

Revolutionary & Early American Poetry

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Intended Class Level

11 &12 grade English or History Course

Abstract

Students will examine poems from a variety of Revolutionary & Early American poets. They will look closely at not only the literary elements of the poem but what the poem can reveal about the time period. This is a way for a class of students to be exposed to a larger number of poems but still provides an opportunity for close reading and study.

Essential Questions

- What themes did early Americans address in their poetry?
- What can poetry teach us about the lives and values of early Americans?

Background

- This lesson is intended as a piece of a larger unit about the Revolutionary and Early American time period. Students should have a general background about the lives, values and struggles of early Americans. The lesson is intended to show students how these ideals were expressed through poetry.
- In addition this lesson can be lengthened if basic elements of poetry need to be further introduced and explained to the students. Again students should have a basic working knowledge of the elements of poetry to be discussed in their groups.
- The lesson is intended to take one class period but can be extended as needed. I have conducted this lesson either over one or two class periods.
- Poems to be used should be copied on to overheads so that students can present their group's poem to the class. Other poems may be added or substituted as needed or desired by the instructor.

Procedure -

- The instructor should choose a poem to use as an example for the class. The instructor should read the chosen poem for the class and go through all of the questions that

students will be expected to discuss in their groups. The class can generate answers together so they know what they will be expected to work on in their groups.

- The instructor should break the students in to groups (no more than 3 students in a group) and hand out the Poetry Group Sheet (attached). The instructor can either hand pick groups, randomly assign groups or have students choose; it really depends on the climate of the classroom.
- Students should work through the questions on the sheet and prepare to read the poems to the class. The instructor should circulate to make sure that students are on task, answer any questions and probe groups in to deeper discussions.
- When groups are finished (about 15-20 minutes) they will then present their poem to the class. The instructor can ask follow up questions or question the class as a whole about issues brought up by the groups. Depending on the size and length of the class the presentations may have to take place the next day.
- Groups should turn in their Group Poetry Sheets to the instructor at the close of the lesson.

Assessment

The instructor will monitor the small group work as well as review the completed Group Poetry Sheets to check for student understanding.

Sources

Huswifery

<http://www.puritansermons.com/poetry/taylor14.htm>

The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended

<http://www.puritansermons.com/poetry/taylor12.htm>

To My Dear and Loving Husband

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Bradstreet/bradhyp.htm>

On Being Brought from Africa to America

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/webtexts/Wheatley/brought.html>

On the Death of a Young Gentleman

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/Phillis-Wheatley/18532>

Before the Birth of One of Her Children

[http://www.annebradstreet.com/before the birth of one of her children.htm](http://www.annebradstreet.com/before_the_birth_of_one_of_her_children.htm)

A Hymn to the Evening

http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/classroom/curriculum_8th/lesson2/hymn.html

Indeed Young Man I Must Deny (pg. 17)

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1555533507/ref=s9_simh_gw_p14_d0_i1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_s=center-2&pf_rd_r=1S2ZNTCC91WYBA3MG1T5&pf_rd_t=101&pf_rd_p=470938631&pf_rd_i=507846