



The Power of Poetry

Perspectives in Poetry



Shelby Blackwood

Published by K20 Center

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Grade Level	9th – 10th Grade	Time Frame	120-180 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	2-3 class periods
Course	American Literature		

Essential Question

How can poetry be a vehicle for change?

Summary

In this lesson, students compare and contrast the poem, "The Hill We Climb," with an excerpt from the speech, "I Have a Dream," and analyze how the authors' messages are made clear through their word choices and rhetorical strategies. Students compose a poem, evaluate how poetry can be used to send a message, and consider how different perspectives bring different meanings to our writing. This is a multimodality lesson, which means it includes face-to-face, online, and hybrid versions of the lesson. The attachments also include a downloadable Common Cartridge file, which can be imported into a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Canvas or eKadence. The cartridge includes interactive student activities and teacher's notes.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch and respond to a video of the poem "In This Place: An American Lyric."

Explore

Students read and compare "The Hill We Climb" with an excerpt from the "I Have a Dream" speech using Categorical Highlighting. Then, students answer the question "What makes a piece of writing poetry?"

Explain

Students watch and reflect on the Ted Talk, "Using your voice is a political choice."

Extend

Students create a Blackout Poem using an excerpt from a speech by Abraham Lincoln.

Evaluate

Students participate in a Gallery Walk and respond to classmates' poems.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards (6-12)

WME401: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.2: Evaluate authors' perspectives and explain how those perspectives contribute to the meanings of texts.

9.3.R.7: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.

Attachments

- [Abraham Lincoln Speech Excerpt—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln Speech Excerpt—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln Speech Excerpt—The Power of Poetry.docx](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln Speech Excerpt—The Power of Poetry.pdf](#)
- [Common Cartridge—The Power of Poetry.zip](#)
- [Discussion Post Rubric—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Discussion Post Rubric—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Discussion Post Rubric—The Power of Poetry.docx](#)
- [Discussion Post Rubric—The Power of Poetry.pdf](#)
- [I Have a Dream—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.docx](#)
- [I Have a Dream—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [I Have a Dream—The Power of Poetry.docx](#)
- [I Have a Dream—The Power of Poetry.pdf](#)
- [Lesson Slides—The Power of Poetry.pptx](#)
- [The Hill We Climb—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The Hill We Climb—The Power of Poetry - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The Hill We Climb—The Power of Poetry.docx](#)
- [The Hill We Climb—The Power of Poetry.pdf](#)

Materials

- "The Hill We Climb" handout (attached; one for each student)
- "I Have a Dream" handout (attached; one for each student)
- Abraham Lincoln Speech Excerpt handout (attached; one for each student)
- Highlighters (multiple colors)
- Pencils
- Sticky notes
- Black permanent markers

20 minutes

Engage

Use the attached Lesson Slides to follow along with this lesson.

Display **slide 3**. Read aloud the essential question, "How can poetry be a vehicle for change?" Ask students to consider this question and to volunteer their responses.

Move to **slide 4** and briefly review the lesson objectives. Explain to students that they will compare and contrast multiple texts and evaluate how a person's perspective can change the meaning of something.

Display **slide 5** and play the video below. Ask students to consider who the author's audience is and what the author's purpose is.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=W9UmyBSMn3A>

After students have watched the video, ask them to discuss in small groups these two questions:

1. What is the poet's/poem's purpose?
2. Who is the poet's audience?

Ask for volunteers to share out what their groups discussed.

60 minutes

Explore

Tell students they will now watch two more videos. One is of Amanda Gorman reading "The Hill We Climb" at President Joe Biden's Inauguration on January 20, 2021. The second video is part of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

Display **slide 6** followed by **slide 7**.

Teacher's Note

Start the I Have a Dream speech at 11:10.

Ask students to think about how the two readings are similar and how they are different from one another. Ask them to consider how the authors use words and rhetorical strategies to give the text meaning and help it flow. Ask students to identify each audience and each purpose.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4YuEvJ3y4>

Display **slide 8**. Pass out a copy of "**The Hill We Climb**" and "**I Have a Dream**" excerpt to each student. After viewing the videos, review, if necessary, the [Categorical Highlighting](#) strategy. Explain to students that they will analyze these two pieces of writing by looking for rhetorical strategies used by the authors. As they analyze the two pieces, ask students to consider why the author chose the rhetorical strategies they have incorporated into their work.

Teacher's note:

Choose specific rhetorical strategies to highlight depending on students' knowledge level.

