



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2011 Volume III: The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry

Song of Myself: The Study of Hip Hop, Poetry and the Personal Statement in the Secondary English Classroom

Curriculum Unit 11.03.04
by Matthew S. Monahan

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Statement of Context

As a sixth year veteran of teaching English, I do currently teach poetry; however, the *New Haven School District English Language Arts* curriculum allows little room for a complete unit dedicated to the form of poetry. The majority of lessons and class time I currently give to poetry generally focus on the teaching of specific literary devices and analysis (with a concentration on the acronym SIFT: Symbol, Image, Figurative Language and Tone). I do generally concentrate on modern and contemporary works. I look forward to the prospect of engaging all of my students through the inclusion of such uncharted territories (speaking from a strictly personal standpoint) of memorization, and vocal performance in the classroom. In the preface to his book *Teaching Poetry in High School*, Albert Somers states "that anyone can like poetry, that a lot of poetry is approachable and fun. And poetry is fun to do things with" (ix). This is what I look forward to most, discovering new approaches to poetry to both enliven and enrich the experiences of my students.

My first year teaching at Metropolitan Business Academy (MBA), an inter-district magnet high school, I taught one section of creative writing. Much of its focus was the writing of formal poetry and of "free verse" (I am placing free verse in quotations because with this "freedom" came responsibility, specifically a number of criteria e.g. the incorporation of a set number of student-generated neologisms or portmanteau words). A current Metro senior recently expressed his fondness for the course and stated that he still has everything he wrote for class. One of my aims is to create a unit that inspires this type of reaction from all students within the context of a required English course.

Although MBA is a magnet high school, students are admitted solely on the basis of lottery. There are no entrance or placement tests. Additionally, the term inter-district has been somewhat misleading. It is true, that in the interest of greater diversity, our school does service students from surrounding districts (with a few coming from as far away as Bridgeport and Naugatuck); however, despite these efforts the student body does remain predominantly minority and the lion's share of students receive either free or reduced lunch.

My prior use of hip hop or rap in the classroom has been extremely limited. Although Baraka's "Somebody

"Blew Up America" lends itself to a Gil Scott Heron-esque performance/reading, I believe it is the work of Tupac Shakur, specifically his poem "Liberty Needs Glasses," that I have read with my students. The Baraka poem has been great fun; however, as this the unit was at one time intended for freshmen, I believe it is worth noting that its mature language would reserve its use for upper-level classes.

Prior to and initially during my studies of secondary English education at City College, CUNY (City University of New York) I spent a good deal of time working in service industries that were closely connected to the entertainment business. Up until this point the lyrical stylings of Chuck D. and Public Enemy represented both the beginning and the end of my appreciation of the form (i.e. hip hop or rap). In the early part of the twenty-first century while working a N.E.R.D. show at New York's Irving Plaza, I and approximately twelve hundred others were treated to a surprise appearance by Jay-Z. The power of his performance gives me pause; why haven't I capitalized on this medium before? Am I afraid that my students might find it condescending if we were to focus on a genre that is so often assumed to be of high-interest? I guess, in reality, I often been overly concerned with the separation of musical forms and other more "accepted" genres for use in the classroom. Exposure to the very different versions of Yeats' "The Lake Isle of Innis Free" and WC Handy's work at our first seminar meeting has worked to dispel such misguided concerns and assuage such fears.

Poetry finds its way into the collective unconscious in a myriad ways, whether it be Bruce Dickinson of the heavy metal band Iron Maiden reinterpreting Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a group of second-generation brat-packers standing on desks reciting Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain" or Rodney Dangerfield's Thorton Mellon romancing Sally "Hot Lips" Kellerman in *Back to School* by reciting the villanelle "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night,"

Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

I have always admired Yeats (yes, I realize that last line was Thomas), and I feel "The Second Coming" is a fierce poem on many levels. I have used it to illustrate the motif of things that are cyclical by nature especially when introducing such works as Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, which is structured around the changing of the seasons, and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* whose title alludes directly to Yeats and "The Second Coming" in particular. These digressions are somewhat illustrative of the past approaches to my teaching of poetry.

My unit will run approximately six weeks and has been created with my senior students in mind; it will be easily adapted to all grades at the secondary level. This is significant as I also have taught freshmen and juniors and historically speaking my grade level assignments have changed from year to year.

