



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2003 Volume III: Teaching Poetry in the Primary and Secondary Schools

Making Connections across the Curriculum through Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 03.03.05

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This unit is designed to provide English language arts teachers with strategies and activities that use ballads, narratives, and free verse to make connections with themes across the curriculum. The unit is specifically designed to fit the content standards and objectives of the fifth grade curriculum; however, the creative teacher may make modifications for other grade levels or incorporate particular aspects in other disciplines. Also, a group of teachers of various disciplines may use this unit as a collaborative effort.

The approach includes a mixture of analyses and syntheses that teachers may use to stimulate high-order thinking. The analytic approach focuses on the identification of some types of rhymes and rhythm and a distinction between similes and metaphors. Further analyses that include dissecting will not be the focus at this grade level. Nevertheless, the unit encourages oral discussion and written responses based on the three broad objectives of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). These objectives are initial understanding, developing an interpretation, and demonstrating a critical stance. The syntheses will be done after the students carry out research on various themes relating to poems on pictures, places, and people. The teacher will guide the students toward combining the facts and ideas to compose their own poems during poetry writing workshops. The unit is also intended to provide activities that teachers can use to help students appreciate and enjoy poetry.

(Recommended for English and Language Arts, grade 5.)

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