



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

Steps Toward Writing Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 91.04.05
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My objective for this unit is to create a smooth guide for children, as they take their steps toward writing poetry. First, I shall introduce workable methods which may be utilized in the classroom. These methods are to motivate children to the point where they are eager and exuberant about expressing themselves poetically. Works with which the students in New Haven can relate will be used. They will consist of these influences: American, African, Caribbean, and Spanish.

In order to boost the children's understanding of poetry, suggested methods such as read first to the children poetry which will interest the children; have them write short poems about what they desire; show them how; use areas of learning and concentration; be aware of the poetic vocabulary; see examples of the work done in my class this spring—will be touched upon. A few added features will include the following: An annotated bibliography for teachers and for students, materials which may be ordered for the classroom, including books of poetry, pictures or photos, drawing paper, pencil crayons or magic markers.

This unit may be used for mainly middle elementary grades but is easily adaptable for younger children as well as older children. This unit encourages teachers to expose children to as many poems as possible, but to use poems which will bring smiles and laughter to the little ones. There is no stereotyping encouraged here. As a matter of fact, it is strongly discouraged and considered bad taste, which will defeat the purpose intended by this unit. After this unit is being taught the children should feel good about themselves and proud of their heritage. The children should also be aware that they should judge their fellowmen fairly and individually, as they give good treatment to all people.

(Recommended for Poetry and Language Arts, grades 4-6)

Key Words

Literature Afro-American Poetry General American Caribbean

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