1.2 Teaching Philosophy

An effective teacher encourages participation, aids in the development of students' self esteem and promotes the value and practice of respect for others. Additionally, the effective teacher understands the importance of a balanced approach to instruction that utilizes both individual and cooperative learning processes. The teacher stresses the importance of classroom as community, possesses infectious enthusiasm and has a clear message.

It is my hope that through the study of hip hop and poetry and in crafting their personal statements my students will minimize their fears of failure and discover and value their individual voices. What is voice without sound? It does not exist. In leading, steering, and coaching my students along this journey of self-discovery I wish to avoid moulding, shaping or indoctrinating them.

We don't need no education,
We don't need no thought control.
No dark sarcasm in the classroom-
Teacher, leave them kids alone! (Pink Floyd, "Another Brick in the Wall." 1979.)

It sounds; I sound like a broken record, "The irony is not lost on me." I will complain that a teacher/author who has the NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) seal of approval lauds teachers who espouse Dylan (Bob not Thomas; even though Zimmerman's moniker is homage) as poet in the highest esteem and makes the claim that hip-hop is rock derivative successfully marketed to African-Americans, and I lead off with a quote from Roger Waters come Bob Geldoff of the Boomtown Rats.

1.3 Descriptive Overview and Rationale

The argument that Albert B. Somers makes for the inclusion of rap music in his book *Teaching Poetry in High School* is not only sophomoric but also borderline offensive. He states, "Since the late 1970s rap music, or hip-hop, has been an important offshoot of rock, especially among African Americans" (170). Although I disagree with his supporting statements, one of my aims in writing this unit is to thoroughly convince myself of his thesis that "No teacher should overlook rap."

My bone to pick with Somers is largely a matter of tone. Whether or not my perceptions are correct, it sounds to me like he is saying that rap is derivative of rock and roll and therefore somehow inferior; additionally, the emphasis he places on its appeal "especially among African Americans" comes off as being somewhat condescending and has the effect of marginalizing the form's overall cultural impact and significance. While it is true, at least according to Bradley, that:

Hip hop emerged out of urban poverty to become one of the most vital cultural forces of the past century. The South Bronx may seem an unlikely place to have birthed a new movement in poetry. But in defiance of inferior educational opportunities and poor housing standards, a generation of young people- mostly black and brown- conceived innovations in rhythm, rhyme, and wordplay that would change the English language itself (*Book of Rhymes*, Chapter 1, location 72).

The major differences in these two presentations are that Bradley acknowledges that while most of the progenitors of hip hop were people of color, thus broadening the scope of those recognized as being socioeconomically oppressed and politically disenfranchised, that the form's cultural significance has

transcended race.

Reinforcing my newfound acceptance of words more closely associated with music is the writing of Adam Bradley, specifically his *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*. In it he discusses how "A good poem makes for a lousy lyric, and a great lyric for a second rate poem. Rap defies such conventional wisdom. By unburdening itself from the requirements of musical form rap is free to generate its own poetic textures independent of the music" (xvi). He goes on to explain how songwriters, unlike MCs, must also consider how their words match "melodies and harmonies." This disambiguation aligns MCs more closely to literary poets. If Bradley gets his way, Jay-Z will one day receive the serious consideration reserved for the likes of Kooser, Hall and Pinsky.

Okay, so now I feel confident that I have a sound rationale for the inclusion of rap in the study of poetry, but once one gets past the relative absurdity of having to rationalize the inclusion of the study of poetry in English class, it may lead him or her to a series of questions: How does one make effective use of poetry in the secondary English classroom without coming off pedantic? How does one counter the arguments made by literacy consultants and administrators alike, "Poetry is too difficult for our kids [students].... We need to demonstrate to Downtown that we are preparing students to be successful [on the CAPT exam]." How might a deeper understanding of the sound of words through a greater appreciation of the music of poetry empower our students as writers of prose, especially in relation to something as seemingly pedestrian as the Personal Statement?

Why? The hook, even if the writing of poetry (let alone "good poetry") is not the endgame, students must write to be heard. Like the emcee, the college applicant, wishes to avoid being just another face in the crowd.

What else might the skilled wordsmith have to impart other than a command of voice, whether we speak of Chuck D., Wordsworth or Longfellow?

Now they've got me in a cell
Cause my records they sell
Cause a brother like me says well
Farrakhan's a prophet that I think you oughta listen to
What he say to you
What you oughta do (Public Enemy, "Bring the Noise.")

