

Identity and Ideology: Using Poetry to Explore Who You Are and What You Believe

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Content Objectives

In my seventh and eighth grade English Language Arts classes, my students are eager to contribute, but very uncomfortable with discussion and the vulnerability that comes with it. In this unit, I use poetry as a medium to establish norms and expectations for discussion and questioning in the classroom, as well as creating a playground for living in the uncomfortable space of having more questions than answers.

It comes up frequently in conversations with other teachers that students lack a sense of curiosity required of critical thinking and a lifelong pursuit of learning. While I broadly understand the complaint, I think that all of my students have an intense curiosity, but perhaps are not often encouraged or equipped to identify, explore, or explain their questions and ideas. It feels like an example of classrooms becoming more focused on what (content) as opposed to how (process).

As a middle school English Language Arts teacher, I am acutely aware of the standardized testing pressures and challenges of the rigor dictated in the Common Core standards. In a classroom where students represent an incredibly broad range of reading levels, interests, and prior learning, it can feel daunting to push students into the meaningful critical thinking and authentic experiences that will result in deeper engagement.

I find that I spent a good deal of time toward “un-teaching” the habits that students have grown accustomed to in a teacher-centered classroom. My students often look to me for answers and see learning as binary. The primary goal of the unit will be to work on questioning with students, and guide them toward seeing the learning value in conversation and questions with each other. This first phase will address how students can ask questions of poetry (modeling multiple meanings of words, placement, feelings, etc.) and I will largely model and reinforce with small group practice. The second phase will provide students with opportunities to use poems we’ve studied in class as inspiration to create their own pieces.

This unit seeks to address these problems by using poetry to engage students in constructive conversation and meaning making to give students ample opportunities to become active participants in their own learning. Critical to this work is creating an atmosphere of trust in which students will share and participate in the collaborative learning process.

In my seminar Modern and Contemporary U.S. Poetry (or “ModPo”), we read and discussed a wide variety of types of poems. Each week was organized with “like” poems (the New York School one week, the Beats another week, for example). We, as students, were told a few specific poems that we would discuss in the next class. As we sat around a large conference table, at least in the first few sessions, each student was given a specific word or phrase to unpack. This “unpacking” process consisted of exploring and explaining what the word may mean or contribute to the poem. Beyond connotation, denotation, or etymology, one might note things like the word’s physical position in the poem, or capitalization. While “unpacking” the word, the seminar leader or classmates may ask questions to extend or explore ideas. With little variation, most of our seminar classes followed this general format. The biggest change being that we, the students, became more comfortable, confident, and engage in and drive the process.

The most striking part of the ModPo Seminar experience was how truly democratic the process was. Poetry was a great equalizer, and when distilled to words and phrases, no one student emerged as the one with all the answers. In our group, some of us were English teachers, some were not; a few were avid poetry readers or writers, many were not; some had many years of teaching experience, others did not. Still, each seminar session, our conference table strewn with poems created a level playing field for all of us to engage in dialogue with each other without any pretense. Creating a similar classroom environment has always been my goal as a teacher, but ModPo allowed me to participate in the model as a student.

The challenge (and opportunity) that the ModPo seminar presented to me was how to channel a process that is so refreshingly open and unstructured into my classroom. What elements from the ModPo seminar can still convey the collaborative nature of our discussions in a classroom of thirty-eight eighth graders in a productive and meaningful way?

While this was a seminar on poetry, typical teaching points of a traditional poetry unit are noticeably (and intentionally) absent from this unit. I will not specifically teach poetic terms and devices in this unit, outside of what may come up naturally in conversation. Those standards, while important, are not integral to this unit and will be covered in other lessons and units in the school year. Identity and Ideology seems like a poetry unit, but it is really a discussion unit that uses poetry as a vehicle.

My unit plans to mimic this unpacking process with my students. Each session of ModPo required us to come prepared to challenge ourselves and our thinking. This process can be intimidating - especially when your school experience has been in a primarily teacher-driven environment.

I teach seventh and eighth grade English Language Arts in a neighborhood public school in the northwest corner of Philadelphia. My school educates students from pre-

kindergarten through eighth grades. The student body identifies as 89% African American, 8% identify as more than one race, and the remaining 3% representing Hispanic, white, Asian, or Pacific Islander. The entire student body is designated as coming from a “low-income family” with 100% of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. We boast a highly active Family-Teacher Association; parents and families are very involved and the school is very much a part of the neighborhood community. Designated as one of Philadelphia’s community schools, our students and families participate in a weekly farmers market at the school, among other things.

