



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1991 Volume IV: Recent American Poetry: Expanding the Canon

In Search of Afro-American Poets in Modern Times

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.04.03
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This unit was designed to meet the needs of Special Education LD (learning disabled) and SEM (socially emotionally maladjusted) students in grades 9-12. Based on their skill, a great deal of time will be spent on interpretation. Both oral and written activities will be used to encourage participation. It is my intention to show that students of poor neighborhoods, if given the chance and opportunity to write, have a tremendous amount to say and they are very anxious to speak through poetry.

Students will discuss poetry in depth. Students will understand that poetry is age old and in its varied forms has always been a way that mankind has given expression to something more than ideas. Like music, its rhythms and cadences are universal in their emotional appeal.

This unit takes a look at biographical sketches of several famous Afro-American poets. These include: Paul Laurence Dunbar, Claude McKay, Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps and Nikki Giovanni. Students will take a look at the historical events that occurred in each poet's career. Students will also read each selected poem by a poet, memorizing possibly, and looking closely at the theme of the poem. Through the experience of learning how to listen, read and write poetry, students will be able to let go and be creative.

(Recommended for history and literature, grades 9-12: special education)

Key Words

Afro-American Hughes Langston Biography Autobiography Poetry Special Education Literature Women

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