When students have finished highlighting, ask students to discuss in small groups any parts of the texts that jumped out at them.

- Have them identify any rhetorical strategies that both pieces used.
- Ask them to surmise why they think the authors chose those strategies.

Display **slide 9**. Ask students to consider this question: "What makes a piece of writing poetry?" Have them discuss in small groups. Ask for volunteers to share out with the class.

20 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 10**. Once students have read and analyzed the two pieces of writing, show the Ted Talk by Amanda Gorman. In the Ted Talk, Ms. Gorman proposes that all poetry/art is political. Ask students to pay attention to her claim and identify the reasons behind her claim as they watch the video.

Embedded video

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=zaZBgqfEa1E>

Display **slide 11**. After students have watched the video, ask them to consider this question: "Is poetry/art political? Explain."

Give students sufficient time to consider and answer the question. Then, ask students to discuss their answers with a partner. Partners will then share out their thoughts to the whole class.

45 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 12**. Pass out a copy of **Abraham Lincoln's speech excerpt** to each student. Explain to students that in 1864, Abraham Lincoln gave the speech at the Baltimore Sanitary Fair. In this speech, President Lincoln made the claim that words do not necessarily have the same meaning for everybody.

Amanda Gorman referenced Lincoln's speech in an interview. Here is a quote from that interview: *"Abraham Lincoln where he basically says, 'By freedom, we do not all mean the same thing. By feminism, we do not all mean the same thing. By intersectionality, we do not all mean the same thing'."* Keeping these observations in mind, read the excerpt of President Lincoln's speech.

Have students use the excerpt from President Lincoln's speech to create a Blackout Poem. Ask students to take their pencil and lightly circle the most significant words in the speech or the words they believe convey the most meaning.

Tell them they may write these words down in the order they appear as they read from top to bottom and left to right. Ask them to make a box around the words they have chosen with a black permanent marker. Have them then black out the rest of the page, leaving only the words they chose untouched.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 13**. Review the [Gallery Walk](#) strategy with students. Ask students to post their Blackout poems along the walls or leave them at their desks. Then, ask students to walk around the room reading their classmates' poems. Invite students to leave sticky notes with comments on the poems. Advise students to look for similarities and differences in the pieces.

Guided Inquiry

Guide students with leading questions, such as "What do you notice about the poems? Are they similar or very different? Did most people choose the same words in their poems? Why do you think people chose the words they did?"

These questions should lead the students to realize that although they used the same piece of text to construct their poems, there were many different ways the piece was interpreted.

Optional

Depending on the number of poems, students could be placed in smaller groups to complete the Gallery Walk.

Resources

- ABC News. (2021, January 20). Poet Amanda Gorman reads 'The Hill We Climb' [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4YuEvJ3y4>
- Hazelwood, Suzy. (2020, March 13). *Black and Yellow Camera Lens on Wooden Surface* [Photograph]. Pexels. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/wood-industry-typing-writing-3928917/>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical highlighting. Strategy. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/192>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk/carousel. Strategy. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google classroom. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google drawings. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/629>
- Knowledge World. (2019, October 8). I Have a Dream by Martin Luther King, Jr's famous speech on Jobs and Freedom (Full Speech Video) [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/c_nvqRqTiKk
- Liu, J. (2021, January 20). Read the full text of Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem 'The Hill We Climb'. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/20/amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem-the-hill-we-climb-full-text.html>
- Mass Poetry. (2020, April 14). Mass Poets read "In this Place (An American Lyric)" by Amanda Gorman [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9UmyBSMn3A&feature=emb_logo
- Montgomery County Public Schools. (n.d.). "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr; August 28, 1963 [Speech transcript]. <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/siteassets/Schools/Middle-Schools/A-F/leems/uploadedFiles/news/Full-text-I-Have-a-Dream-.pdf>
- Spiske, Markus. (2019, September 26). [Photograph]. Pexels. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/climate-sign-outside-blur-2990644/>
- TED. (2021, January 20). Using your voice is a political choice. | Amanda Gorman [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaZBgqfEa1E>
- Volokh, E. (2015, December 30). "We all declare for liberty, but we do not all mean the Same Thing": Eugene Volokh. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/12/28/we-all-declare-for-liberty-but-in-using-the-same-word-we-do-not-all-mean-the-same-thing/>
- Volquardsen, Matthias. (2019, April 15). *Low Angle Photo of American Flag* [Photograph]. Pexels. <https://www.pexels.com/photo/low-angle-photo-of-american-flag-2174720/>