This unit focuses entirely on poetry by African American poets and those who center the African American experience so that my students (entirely African American) can explore their own identity and the importance of finding and sharing their own voices. I’d like students to begin to see their participation in discussion in class, and their contributions to our classroom culture as a microcosm of their participation in society at large. As students cultivate their own beliefs and opinions, strengthen their voices, and validate each others’ ideas, they will become more empowered to share their stories. For our culminating project, I’d like students to be able to choose how they feel their learning can best be represented in the community. This may take the form of leading a poetry discussion with a lower grade classroom, or even with a group of parents. It may be mirroring poetry they’ve read to reflect their own experience and presenting them to our school or local community.

Students in marginalized communities often have a valid distrust of authority figures (Gorski 28). In order to create this atmosphere conducive to sharing and learning, I will focus on cultivating the potential and leadership of students through student-led small discussion and by modeling my own learning by sharing my own questions and confusion and talking through with students.

To have an authentic learning experience, students need the opportunity to engage with poetry in meaningful ways (Ritchhart 10). As a ModPo seminar student, I was able to experience this authentic intellectual activity with my peers. By introducing a mini-ModPo to my students in Identity and Ideology, I will give them structures and opportunities to do and to teach each other and construct meaning collaboratively. This unit will be the foundation for discussions on other types of text throughout the year. While a group discussion on an informational text is not exactly the same as a discussion about a poem, students will have the tools and the experience to comfortably explore and question other texts in a meaningful way that allows them to think critically.

Teaching Strategies

The unit will be roughly three weeks long. There will be three phases of the unit. The first phase is the introduction to exploring poetry with questions and discussion. The goal of this phase is to get students more comfortable with learning through questioning, as

opposed to learning only being demonstrated through a single correct answer. An example of this phase is presented in the first lesson plan (below). This would be the kick-off lesson, but may require additional follow up lessons before moving into the next phase.

Phase two of the unit, the bulk of the unit, will be close reading. Each daily lesson will follow the same general format and focus on one poem each day. To acclimate students to group discussion and equip them with the tools to organize their thoughts and express themselves clearly, I will share a different strategy in each of the first few lessons in this phase. The goal is that students will add these strategies to their toolkit and be able to use the tool(s) that are most effective for them. Lesson two (below) is an example of this close reading phase. It also shows how I may refer to previous strategies and encourage students to reflect and select what works best.

The final phase of the unit focuses on writing imitation poetry. This will be the shortest phase of the unit and will refer to poems that students have already read in class. That is, they will have already analyzed and discussed a poem as readers before we embark on analyzing and imitating a poem as writers. In this unit, we will have structured lessons to imitate two poems, and students will be able to self-select a third poem to imitate. Lesson three (below) is an example of one writer's workshop.

The unit will culminate in a performance assessment that will largely be driven by student input and planning, though will likely be some form of a community poetry reading that students plan and execute together. As noted previously, this is not an assessment of their knowledge of poetry, but rather their ability to think critically, discuss confidently, and question frequently. This, of course, can be challenging to assess. My goal is to establish the conditions and norms that equip students to engage in discussion throughout the rest of the school year.

This unit is intentionally lean on handouts for students. In developing habits of mind in students, I want to show and model that there are a variety of ways to organize your thoughts. A student does not need to have a specific graphic organizer in order to think through a piece of poetry. If a student develops the habit of using see/think/wonder to examine text, for example, this can take a variety of forms when written. That said, when thinking of the diverse learning needs of my students, I will depict these options on chart paper posted around the room that students can refer to at any point. As with any habit, we will practice extensively before they become internalized.

Below are the highest frequency teaching strategies in this unit. Each of them is used to boost student engagement and provide low-pressure opportunities to explore thoughts and ideas. By using these regularly, my hope is that students feel comfortable in the classroom and know what the expectations of our classroom environment are.

Stop and Jot - This strategy asks students to stop and quickly write down initial thoughts, ideas, or impressions of a poem or idea. The stop and jot gives students time to think and collect an idea before sharing or discussing.

Jigsaw - In our mini-ModPo version of a Jigsaw, students will use this familiar strategy to become more comfortable “unpacking” words and phrases. In this jigsaw, students in a group will each be responsible for explaining a different word/phrase from the poem. Each student who shares the same word from different groups, will meet as “experts” to talk through the word together and co-construct ideas and responses. This takes some pressure and intimidation away from the process (especially when first starting). Experts will then return to their original groups to explain their word or phrase.

