

Speculative Poetry: Making Sense of the Present and Shaping the Future

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With the many seemingly insurmountable crises that society is facing today, it can seem like this is not the time for daydreaming and imagination. And yet, based on the research discussed below, it is more important now than ever. The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to one of the most imaginative genres – speculative poetry, and to analyze how poets and musical artists have used the speculative to communicate very real issues and imagine a better future, inspiring others and sparking change in their societies. Students will engage with a variety of poems and writers, analyzing technique and discussing ideas, then apply their understanding by also writing their own speculative poems.

Content Objectives

Problem Statement

My current group of 8th grade students are part of Generation Z, a generation that has been classified as the most diverse generation ever in America. The school that I teach at in particular has a diverse makeup of students; 47% are white, 30% Asian, 19% Hispanic/Latino, and 10% African American (“School Information”). There is also a wide range of diversity religiously and culturally. This diversity is an incredible asset to our school and its students. Despite this diversity, however, “traditional” texts from western, white culture continue to be taught a majority of the time in the majority of classrooms, including mine. Many of these texts that I teach are considered “classics” in the American canon, and are expected by administration and parents. Many of my students’ parents are immigrants, and believe that it is important for their child to learn these “classic” texts in order to be fully inundated into American life and be on an equal playing field with other students.

While I believe these texts have certain value, and I want to respect the goals of my students’ parents, I have also come to realize the more subtle lessons that are taught to students. By only teaching these texts, the idea of white culture as “American,” dominant, and “worth studying” is reinforced, while, conversely, students learn that texts representing “the other,” particularly people of color, is not worth studying and is therefore less valuable. I was greatly influenced by listening to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk “The Danger of a Single Story,” last summer, in which Adichie emphasizes the need for having and reading stories that reflect people’s diverse identities (Adichie). This idea was made more real to me when an Indian student asked me if I had any novels that featured Indian protagonists, and I had to say that I did not. As a white

female, there are many stories that I can draw on in which I can see myself reflected - my culture, my race, my gender, my sexuality. But this is not true for many of my students. It is important that students see themselves in the texts they are taught. Not only will they be more engaged and connected because the text is relatable, but because of the underlying lesson they learn about the value of their own culture, and therefore of themselves.

This diverse generation (racially, sexually, culturally, politically, etc.), is growing up in a world that was created by the WASP elite, and is currently facing a political and cultural crossroads of whether to accept or reject each other's' differences. Instead of making this decision based on stereotypes and misconceptions, I believe that students should study the voices of those from diverse backgrounds. While my role as a teacher is not to persuade students towards any political beliefs, a part of my role is to cultivate open minds that can consider and evaluate diverse ideas and perspectives.

The second problem is more academic in nature, but also relates to the need for social and emotional learning in school curriculums. Based on standardized test data and my own experience as a teacher for eight years, students struggle with poetry. They don't understand it, they struggle writing it, and many just don't like it. I myself disliked poetry during most of my career as a student, until towards the end of college I took an elective on British Literature and when I read "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T.S. Eliot, I myself fell in love. I'm no poetry aficionada, but I've grown to admire the art of poetry, and the powerful way it glorifies the beauty of words and can convey such complex ideas and emotions in so many fewer words than a novel. Poetry can be an excellent way to study form, genre, theme, voice, the art of language, and so many other things. The tools needed to understand poetry also transfer to understanding all sorts of other types of texts, including novels, song lyrics, essays, and speeches. I don't believe that most of my students see this.

Over the years, I have had a few students who love poetry and write on their own, often to express personal feelings and struggles. During the non-graded part of online learning this year due to Covid-19, I had my students do an optional assignment to write a poem about their time in quarantine. I had been trying to incorporate more outlets for this kind of expression after taking a 6-session course called "Enhancing Trauma Awareness" in 2016. In the core text for the class, *Creating Sanctuary* by Sandra Bloom, the author says this about the need for expression emotions:

A growing body of research indicates that healthy human beings need to confide their thoughts and feelings about troubling events to other people and, perhaps most importantly, to themselves. Inhibiting the expression of emotion has negative consequences for both mental and physical health, and expressing emotions, particularly about traumatic events, is health-producing. (Bloom 53)

I was amazed that about half of my students wrote a poem, and was equally amazed at the incredible need there seemed to be to express what they were going through. It made me realize that I need to create more outlets for students to process and express their thoughts and emotions. These have been trying times, and understanding what is happening and addressing these issues needs to happen in order for healing to begin. I was further convinced that poetry could be a valuable resource for dealing with complex emotions after reading Geri Chavis's book, *Poetry and Story Therapy: The Healing Power of Creative Expression*. Poetry/song lyrics can be an excellent way for students to do this, but they need some tools and inspiration to even see it as an option. I am hoping that through this unit, I can engage students in poetry and equip them with tools and skills to understand it and create it.

