



What is Libby Hathorn's 100 Views?

An opportunity for students and communities to celebrate their chosen icon through poetry, art and technology, whilst fostering community involvement and providing a means to showcase it to the world.

Building bridges Developing understandings Enhancing tolerance

POETRY WORKSHOP 1

Poetry in Action



Poetry is what makes me laugh, cry or yawn,
what makes my toenails twinkle
what makes me do this or that or nothing.
from Poetry is What by Dylan Thomas

Poetry is life distilled
Gwendolyn Brooks

I write poetry in order to live more fully
Judith Rodriquez

WHAT WE ARE SETTING OUT TO DO

If you'd like to make poetry more accessible to children and help make poetry live for them, as something relevant to their lives, then you might like to follow this series of easy-to-run workshops, a 'poetry roadmap'. Linked with artwork these form the basis of the 100 Views Project.

We need to inspire young people to read and listen to poetry in order to simply enjoy the magic of words! But we also need to help them read and write poetry more eagerly and thoughtfully as a means of expressing themselves.

One way we can initiate this is through a workshop that helps ‘get them into poetry’ where everyone has an opportunity to be an active participant. Through several suggested activities, (really active, such as dance!) participants are encouraged to:

- search for
- choose
- interpret
- refine
- present, and ultimately
- **enjoy** a poem of their choice

thus getting students searching the poetry books to find ‘their’ poem.

WHAT IS NEEDED

- a good selection of poetry anthologies (821 in the library)
- a selection of recorded instrumental music
- two CD players (one to play and one to record)
- percussion instruments (anything that will produce sound)
- access to power points (ideally)

It’s not necessary to record the poetry and music presentation (if no recording is possible) and, if preferred, this can be a ‘live’ presentation.

HOW TO ARRANGE IT

The workshop begins with a whole group but breaks into four or five smaller groups working at appointed locations.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

Before the workshop- setting up locations

Have a big pile of poetry anthologies at four or five locations where groups (as large as 6 or 7 to a group) can comfortably work, reading poems aloud and discussing choices. Two groups will need access to power points.

Set up percussion instruments at one location, recorder and recorded music at a second location, and a recorder at a third. The remaining two locations need no extra equipment.

At the workshop- finding the right poem

- Explain to the whole group that the purpose of the workshop is to explore and enjoy lots of poetry. The workshop will allow them to work in small groups, choosing a poem that they will interpret through one of several ways, for their enjoyment and the enjoyment of the class as a whole.

- Outline the following forms as possibilities:

- poetry through movement or dance
- poetry and mime
- poetry and music
- poetry and sound effects
- poetry 'televised'

- Explain the possible variations of the voice or voices for group presentation in reading the chosen poem. For example, for some lines or refrains, one can use a single voice, a duet, or whole group, for a particular effect.
- Indicate the time frame, e.g. that they will be allowed ten minutes for group discussion and choice of poem; a further ten minutes for refinement through practice of their presentation; ten minutes for all groups to present their poem; a further few minutes for final whole class discussions and suggestions.
- Indicate the pre-selected stations around the room (or out in the corridor) for the groups, where the selections of anthologies (and equipment, if needed) have been placed.
- Explain how each group will present the poem of its choice.

GROUP I: Dance It! Poetry through Movement or Dance

The group searches for a poem which suits an interpretation through movement. Explain that the very rhythmic poems are most suitable for this.

GROUP II: Guess It! Poetry through Mime

The group chooses a poem to mime, such as an action poem. They are asked to do their presentation twice. In the first instance to do it without words, where the audience will be asked to guess the subject and action of mime. In the second

presentation the mime will be re-enacted as the poem is read.

GROUP III: Say it with Music. Poetry and Music

The group chooses a poem and then selects the appropriate recorded music to accompany it. The choral presentation is interpreted with the music faded in and out for the desired dramatic effect. The group explores different effects through recording its efforts. If there is access to another CD, recording the presentation then working to improve it, is a valuable process to go through.

GROUP IV: Listen up! Poetry and Sound Effects

Using musical instruments or devised instruments this poem is presented with 'sound effects'. Can be recorded as above.

GROUP V: 'Selling' their poem

The group chooses a poem to be presented as a television segment fractured by commercials which must attempt to 'sell' poetry. (What can poetry do for you and your family, your health, the neighbourhood etc?)

All presentations could be recorded in photographs or filmed for future use e.g. on the school website.

CONCLUDING THE WORKSHOP

After twenty minutes the groups are recalled, and each in turn presents its particular interpretation of the poem.

The workshop itself is busy and noisy and fun. But the final presentation is a culmination of all efforts and it is *extremely important* that sufficient time be made available so that each group is able to perform for the assembled audience.

In a final discussion suggestions could be made for further workshops with different approaches to poetry, e.g. a visual presentation of chosen poems through painting, drawing, collage, photographs, slides, online presentations.

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The poetry of earth is never dead
John Keats

Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself
William Hazlitt

Poetry must have something in it that is barbaric, vast and wild
Denis Diderot

Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if
they were not familiar
Percy Bysshe Shelley

Nature can provide us with endless sources of inspiration...

What is this life
If full of care,
We don't have time
To stand and stare?
William H Davies