Carousel Share - In this share, usually used in the closing of a lesson, I will ask students to come up with one word to describe either their thoughts on our poem that day, or one word from the poem that they loved, or one word to describe how they are feeling at the moment, etc. Students must only choose one word and are not called upon to explain it. This is a low-pressure way for students to engage and have fun with words. To make it more exciting, I’ll often time the carousel share to make it a race. Every student in the class shares their word by shouting in out. We’ll go up and down words, or pod by pod, depending on how student desks are arranged.

Gallery Walk - In a gallery walk, students are silent observers as if visiting a gallery. In this unit, I will use the gallery walk to present images that lend themselves to deeper interpretation of a particular poem, or images that may elicit the scene or the feelings portrayed in the poem.

Do Now - Each class period begins with a Do Now. This is a brief (3-5 minute) activity that serves as a warm-up for the students to engage with material that previews or sets the tone for the class period.

Exit Slip - Each class period ends with an Exit Slip. This is a brief (roughly 5-10 minutes) prompt that serves as a check for understanding after each lesson.

Silent Discussion - I use this most often before having a verbal discussion. In a silent discussion, students write a brief response to a prompt. In a small group format, this may mean passing along one piece of paper (like passing notes). In whole class or a larger group, students would rotate and write responses on chart paper around the room. This is a low pressure way for all students to share thoughts and see what others have to say before engaging in a verbal discussion.

Student-Led Discussion - After students become accustomed to the norms and expectations of our discussions, they will take turns leading discussions themselves in small groups.

Visual Prompts - Poetry is an art form, and visual prompts (using art in the classroom) can encourage students to be more creative in how they respond and engage with material. In this unit, we will use visual prompts most often as a Do Now with the structure “I think... I notice... I wonder...” to allow students to respond in a low-stakes situation to a prompt that lends itself to a more abstract interpretation.

Hand Signals (Thumbs up, thumbs down; snaps or pounds, fist of five, etc.) - Hand signals are a quick way to get an idea where all students are. Most commonly I will use hand signals to find out if students agree or disagree with a particular idea. In addition, I use hand signals to gauge confidence levels (*for example: “How comfortable or confident are you that you could explain what you think about this poem to a classmate? 5 = very confident and comfortable, 1 = not at all*).

Compass Points (Ritchhart) - Compass Points is a routine structured to engage students in reflecting on their own decision-making process as learners. Compass Points (N = what else do you **need** to know? S = what is your current **stance** or opinion on this topic? E = What **excites** you about this idea? W = What **worries** you?) gives specific categories for students to note where they are in the learning process and what they may need in order to be successful moving forward.

Think Aloud - When modeling for students, the Think Aloud is when I narrate my thoughts and ideas about a poem. This is important in showing students that I too have many questions and allows me to explicitly show them that I can be vulnerable and comfortable in not having all the answers.

Classroom Activities

The following lessons are numbered 1-3. While Lesson 1 is the first lesson I would use in the unit, I would not follow it immediately with lessons 2 and 3. I chose to present three different types of lessons (intro to the unit, close reading, and writing focused) to show the arc of the unit. The bulk of the lessons will be versions similar to lesson 2 (targeted close reading), and lesson 3 is an example of one of the imitation poetry writing lessons that will come toward the end of the unit.

While the target audience is eighth grade ELA, the lessons can easily be adapted to meet the needs and standards of sixth-eighth grade ELA and ESL classes. The lessons serve as models in which one could substitute other poems to meet the same goals of discussion.

Lesson 1

Teacher/Content Area: English Language Arts, Grade 8

Standards:

- SL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.4

Guiding Questions:

- How can we define poetry?
- According to the speaker, what is poetry?

Materials:

- Student copies of “How You Sound” by Amiri Baraka
- Chart paper and markers for groups
- TedEd clip (Kovacs)

Agenda

1. Do Now + Introduction (10)
2. Mini-Lesson (10)
3. Guided Practice (10)
4. Group Practice (15)
5. Closing (15)
 - a. Debrief
 - b. Exit Slip

Do Now: I choose a visual art image of interest. I often choose a personal photograph of local mural, or something Impressionistic which will surely cause students to have questions. I project the image alongside the following prompt:

- What do you SEE?
- What do you THINK?
- What do you WONDER?