The third problem relates to limited imagination, but is perhaps more complex as it has continued to be shaped by current events. During the writing of this unit, the Covid-19 pandemic took the world by surprise, closing down schools, businesses, and upending lives and any sense of normalcy. Many have referenced a sort of "collective trauma" as a result of these many changes, but there have also been many individual traumas, as students especially deal with the stresses of financial insecurity, loss of normalcy, family fighting, loneliness and isolation, and anxiety about the future (Ganley and Ortiz). Almost every student I teach has expressed a pandemic-related anxiety of some kind, some seemingly more severe than others. During these past few months we've also seen widespread racial protests and activism, ignited in particular by the murder of George Floyd but fueled by a number of underlying societal problems that have been exacerbated and brought to light by the pandemic.

The sheer number and magnitude of problems that exist can seem overwhelming. And yet it is times like this when we need to encourage each other to not give up and to work towards change. A key part of this is being able to imagine diverse possibilities for the future. While there are many things to grieve over, we can also see this time as an opportunity to imagine – and create- a different kind of world. In an article that was published this spring at what we then thought was the height of the pandemic, the author, Julio Gambuto, makes a case for using this time not only to grieve what has been lost, but also to re-imagine what we actually value, and what we actually want our lives to look like. He says this:

From one citizen to another, I beg of you: take a deep breath, ignore the deafening noise, and think deeply about what you want to put back into your life. This is our chance to define a new version of normal, a rare and truly sacred (yes, sacred) opportunity to get rid of the bull* and to only bring back what works for us, what makes our lives richer, what makes our kids happier, what makes us truly proud. (Gambuto)

Based on conversations in my classes, many students either struggle to imagine what a better world could look like, or don't even bother because it feels pointless. Especially after taking this class, I believe that it is part of my responsibility as a teacher to help students connect to their imaginations and encourage them to avoid complacency and instead actively find solutions to the problems they see. Speculative poetry, particularly visionary poetry, is a tool to do this. If these students cannot imagine anything different than the present, they will not be able to create anything better. It is those who can imagine the future who shape it.

Background

While I didn't see it at first, the more I read and researched for this unit, the more I realized how it is, and needs to be, rooted in my own beliefs about education and why I teach. I initially studied and taught history in my early teaching career, because I believed that understanding the past was essential to understanding who we are individually and collectively, and only through this understanding could we make thoughtful decisions in the present to positively shape the future. This belief has carried over into my transition to teaching English, but has been expanded through a focus on communication and the role of narratives to understand ourselves and each other in the past and present. Speculative Fiction's definition has evolved since its original coinage in 1941 to include not only the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror, but also "Weird Tales, Amazing Stories, and Fantastic Fiction" (Nilly). Essentially, Speculative Fiction centers on the imaginative, often pushing the boundaries of what we know to be true, real, and/or possible. This unit is about that – analyzing how communication through speculative poetry deepens our understanding of people, and expands our thinking about the possibilities of the future for ourselves and our society.

One of my goals of this unit is for students to understand that imagination is a form of power, and that reflective imagination can be a powerful force for personal and social transformation. I want students to be empowered through story to make decisions rooted in their identity; to see themselves as persons with agency, capable of effecting change in themselves and their world. Through this class with Dr. Thomas, *The Dark Fantastic: Reading Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Comics to Change the World*, we have explored this theme of "epistemic agency," through the lens of speculative narrative. Some key questions we have focused on are: Who gets to tell stories and why? How have the voices of traditionally marginalized groups been silenced or shaped by structural and cultural biases? How can speculative stories be used to imagine a different future, particularly for these marginalized groups?

All of these questions relate to the idea of power – of who has power to create stories, make decisions, and shape their world. Kinitra Brooks, in her discussion of her project "The Conjure Woman's Garden," uses this definition of power; it is "the capacity

to control, create, and transform” (Brooks). To empower my students, I need to expose them to stories and writers that reflect their own experiences and identities, provide opportunities to reflect on and communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, and encourage them to imagine possibilities of the future. This will help them gain the ability to have control over their own decisions, create more meaningful lives for themselves and others, and transform problems into solutions.