Irony, tone, shifts in register. How does verbal irony differ from sarcasm? Does this have anything to do with the sound of words? What exactly is a malapropism? When a colleague mistakenly uses the word "nuisance" when he or she meant to say, "nuance," would that qualify? Where do *spoonerisms* come from? Was there a Spooner? In fact, there was.

Dull, brazen, cherished, cherub, dilly-dally, rumble, crumple, burp, lurk, lark, glow and doze: the preceding

dozen words seem to be like their meanings. Could any of them mean their opposite? Was Shakespeare correct in his assertion about roses? Could dull be, in fact, bright and shiny? Is there room for clever and humor in the Personal Statement?

Is it pronounced Ray-Kim or Rah-kheem? Rockin' his mic. Should I not take offense when Somers claims hip hop is derivative of rock?

1.4 Descriptive Overview and Long Term Plan

This six week unit provides for two eighty-six minute blocks and one hour long period per week for its duration; this time will be spent with students engaged in a variety of reading, writing and listening activities. The unit concludes with the culminating project of senior students producing their Personal Statements.

Although neither will be studied in isolation, students will focus on the genres of hip hop and poetry. The main purpose of these studies as a gateway to the personal statement, which in fact is a "significant task" as outlined by the District's twelfth grade English Language Arts curriculum, is that students will engage in discourse with a rich variety of texts and will therefore begin to develop personal voices, a sense of tone and a fundamental understanding of what Thomas Fox terms "position" in his essay "Repositioning the Profession: Teaching Writing to African American Students."

"Position" as a central concept in the exploration of African American student writers requires a pedagogy that would investigate the ways in which history, culture, institutions, social relations, and race intersect and influence writing (106).

Section Two: Special Issues, Objectives, and Goals

2.1 Special Issues AKA Where is the PMRC When You Need Them?

Misogyny and the glorification of violence are pervasive in rap lyrics. It would probably be wise to exclude any and all works by Too Short AKA Shorty the Pimp, 2Live Crew and the bulk of recordings contained on Ghostface Killah's solo debut FishScale esp. Track 8, a skit entitled "Heart Street Directions." That being said, one might make an argument for including Track 3, "Kilo" featuring Raekwon with its hook, "All around the world today/ The kilo is the measure/ A kilo is a thousand grams/ It's easy to remember," if he or she were teaching across disciplines.

2.2 Aims: Objectives and Goals

The aim of this curriculum is to promote student growth across a wide array of areas. These areas include academic achievement, social skills and an increased awareness and practice of acceptable behaviors.

By completing this unit students will demonstrate increased abilities in reading comprehension and literary

analysis. Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of the following: tone, speaker, author's purpose, and a number of other literary devices.

Students will develop writing skills through active participation in the following activities: regular free writes, guided journaling and the development of both personal and analytical essays by means of both cooperative and individual writing practices.

Section Three: Unit Description

3.1 Outline: Texts and Methods

3.1.1 Tone and Author's Aim in Literary Poetry

Included in our required readings for seminar were works by Hayden and Roethke. I found the pairing to be a compelling one. This is in evidence by my inclusion of "The Whipping" and "My Papa's Waltz." If one were to compare and contrast these two works, you could possibly point to a thematic link (depending on your reading of Roethke). It seems to me that the "Waltz" is somewhat [intentionally?] ambiguous, while "The Whipping" clearly makes a case for the cyclical nature of domestic violence i.e. child abuse. This simple observation leads me to the question, how do I move past theme and analysis of other literary devices? What about the sound(s)? Whether or not it is appropriate, I would like to impose a rhythm and beat similar to that of a Waltz on Roethke's poem. With a little work (and research to confirm my findings) I discovered that Roethke's poem is written in iambic trimeter and that a Waltz is traditionally in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. It is my belief that the lyrical qualities of the work lighten both the mood and the tone, which in turn strengthen any arguments that the father's drunken "romp" is, for lack of a better term, benign.

Where is the hip hop? I have thus far included Roethke, Hayden, Carver and Dunbar. Roethke's and Dunbar's poems are lyrical; Carver's and Hayden's are free verse narratives bordering on prose. Neither Carver nor Hayden employ rhyme but rather emphasize image. An overarching theme (with the possible exception of the Roethke poem as previously discussed) is that these poems all deal with abuse. How does this tie in with the personal statement? Historically speaking, students who are, or have been, disenfranchised like to include anecdotes about overcoming adversity. One might argue that the only speaker or subject to have successfully overcome is that in Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask." The speaker is reminiscent of the grandfather in Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man* who essentially says that you must kill "them" with kindness; no matter how hard the struggle, never reveal yourself to be susceptible [to what?] or vulnerable.