Introduction: In the next few weeks we’re going to study poetry and spent a lot of time in our

groups having discussion to make meaning from it. This will require us to work on our listening skills, collaborate with our classmates, and develop more questions than answers. To do this work effectively, we will approach our work with an open mind. That means, knowing that no one has all the answers (including me!), and valuing the contributions that each one of us can make to the classroom.

Fist of Five: When I tell you that we'll be studying poetry for the next few weeks, how does that make you feel? (5 = very excited and interested, 1 = poetry is the worst!)

Mini-Lesson:

In your Do Now, you used the *I see... I think... I wonder...* format to examine and organize your ideas around a piece of art. This same structure can help us to put our thoughts and ideas into words when studying a poem.

I'm going to show you how I would use this structure when looking at a new poem. *Teacher reads aloud the first section of "How You Sound."*

When I demonstrate my thinking, remember it is just that - mine. You will likely have different things that you think/notice/wonder, and you should! In sharing all of our ideas on this poem,

Think Aloud:

- I see...
 - That the first sentence is in all capital letters and has two question marks after it.
- I think...
 - That this is a poem, but it doesn't look or sound like poems I've read before.
 - It's strange that the speaker uses a. b. c. d. as if it's a list or a multiple choice response
- I wonder...
 - Why some words are capitalized (or how the poet decided to capitalize things)
 - Why there are so many ellipses
 - Who the "we" is that the poet is talking about

Are there any things that you see/think/wonder that I might have missed? Turn and talk with your group. (Add any student responses offered).

Guided Practice:

In the same way that I demonstrated how to use see/think/wonder to examine the first part of "How You Sound," I'd like you to work in your groups on the second part. I'll read it aloud before you begin your work.

Teacher reads second section of the poem.

Before you begin your group work, remember that using see/think/wonder is a structure to **help** organize your thoughts around a new poem. It should help you, but not limit you. If you find that you have questions or ideas that do not fit the structure, you should still share them.

At the end of guided practice time, teacher takes a Fist of Five to determine confidence level of students to continue reading and discussing the rest of the poem in the same way.

Group Work:

Students will continue reading the rest of the poem and discussing it in groups using the think/notice/wonder structure. Teacher will visit groups to listen to conversations, and help students in groups that may need additional modeling.

Closing

- Debrief:
 - Groups will post their chart paper. Students will have a do a silent Gallery Walk to examine other groups' thoughts and ideas on the chart paper around the room
 - Show Kovacs TedEd clip "What makes a poem... a poem?"
- Exit Slip:
 - Compass Points (N = what else do you **need** to know? S = what is your current **stance** or opinion on this topic? E = What **excites** you about this idea? W = What **worries** you?

Lesson 2 - This lesson would not be presented on day two of the unit, but a few days into the unit. This format will be what most of the close reading lessons (the bulk of the unit) would look like.

Teacher/Content Area: English Language Arts, Grade 8

Standards:

- SL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4

Materials:

- Student copies of "Incident" by Countee Cullen
- Chart paper and markers for groups

Agenda

1. Do Now + Introduction (10)
2. Mini-Lesson (10)
3. Guided Practice (10)
4. Group Practice (15)
5. Closing(15)
 - c. Debrief
 - d. Exit Slip

Do Now:

Interpret the quote: "Growing up is losing some illusions, in order to acquire others." — Virginia Woolf

- What does it mean to you?
- Do you think it is true?
- How might it relate to the poetry we are going to read today?

Introduction: Teacher reads the Do Now quote. Two students repeat the quote. Teacher takes volunteer responses about the Do Now quote, focusing on responses to the last question which encourages students to predict how this might connect to what we are reading and discussing today. Today we're going to read and discuss a poem called "Incident." Let's think about that word 'incident.' If I were to say there was an incident in the school yard early today, what ideas come to mind? Teacher leans in to responses that suggest that incident is not usually a word we use to describe something positive.

Mini-Lesson:

In this poem, we are going to practice dissecting a poem line by line. When you study your line, remember that you have a few tools that can help you to organize your thoughts and ideas. You have used see/think/wonder to analyze poetry. If that strategy works well for you, you may use it for today's poem. We've also used Compass Points. If organizing your thoughts through needs, stance, excitements, worries helps you to express your ideas about the poem, use that. If you are comfortable and confident analyzing your line without these strategies, jotting some notes on your paper for example, please do so. Take a moment to decide which strategy works best for you and which you will use to study today's poem. Teacher asks students by show of hands which strategy they will use today: see/think/wonder, Compass Points, or other. Each student should have a strategy chosen.

