

Poetry Writing Lesson (Poetry, teamwork, writing)

Objectives and Outcomes:

- To give students practice in writing poetry
- To bolster teamworking skills by having them work together in writing and acting
- To work on dramatic skills, specifically with voice and body
- To make words on a page less abstract to a young group of students by having them assign actions and sound effects to the words

Grade Level: 2nd to 5th

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes

Materials Needed: pencils and paper, topics to draw out of a hat

I. Introduction (five minutes)

- A. Start discussion by putting a short ABAB poem on the board (example at the bottom of the document), and ask students what they notice about the poem
 1. Focus on the rhyming scheme (first and third/second and fourth lines rhyme)
- B. Split students into pairs, and tell them they will be writing their own ABAB poems
- C. Have a hat full of topics. Topics can be whatever you choose; nouns that are jumping off points, genres, feelings, etc. Students will be writing their poems based on the topic that they drew.

II. Poem writing (ten minutes)

- A. Give students ten minutes to write their poems. Have them write at least one set of four ABAB lines, but if they finish this quickly and easily, have them keep going.
- B. Actively be checking in with students to make sure that they are not overwhelmed but are also working on the task at hand

III. Gesture/sound modeling (five minutes)

- A. After students have finished writing their poems, have them focus their attention on you. Tell them that they will be adding gestures and sound effects to their poems while reading them aloud. You may have to explain what a gesture is depending on the age of the students.
- B. Model examples of what gestures and sound effects while reading can look like. An example is at the bottom of this document.

IV. Adding gestures and sound (five minutes)

- A. Instruct students that they have five minutes to add at least three gestures and one sound effect to their poem. They are also encouraged to do more if they please.
- B. Again, actively be checking in with groups and making sure to help them if they are struggling.

V. Performance (five to ten minutes)

- A. Move all students to a large standing circle in an open space available in the room, pick a volunteer to start with their poem, then once they are done, move around the circle until every group has gone. Encourage groups to commit to their choices, be bold in their reading, and own their work.

VI. Wrap-up (five to ten minutes)

- A. Lead a discussion with students asking them about their feelings about the lesson. Example discussion questions include:
 1. What was it like writing poetry? How did it feel adding gestures and movement to the poems? Does this make you more interested in poetry?
- B. If time permits, end with a game.

Modification and Differentiation

The timeframe on this lesson plan is relatively loose. Constantly be checking in with your students and see what their needs are and if they need more time. Additionally, I would add that this is a very general framework of what a poetry drama integration lesson can look like. Aspects of this lesson can absolutely be used in a poetry lesson for older students, and parts of the lesson can also be shifted around. One modification could be bringing poems in for the students to read, and then have them add gestures and sound effects to that poem, putting more emphasis on the active element of the lesson.

Example of ABAB Poem:

The people along the sand (A)
All turn and look one way. (B)
They turn their back on the land. (A)
They look at the sea all day. (B)

Example of gestures and sound with ABAB Poem:

The people along the sand (both hands swinging out)
All turn (physically turn body) and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look (looking gesture) at the sea (whoosh sound effect) all day.