But it is simply not enough to say, "I am the first in my family to graduate high school and to attend college." This is true of many of our students. What they need are the tools (one of which being process writing) to communicate that they are in fact

...so hip even my [their] errors are correct...

I am so perfect so divine so ethereal so surreal

I cannot be comprehended

except by my permission (Giovanni, "Ego Tripping: there may be a reason why,"

It is becoming increasingly self-evident that no unit that contains both hip hop and poetry would be complete without the inclusion of Gwendolyn Brooks, especially her poem "We Real Cool."

3.1.2 Ballad Meter across the Ages: "The Seafarer," "Junk" and "Rapper's Delight"

I am increasingly interested in the neo-formalists, esp. Richard Wilbur and George Starbuck. I stumbled upon Starbuck looking for an entryway- a gateway so to speak- to iambic pentameter, which in turn I was hoping to use as a point-of-entry to Shakespeare. I may have found a way to work Wilbur in. Although this unit does not provide for a complete reading of "Beowulf" I will include it in at least an extremely excerpted form.

Senior English both traditionally and in our district has a focus on British literature. I realize that inclusion of "Beowulf" is somewhat counter-intuitive as its protagonist is of Scandinavian extraction; however, its title is synonymous with Anglo Saxon epic poetry. I will introduce "Beowulf" by means of the Sugar Hill Gang. In seminar we looked at classic, modern and contemporary examples of verse that employed common measure (e.g. "The Seafarer, Ezra Pound's "Cantos" and Richard Wilbur's "Junk"), also often referred to as ballad meter. It is Bradley who points out the fact that Sugar Hill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," oft-times credited as being the first rap song, even if equally derided for being "pop" in the basest sense somehow akin to the music of The Monkees or the boy bands from the nineteen-eighties up to today, follows common measure. Bradley goes onto acknowledge that Wonder Mike's choice of meter was more than likely the result of synchronicity and the collective unconscious (18). If for some reason "Beowulf" as included in the McDougal Littell anthology *The Language of Literature* does not follow ballad meter I will always have these earlier examples to fall back on (i.e. "The Seafarer" and "Junk").

Now WHAT you HEAR is NOT a TEST
I'm RAPpin' TO the BEAT.
And ME, the GROOVE, AND my FRIENDS
are gonna TRY to MOVE your FEET (Sugar Hill Gang as transcribed by Bradley,
17-18).

3.1.3 Nonsense Poetry and Das Racist's "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell"

In a world increasingly sophisticated, poetry is one of the few ways in which we

can still afford to be primitive (Nims xxxviii).

How to get the boast bang for your muck? In seminar such a transposition of sounds (albeit I bent bast [sic] to boast from most) was revealed to be a spoonerism, a term named for the British cleric William Archibald Spooner. Word play; puns are fun, as are oxymorons. I always get a kick out of students' reactions when I include Biggie Smalls in a list of oxymorons. Many seem to think that it is meant to be an insult. Although one does not wish his or her personal statement to be nonsensical, having a little fun with words may prove to be good training and or exercise.

Personally having recently read, listened to and performed a number of works by May Swenson and Wallace Stevens, who unbeknownst to me was a native son of the Nutmeg State and led the rather superhero-like existence of mild-mannered insurance man by day and poet by night (not unlike one of my personal favorites Ted Kooser, whose works I would highly recommend to anyone developing a poetry unit for the secondary classroom esp. "The Abandoned Farmhouse," "Flying By Night," "Selecting a Reader" and "Epitaph for a Sky-diver"), I am drawn to the Brooklyn-based hip hop outfit Das Racist's 2008 single "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell." The rap perfectly blends the nonsensical and absurd while creating a sense of whimsy that evokes fun, free-spiritedness and camaraderie. My boys Otis and Oscar, one and three respectively, cannot get enough of its use of rhythm, repetition and obvious rhyme.

I'm at the Taco Bell, I'm at the Pizza Hut,
I'm at the combination Taco Bell and Pizza Hut,
I've got that taco smell, I've got that pizza butt (Das Racist).

