

Theatre Activity: Performing a Poem

In this Activity: This activity is about acting out or embodying a poem. This would be most effective in a section specifically on poetry and/or sonnets.

Literacy: Reading, Writing

Why?: To give the students the opportunity to embody a poem to better understand what goes behind the poem.

Ages: Sixth-Eighth Grade

How:

- *In preparation for this activity the teacher will want to put up poems and/or sonnets along the walls and tables in the classroom. The idea behind this is to create a gallery space for the students to explore the different poets and poems within the room. The number of poems should be exactly half of the class you have because the students will be paired up on the poems later. If there is an odd number then have one group with three students.*
- Students will be asked to explore the space and read as many poems as possible within the time limit the teacher has allotted for this section of the activity.
 - Once the students have been able to take a look around the room the teacher should ask the class to reconvene. The teacher should then ask the students to stand by the poem that spoke to them the most. No more than two students to one poem.
 - *If more than two students stand by the same poem then names will be drawn from a hat and the remaining students will have to relocate to a different poem.*
- Once the poems are selected each pair of students will be given the task of reading the poems out loud.
 - In these pairs the students will be asked to focus on a few different elements within the poem.
 - *For example: Rhythm, tone, theme, ect.*
- After identifying where these elements are included within the poem, the students will be asked to put the poem's imagery, rhythm, tone, ect "on its feet."
 - This means that while one student is reading the poem aloud the other student will be trying to embody what is being said. This is just in the pairs and not being displayed or presented in front of the class.
 - *This can be in very literal terms, for example if a tree is mentioned in the poem the student can be that tree. This can also mean that if an emotion is mentioned the student can try and see how that emotion would feel embodied.*

- After each student in the pair has gotten the opportunity put their poems up “on its feet” the students and teacher will all come back to the center of the room and discuss what the students noticed about this activity and what they may have learned about their poem by embodying it that they were unaware of after the first reading.
- As the discussion comes to a close the second part of this activity can begin.
 - The students will be asked to do some research on the poet of the poem that they previously picked.
 - The students will be looking for general information about the poet. Such as, place of birth, date of birth, background in poetry, ect.
 - Students will be asked to write a paper on the poet as well as comparing and contrasting the original poem from the first part of the activity with another poem by the poet.
 - *The importance of this is to get a better understanding of how poetry relates to each other and how this poet approaches his or her own vision within poetry.*

(EXTRA)

Modification:

For a more HIGH RISK class these poem embodiments can be shown to the class as a presentation. The presentation also makes this activity longer. The teacher may have to think about making this a longer term project.