Guided Practice:

We will read the poem aloud three times. The first time, please just listen without a pen or pencil in your hand. The second and third times, you may take notes if you would like. Read poem aloud. Give a few moments after reading for students to think, absorb, jot down thoughts before moving forward. Each stanza in this poem has four lines. In your groups of four, count off 1-4. Students will participate in a Jigsaw to meet with expert groups about their assigned line of the poem before returning to their original group for discussion.

Group Work:

Students will discuss the poem line by line moving around their groups of four.

Closing

- Debrief:
 - Carousel Share - what is one word that describes how you are feeling about today's poem?
- Exit Slip:
 - Returning to the quote from our Do Now, what illusions do you think the speaker lost as a result of the incident? What might the speaker have acquired?

Lesson 3 - This lesson would not be presented on day three of the unit, but would be an example of a lesson the third or final phase of the unit. I would use this lesson **after** completing a close reading and discussion of the poem in a previous lesson. This writing lesson would ideally not be the first exposure students had to this poem. This lesson focuses on students using a poem as a model to write their own imitation poem.

Teacher/Content Area: English Language Arts, Grade 8

Standards

- SL.8.1, W.8.3, W.8.5

Guiding Questions:

- How can a description of one small moment convey big things that are happening in someone's life?
- How can a writer slow down a moment in their writing?

Materials:

- Student copies of "Akron at Night" by Teri Ellen Cross Davis (audio also linked in bibliography will be used in this lesson)
- Students' writer's notebooks
- Post-It notes for each group
- Video Clip from TedEd (Sitze)

Agenda

1. Do Now + Introduction (10)
2. Mini-Lesson (10)
3. Guided Practice (10)
4. Writer's Workshop (15)
5. Closing(15)
 - a. Debrief
 - b. Exit Slip

Do Now:

Interpret the quote: Yesterday we completed a close reading and discussion of "Akron at Night" by Teri Ellen Cross Davis. What do you know (or think you know) about the speaker's life based on the poem? How do you know?

Introduction: *Teacher reads the Do Now question. Student volunteers share out responses.* We are going to take another look and listen to "Akron at Night," but instead of analyzing the poem in a close read, we are going to examine the poem as writers. We will take note of the craft moves that Davis uses to share about the speaker's life through one small moment. We will use our writer's workshop time to practice writing with our own small moments.

Mini-Lesson:

Watch TedED clip. Based on the clip, what are some of the ways a writer can slow down a moment? *Teachers charts responses.* Let's listen and read along with the poem again. What are some of the ways that Davis slows down the moment in "Akron at Night"? *Chart responses, adding to or extending list.*

Guided Practice:

Teacher models brainstorming a list of small moments. Taking time to think aloud through each and modeling openness and vulnerability in talking about personal experiences. Writers, take five minutes to brainstorm some small moments as I've modeled. Remember, this is the beginning of the process not the end. Some things you list will be great to write about, others you may not choose to explore - all are valuable at this point in the process. In addition, you do not need to write or share anything that you do not feel comfortable sharing. I give you advance notice when we may be sharing personal material.

Writer's Workshop:

This is your time to write. For some of you, you may want to continue your brainstorm list before you flash draft a small moment. Some of you may be ready to write about a moment. The goal in this workshop is to keep writing and thinking. If you find yourself stuck in a small moment, for example, you can return to your brainstorm list and try another one. We are not trying to have a completed, polished poem. We are practicing writing small moments that may eventually develop into a poem.

Closing

- Debrief:
 - Carousel Share - select one word from something you wrote today. It may be a word that captures your writing for today, or it may just be a word that you like.
- Exit Slip:
 - Process Share: What is one success you had in our writing workshop today? What was one challenge you faced?

Resources

Works Cited

"English Language Arts Standards." Core Standards. 2019. Common Core State Standards Initiative. 2019 <<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>>.

Gorski, Paul C. *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty: Strategies for Erasing the Opportunity Gap*. 2nd ed., Teachers College Press, 2018.

Ritchhart, Ron, et al. *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding, and Independence for All Learners*. Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Bibliography for Teachers

Ritchhart, Ron, et al. *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding, and Independence for All Learners*. Jossey-Bass, 2011.