Although nonsensical on the surface, not unlike Stevens' "The Man on the Dump," there seems to be a comment on the alienating effects of modernity. In Das Racist's rhyme suburban sprawl has encroached upon the inner city with its cookie cutter fast-food box chain stores causing an added layer of disconnectedness and confusion. By the rap's conclusion you realize two friends are attempting to meet and although they are both where they believe they are supposed to be, they are in fact at different locations. It is as though you were asked to meet at either the Duncan Donuts or the Starbuck's on Chapel Street in New Haven. The situation might likely devolve into something like Abbott and Costello's baseball sketch "Who's on First?"

3.1.4 Jay-Z's Decoded and the Personal Statement

In the research and development of this unit I have learned some very valuable lessons. First and foremost is that I must better position myself as a teacher of writing, as Fabb points out in "Unit 10 The Voice to Write In" of his book *How to Write Essays and Dissertations*, "Academic register is not your spoken voice" (91). Additionally, in the essay "The Process of Writing" Kinneavy points out the modern pitfall of becoming so immersed in and enchanted by "process" that we as writers and teachers of writing neglect the final product.

As I have previously mentioned there is much to be learned by the writer of the personal statement from the emcee. In his extended personal statement *Decoded* the rapper Jay-Z discusses how the braggadocio in hip

hop is similar to the theme of love in the sonnet; it has been done so many times, one has must incorporate some personal flair to get anyone to pay attention (26). In explicating his lyrics to "Public Service Announcement," he observes:

Identity is not a prison you can never escape, but the way to redeem your past is not to run from it, but to try to understand it, and use it as a foundation to grow (31).

Throughout his book Jay-Z not only analyzes his own art but that of his predecessors, contemporaries and progeny. Using this frame to position himself brings to mind a short piece published in New York magazine that described the admissions process at Sarah Lawrence College, the one school that claims that standardized test scores such as the SAT and ACT have no bearing on their decision-making. In the article a student who wrote a thoughtful and yet personal analysis of the writings of Stephenie Meyer was selected over someone who had chosen it write yet one more canned *Hamlet* essay.

3.2 Details: Sample Lesson Plans

3.2.1 Analyzing Tone in Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz"

Journal/Motivation: Think back to time when both you and a friend or family member witnessed an event and later, in retelling what had happened, discovered your perspectives differed greatly. Whose recollection was more accurate? How do you account for such discrepancies?

Aim: How can we use text evidence to support our interpretation and analysis of Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz"?

Objectives and Goals: SWBAT...

1. interpret and analyze a poem by Theodore Roethke
2. cite text evidence in support of their ideas regarding the true meaning of a print text.

Mini Lesson:

Author's *aim* and *tone*.

Class Assignment:

Read and annotate the poem "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke.

Workshop. In groups discuss and answer the following questions:

1. Had the father in "My Papa's Waltz" been drinking?
2. Where does the action in the poem take place?

3. What was the mother's facial expression while her husband and child danced?
4. What was on the father's hands?
5. Where does the father keep time?
6. What images in the poem do you find most striking?
7. Why do you think the poet has chosen these images?
8. What might the term dance refer to other than its literal meaning?
9. What is your interpretation of the poem?
10. How sure are you that your interpretation is the correct one? Might there be alternative viewpoints that are as valid? Why or why not?
11. If one of the author's aims was to be ambiguous was he successful in accomplishing this goal? Why or why not?

Journal II: Write a haibun.

Mini Lesson: Narrative vs Lyric

Read and annotate the following poem:

The Whipping

Robert Hayden

Class Work:

1. Who is the speaker in Hayden's "The Whipping"?
2. What is the poem about?
3. How does the speaker react to the scene, esp. in lines 1-11?
Is he or she emotional or objective?
4. What do lines 1-11 mean? What might the colon at the end of line 12 suggest?
5. What does stanza four refer to? How do you know?
6. How does the speaker feel about the incident from his past?
7. What might he mean by "the face I no longer knew or loved? As he looks back over the years do you think his feelings toward the person who whipped him have changed? Explain.

8. How is the old woman "purged"?

9. Why did she whip the boy?

10. Why does the speaker repeat "it is over" in line 19? Is it? In what way may it not be over? How is this ironic?

11. Do you think the poet is against corporal punishment? Are you? Why or why not?

Homework (choose one):

1. Draft (write) a brief narrative, may be either an essay or a poem, in which you use the device of flashback.

2. Briefly describe a controversial incident in which you have personally participated. Quickly jot down your thoughts on the matter. Now consider an alternative viewpoint. Write two short poems, each describing one point of view.