In the introduction to her book, *The Dark Fantastic*, Dr. Thomas discusses her theory of an “imagination gap,” which she says is caused by a lack of diversity in young adult literature. Connecting to Adichie’s warning of having a “single story” to reflect all of human experience, Dr. Thomas is referring to this lack of diversity when she states “When youth grow up without seeing the mirrors, windows, and doors of children’s and young adult literature, they are confined to single stories about the world around them and, ultimately, the development of their imaginations is affected” (Thomas 6). This “imagination gap” hinders young people’s ability to feel pride in their own identity and imagine themselves into the future. Being able to imagine oneself into a better world is a source of empowerment. Students must see themselves in the narratives they read so that they can see themselves in the narratives (real and imagined) they will create. According to Paulo Freire, in order for the oppressed to be free, the individuals must be able to “perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (Freire 49). Teachers can facilitate this view by exposing students to stories that reflect their own experiences - and also to stories by diverse authors that imagine themselves into a better future.

As shown by S.R. Toliver and Keith Miller through their work with teen writers, the science fiction and fantasy genre can be a great way for students to communicate their own experiences while also engaging with ideas about social change. In their paper, “Rewriting Reality: Using Science Fiction to Analyze the World,” they find that “SF became an imaginative framework through which students could interrogate identity positions and analyze oppressive hierarchies in the world. It was also a way for students to express their ideas about the changes they wished to see in the world they inhabit.” (Toliver 58). In other words, students can use an imagined narrative to communicate issues in their real lives and explore potential solutions to those issues.

In the introduction to *Octavia’s Brood*, an amazing collection of speculative short stories, Walidah Imarishah calls this type of future imagining through stories “visionary fiction.” This is slightly different from traditional science fiction, in that visionary fiction “has relevance towards building new, freer worlds from the mainstream strain of science fiction, which most often reinforces dominant narratives of power” (Imarisha 4). Visionary fiction, in particular, can be a tool for people to create potential solutions to real-world problems and lay out a vision of a better world. Instead of reinforcing traditional narratives, speculative fiction can be used to empower students through

reflection on the past and present, seeing their own experiences reflected in text, and imagining themselves into the future.

Major Unit Objectives

Based on my research and the problems identified and discussed, I have decided to focus my unit on speculative poetry as the main genre of text, and have identified three primary objectives:

1. Reduce the “imagination gap” through exposure to diverse authors
2. Identify poetic structure and devices in order to analyze how they create meaning
3. Provide ample opportunities for students to identify, connect, process, and reflect on their emotions and potentially traumatic personal and social experiences, and use poetry to imagine better futures

While visionary worlds can certainly be more thoroughly developed through novels and even short stories, I’ve seen through my reading that various forms of poetic structure can still be a platform for reading and writing visionary fiction, and can be an excellent way for students to get engaged with poetry and speculative fiction. Poetry is shorter (most often) than other types of text, and is packed with literary devices, providing an opportunity to use a variety of texts in one unit and meet several standards for reading literature. Poetry can be exceptionally powerful and provides excellent opportunities for reflection, analysis, discussion, and creativity.

The first major objective of this unit is to inch towards closing the “imagination gap” by studying texts by authors whose experiences and identities more closely reflects those of my students. In class, Dr. Thomas introduced us to the speculative lyrics of Janelle Monae’s music, especially in her 2010 concept album *The ArchAndroid*. It was my first exposure to Janelle Monae, and since then I’ve been fascinated with her music and her story. In Part Two of my unit, students will study speculative poetry in which the writer addresses a current, real-life struggle through an imagined world. In this case, we’ll be looking at *The ArchAndroid* in general as a speculative concept album, and focusing on a few specific songs to see how Monae uses this genre to communicate her own experiences of racial and sexual marginalization. I believe that many students will be able to relate to these types of experiences and feelings, even if Janelle Monae does not reflect their racial identity. Some other authors we will be studying in this unit include Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Abu Al-Quasim al-Shabi, Nikki Giovanni, and Mary Soon Lee. My students are very diverse, and while finding authors that reflect them has been a challenge, I will continue working to find authors of speculative poetry that reflect all of my students.

While this is a somewhat challenging objective to assess in quantitative terms, I plan to assess this through primarily discussion and written reflection. At the end of this unit,

students will also be brainstorming social problems and writing a visionary poem that imagines solutions to those problems. After studying the poetry of diverse authors who address diverse issues, I believe that this final poem (and associated work and discussions) will be a qualitative way for me to assess my students' ability to imagine themselves and their creative solutions into the future.

