



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

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## **Multiculturalism, Language and Poetry: Exploring These Avenues through the Sound of Words**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.03.09  
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When English language learners (ELL) come into our classroom, they feel anxious about meeting the new teacher, and they wonder whether the teacher will understand them. They may be thinking in their native language, and if the teacher is speaking English rapidly and not giving visual cues, the ELL student may begin to feel anxious. If teachers had the training in working with these students, then they would teach from day one with them in mind. Teachers would limit their speech to simple vocabulary and use as many visual cues as possible to communicate their ideas. Doing this would allow students learning English to feel more comfortable, valued, and important in classrooms, which would thus lead to greater academic success.

This unit can be used with students in grades three through six, during the writing/language arts block. The aim is to expose students to different cultures and language through poetry; and at the same time, to increase their vocabulary and comprehension in English, as well as sensitize them to the sounds of multiple languages. Also, this unit has been created with the hope that when students look at one another from a culture other than their own, they will develop a greater appreciation for cross-cultural experiences and perspectives. The goal is to build tolerance, respect, and empathy for people of different backgrounds, their culture and their language.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grades 3-6)

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