3.2.2 Speaker and Symbol in Carver and Dunbar

Motivation: Read, annotate and quick write three questions or comments regarding the following:

"My Daughter and Apple Pie"

Raymond Carver

Journal:

Think about what emotions people are most likely to hide. What makes people afraid to show certain emotions? Why are people sometimes unwilling to show their true selves to others?

Aim: How can we identify the speaker and analyze symbols within "The Mask?"

Objectives and Goals: Students will...

1. Identify a speaker and symbol within a poem.
2. Use a poem as a tool for self-expression.

Mini Lesson: Review of Symbol and New Term Speaker

Symbol. A symbol is something (generally a person, place, object, or event) that represents both itself and something else by association, resemblance, or convention. Writers use two types of symbols- conventional and personal/idiosyncratic.

Speaker. The speaker is a character that speaks in, or narrates, a poem- the voice assumed by the writer. The writer and the speaker are not necessarily one in the same.

EX. T.S. Eliot takes on the voice of J. Alfred Prufrock in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." In Carl Sandberg's "Grass", the grass is the speaker.

Class Assignment:

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A. Read the poem and analyze its meaning, literary elements, rhyme scheme etc.

"We Wear the Mask"

B. Reinforcing the Mini Lesson:

Discuss and answer these questions with your partner/group:

Speaker. Review the definition of *speaker*.

1. For whom is the speaker speaking?
2. How might your interpretation of the poem change if you decided the speaker was talking for the entire human race? Who then would represent "them" and "we"?
3. Does the speaker express a positive or negative attitude toward human duplicity (phoniness)?

Symbol. Review definition.

1. What does the mask symbolize?
2. Why do people wear the mask?
3. What other symbols could the poet have chosen to represent his ideas other than the mask?

C. Workshop. Making a Connection to Literature (text-to-self)

1. Take a blank sheet of paper, fold it, and on the outside and inside draw the outline of a mask.
2. On the side facing out, write words and symbols inside the mask showing what you do reveal to the outside world.
3. Inside write words and symbols that represent the part of yourself that you do not allow others to see.
4. Share your mask with your partner and ask them to update the mask that you reveal (the one on the cover) and you update theirs.
5. Using the words, images, symbols on your masks begin to write two poems, one for each.

Homework:

Finish and edit your two poems.

3.2.3 Shifts in Register

Journal/Motivation: Do different situations require you to use different types or patterns of verbal and written communications? Rate the following from formal to informal in descending order: a conversation with your pastor or spiritual advisor, a conversation with a friend on the street corner before or after school, a letter written to a friend or family member who has sent you a gift or has "put you up" for a night or two while on a long journey, an essay written for English class.

Mini Lesson:

Shifts in register

A *register* is a state of proper alignment or a variety of language used in a specific social setting.

Class Workshop A:

1. Write a scene in which you are having a conversation with a friend (please refrain from using any explicatives) .
2. Now isolate the main point of your conversation and rewrite your scene as though you were speaking to your parent or guardian on the same topic.
3. For your final rewrite, use your chosen topic to craft a non-narrative that you would use as a starting point for a formal English paper.

Workshop B. Once you have completed Shift in Register you are to complete the story. You may use the excerpt or the idea presented in any way you like:

Here I normally insert a prompt that you can most likely locate by entering the title "Moe's Café" into your search engine of choice (notice the lack of blatant/shameless product placement).

Homework:

On loose leaf chose another topic and put it through the process that you used in class (3 steps: informal, formal familiar, formal academic). When you have completed this task write a paragraph describing your writing process (what you did as a writer in order to accommodate the appropriate register).

Section Four: Assessment

Students participating in this unit of study will receive grades representing their level of content competency and the amount of effort demonstrated through both written assignments and level of participation in class. In order to receive full credit for participation students must come to class prepared. In effect all students are expected to complete all outside reading assignments. Compliance will be judged through both quick writes and subsequent in class discussions.

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Appendix: Links to English and Language Arts Standards Covered by Unit

Standard 4.0 Listening

In developing individual student voices individuals participating in this unit will read, listen to, and respond in writing to a wide variety of print and non-print texts i.e. poetry, rap lyrics written and performed and creative nonfiction.

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