



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1989 Volume II: Poetry

A Journey of Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 89.02.01
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The poetry curriculum will take approximately one month of the ten-month segment of the creative and expository writing course. Or, in a general approach, one could sprinkle in some poetry with drama, short story, novel, or essay units. This unit should be suitable for all levels of ability in the tenth and eleventh grades.

The journey will be a representative sampling of mostly American poetry, including the major poets of the past, such as Whitman, Dickinson, Frost, Robinson, Cummings and Hughes, as well as modern poets including May Swenson, Mary Oliver, Charles Simic, Sara Teasdale, Louis Simpson, Beatrice Janosco, William Stafford, Lou Lipsitz, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lillian Morrison, Robert Wallace, and John Ashbery. One of the most important purposes of the unit will be to make poetry rewarding to read and discuss. Moreover, the unit will help stimulate the flow of creative juices by having students create original poems which express their own life experiences and are engaging to read. The journey through the field of poetry will be intense and deep. Thus, the poetry readers and writers in the class will be changed forever in the way they appreciate and judge poetry.

My objectives for the unit are for students to: 1. become familiar with a variety of poems, contemporary, traditional, and experimental. 2. have practice comparing and contrasting two poems about the same subject. 3. be able to read a poem closely and interpret it in terms of meaning, imagery, and sound; and then write an analysis of it. 4. discover their own reality and their own voice through poetry. 5. sharpen their powers of observation. 6. create original poems which express their own life experiences and are engaging to read. 7. prepare a portfolio of their best poetry—revised, rewritten, polished, and titled. 8. improve their taste in poetry.

(Recommended for American Literature, Expository Writing, and Creative Writing classes, grades 10-12; and English Literature and English classes, grades 11-12)

Key Words

Poetry American Literature General Writing Instruction

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