In *Making Thinking Visible*, teachers will find a wealth of thinking structures and routines to support students in organizing and discussing their ideas. These thinking routines are organized by their role in the learning process (those that help students preview new material, or synthesize multiple pieces of information, for example).

"Protocols and Resources." Engage NY. 2013. EL Education. 2019
<https://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/appendix_protocols_and_resources.pdf>.

The EL Education Protocols and Resources is an extensive list of strategies to engage students, check for understanding throughout a lesson, and build vocabulary. The strategies are very accessible. There is a description of each strategy, steps to implement, and suggested student handouts where appropriate.

Reading List for Students

I will present the following poems to students, but in the spirit of encouraging students to take ownership of their role in the learning process, I will leave space for students to suggest poems that they would like our groups to discuss.

"How You Sound" by Amiri Baraka

This poem will kick off the unit. Students will be engaged with the material because it likely doesn't look or sound like what many consider to be a poem.

With this, we can begin to generate questions and discuss what might constitute a poem.

[“If We Must Die”](#) by Claude McKay ([audio](#))

“If We Must Die” uses a familiar poem structure (sonnet), but does not contain the typical sonnet subject matter. This poem will serve as a springboard to carefully examine how we say something (in this case, a traditional sonnet form) can drive meaning.

[“Incident”](#) by Countee Cullen

[“Incident”](#) by Amiri Baraka

Both “Incident” poems will be used to discuss imitation as an art form, and referring back to “If We Must Die,” how imitation may be a form of flattery or a tactic for resistance and a statement of ----.

[“She Got He Got”](#) Jayne Cortez

In this poem, students will experience a poem as a performance. We will discuss the impact of words in a performance, as opposed to on paper alone. This will be an inspiration piece for students to practice their own imitation poem.

[“On Broadway”](#) by Claude McKay

“On Broadway” juxtaposes the speaker’s observations of a bright, busy, dazzling environment with his own loneliness. We will discuss the conflict between self and space, and use this as another opportunity for students to imitate the poem in their own writing.

[“Akron at Night”](#) by Teri Ellen Cross Davis

Davis’ poem provides a very detailed description of one seemingly small moment in the speaker’s life. Students will use this poem as an opportunity to imitate a poem and explore the poetry in the daily activity of their own lives.

Materials for Classroom Use

Kovacs, Melissa. *What Makes a Poem ... a Poem?* TED, TED-Ed, 2017, ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-a-poem-a-poem-melissa-kovacs.

What makes a Poem... a poem? kicks off the unit and in a brief (5-6 minute video clip) explores different types of poetry and the blurred lines between poetry,

music, and visual art. It is highly engaging and will leave students with many lingering questions.

Sitze, Aaron. *Slowing down Time (in Writing & Film)* . TED, TED-Ed, 2013, ed.ted.com/lessons/slowing-down-time-in-writing-film-aaron-sitze.

Slowing down... will serve as a support to writing imitation poetry. It concisely describes and depicts how and why writers slow down the moment in their writing. This is used in lesson three, when we begin to imitate a poem and attempt to slow down a small moment.

Appendix

This unit, while using poetry as the vehicle, is more focused on cultivating students' questioning, critical thinking, speaking and listening skills. Each lesson provides students with multiple opportunities to engage with poetry and each other in order to build meaning through dialogue and scaffolded thinking structures.

Each content strand below describes how the standards will be addressed in the unit. Below each is a detailed description of each specific standard, directly from the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

- Reading Literature - In the close reading we will be doing each day in the unit, we will cover each of the literature standards below. Some will appear more frequently (RL.8.2 and RL.8.4, for example, will be covered daily in most close readings), and others may be less frequent or require more direct teacher instruction in the lesson (RL.8.5 and RL.8.9).
 - CCSS.RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
 - CCSS.RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
 - CCSS.RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
 - CCSS.RL.8.5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
 - CCSS.RL.8.9 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
- Writing
 - CCSS.W.8.3 Use narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
 - CCSS.W.8.5 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

- Speaking and Listening - This standard, while fairly broad, is at the core of this unit. The focus on **effective** communication, while **building** on ideas to create meaning, and **expressing** their own ideas clearly are the big goals of this unit.
 - CCSS.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Language - This standard is tied closely to RL.8.4 (meaning of words and phrases). This unit highlights students' ability to build on what they already know and feel about words to create their own meaning and understanding of the poems we work with. Through frequent discussion and exploration of words and their uses, students will take ownership of their own power in accessing and using language to express themselves.
 - CCSS.L.8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.