couplet-a stanza of two lines that usually rhyme

Dactyl-a metrical pattern consisting of one stressed and then two unstressed syllables

Denotation-the literal or dictionary meaning of a word

Diction-an author or poet's choice of words

Dramatic Poetry-poetry in which one or more characters speak

Elegy-a lyric poem lamenting death

Epic-a long narrative poem tracing the adventures of a hero

Foot-basic unit of measurement in rhythm, usually comprised of one accented syllable and one or more unaccented syllables

Free Verse-verse that has neither a regular rhyme nor meter, often uses cadences

Haiku-a 3-line 17-syll. (5-7-5) poem, usually about nature, often w/ a deeper meaning

Hyperbole-exaggeration used for emphasis or effect

Iamb-a metrical pattern of one unstressed, one stressed syllable

Image-a picture or likeness made w/ words to help the reader form a mental portrait

Imagery-excerpt that appeals to one or more of the senses: sight, taste, touch, smell, hear

Irony-a term used to discuss the contrast between reality and what seems to be real

Lyric Poetry-short poetry that expresses a speaker's personal thoughts and feelings

Metaphor-fig. of speech that makes a comparison between 2 unlike things w/o 'like' or 'as'

Meter-a regular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables that gives the poem rhythm

Narrative Poem-usually long poem that tells a story

Ode-a poem in praise of something divine or expressing some noble idea

Onomatopoeia-the use of a word or phrase that imitates the sound it describes--splash

Oxymoron-a combination of contradictory terms--jumbo shrimp

Personification-fig. of speech that gives human qualities to an animal, object, or idea

Poetry-writing that uses language, sound, and imagery to create an emotional effect

Pun-a play on words wherein a word is used to convey two meanings at the same time

Quatrain-a 4-line stanza that may be rhymed

Rhyme-the repetition of accented vowel sounds and all succeeding consonant sounds

Rhyme Scheme-pattern of rhymes formed by end rhyme of poem-new rhyme=new letter

Rhythm-pattern created by arranging stressed and unstressed syllables

Sarcasm-form of verbal irony, expresses sneering, personal disapproval in guise of praise

Satire-critical attitude w/ wit and humor to point out hypocrisy in human institutions

Simile-directly compares 2 unlike things using compare words such as 'like' or 'as'

Sonnet-14-line poem, usually iambic pentameter, with a varied rhyme scheme

Stanza-a group of lines forming a unit in poetry

Symbol-something that is of itself but represents something else, usually abstract, as well

Synesthesia-one sensory experience described in terms of another sensory experience

Theme-the main idea of a poem usually expressed as general statement about life

Tone-writer's attitude toward his readers and subject: mood or moral view

Understatement-expressing with less emphasis than actuality for effect

Resources

Annotated Bibliography of Teacher Resources "anidifranco.org." 26 March 2001

<http://www.anidifranco.org/lyrics/songs/index.html> Quality lyrics to each song from each album that ani has written.

Bowden, Betsy. *Performed Literature: Words and Music by Bob Dylan* . Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1982. A work that gives a great discussion of the fusing of music and poetry through the work of legendary folk artist Bob Dylan.

Brown, Calvin S. *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* . Hanover: UP of New England, 1987. A work that furthers the discussion of poetry and music.

Clinton-Baddeley, V.C. *Words for Music* . Cambridge: The University Press, 1941. A bit out-dated, but an excellent source of information on the earlier examples of poetry and music's tangled relationship.

Damsker, Matt. *Rock Voices: The Best Lyrics of an Era* . New York: St. Martin's, 1980. An excellent collection of lyrics to classic rock songs, complete with commentary and analysis of each of the songs.

Ferguson, Margaret, et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* . New York: Norton, 1997. A collection of many of the authors and works of the canon.

Fisher-Reed, Terri. "Connecting Songs and Stories." *Classroom Notes Plus* April 2001: 4-5. An interesting lesson plan that utilizes popular songs and lyrics as connectors to the high school classic literature.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English* . 2nd edition. New York: Norton, 1996. Perhaps the most complete collection of literature-both prose and poetry-by women. Also, boasts great background information and analysis.

Gourly, Catherine. "How Does Music Change Your Mood?" *Writing!* January 2001: 9-11. An article geared toward students that discusses how various poems and music can alter mood. It is a follow-up to the next citation that surrounds using lyrics to teach poetry.

Kizis, Sarah. "The Lyrics of Rebellion." *Writing!* January 2001: 4-7. An article summarizing a detailed lesson on studying the art of lyrics and creating lyrics.

Koch, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry* . New York: Perennial Library, 1980. Geared toward a younger audience, but a great resource for the teaching of poetry at any level.

Morrison, Lillian, ed. *Rhythm Road: Poems to Move to* . New York: Morrow, 1988. A collection of song lyrics and poems that celebrate rhythm.

Stark, David and Michael Randolfi. *Inspirations: Original Lyrics and the Stories behind the Greatest Songs Ever Written* . New York: Sanctuary, 1999. A great book on lyrics and their origins.

Annotated Bibliography of Student Resources

Barton, Edwin J. and Glenda A. Hudson. *A Contemporary Guide to Literary Terms with Strategies for Writing Essays about Literature* . New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. The most detailed text for teaching literary elements to students. This text accompanies the Riverside Anthology of Literature and most of the examples come from works that are to be studied in the anthology.

Hunt, Douglas. *The Riverside Anthology of Literature* . 3rd edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. An excellent collection of literature, including poetry, short stories, and drama.

Materials List

In order to instruct this curriculum unit, you must have access to the following items:

- An overhead projector
- A computer with printer that will print overhead sheets
- Blank overhead sheets for your printer
- A poetry anthology that includes a number of women poets
- Copies of lyrics of music written and/or performed by women artists
- Handouts for students that give detailed information regarding each of the poetic terms or elements that you will study
- CD Player/Tape Player to play songs

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>