The second major objective is for students to learn the basic elements of poetic structure and poetic devices, as well as to gain an understanding of speculative poetry. Many students struggle with poetry - reading it, understanding it, and writing it. I've seen this in my own classes through my attempts to teach it as well as in their scores for local standardized tests. I myself have struggled with teaching poetry. How do I pick the right poems? What if I'm wrong about what it means or I don't fully understand it myself? So much of one's enjoyment of poetry (or lack) seems to be based on personal taste - for style, theme, word choice, structure. If a poem is meaningful for me personally - how do I make it meaningful for my students so that they want to engage with it? However, the individual nature could also be a strength.

In this unit, I'm planning to focus on a different poem for each main lesson set, but then provide a variety of poems for students to read and analyze in small groups. This way, even if students don't like my chosen mentor text, they may be more likely to find something that they enjoy. I think that using song lyrics as poetry will also aid engagement. When I have used song lyrics in the past (for example comparing the lyrics of *Hamilton's* "My Shot" to Shelley's character of Viktor Frankenstein), students have been more interested and more often remember the point of the lesson. I plan to use several song lyrics as poetry in this unit (including Janelle Monae and David Bowie) which tend to be very engaging while still providing an opportunity to analyze poetic devices and structure.

As formative assessments of this objective, students will analyze selected speculative poems in small groups and individually using the SWIFT technique (structure, word choice, imagery, figurative language, theme and tone). They will also write two of their own speculative poems, using literary techniques and elements of speculative poetry. Students will regularly annotate poems and discuss them, as well as write short and extended analyses of poems using their knowledge of poetic structure and devices.

Lastly, a main unit objective is for students to engage with speculative poetry to process some of the collective and individual trauma from the Covid-19 pandemic and, using the pandemic as a starting point, imagine a better, future world. In addition to fears about the pandemic itself, Covid-19 has exposed many of the tensions and inequalities that exist in our society. I want students to see speculative poetry not as something that is for "nerdy Star Wars fans," but as a multifaceted and creative way for anyone to confront real issues. In order to do this, students will start by reading and analyzing works that reflect a poet's own processing of a personal or social struggle. In Janelle Monae's lyrics

in *ArchAndroid*, we can see her personal struggle with feeling alone and different as a theme throughout the album, but especially in her song “Cold War,” which we will analyze in class. Coldplay’s *Myloxylo* album was written in part as a reaction to the financial crash of 2008, (“Coldplay”) David Bowie’s “Space Oddity” as a way to communicate feelings of isolation and depression (Demain), and Margaret Walker’s “For My People” as a polemic against racial oppression. We will also look at poetry specifically written during the pandemic lockdown this past spring of 2020. One such famous writer is Jason Reynolds, who wrote a poem each day for the month of April, many of them related to his feelings and experiences in quarantine (Reynolds).

As a summative assessment, students will write their own speculative poem addressing a personal or social struggle. Since it is very likely that we will still be grappling with an international pandemic when we return to school (whether in-person or online), students will be strongly encouraged to write about their experiences and emotional struggles during the pandemic.

Teaching Strategies

Below is an overview of specific strategies that I will be using throughout my unit. The purpose of these strategies is to meet the objectives discussed above, by creating an environment in which students can acquire knowledge and specific skills, collaborate, process, reflect, and demonstrate their learning.

Annotation: Annotation is a tool used regularly in my classroom to show student-thinking and analysis about a text. With this strategy, students must be able to write directly on the text (using sticky notes is also an option). Using a guide, they make notes about their thoughts, questions, literary devices, text structure, etc.

Quick-Write: This is a strategy for processing, in which a question is posed and the student takes a short amount of time (2-5 minutes) to respond in writing. This is often used right before a discussion but can also be used as evidence of student thinking and understanding of a topic

Think-Pair-Share: This is a collaborative processing/discussion method in which the individual student has time to think about their response to a question (can use a quick-write also), then discusses their thoughts with a partner (Pair), and then the partners have an opportunity to share their thoughts in a whole class discussion.

Gradual Release: This is the *I do, we do, you do* method of instruction. This often begins with the teacher conducting a read aloud and think-aloud, in which the teacher reads a text, talking through how they are thinking about that text and modelling a specific skill. This direct instruction may also include a new term or specific information that

students need to understand for that lesson. This is then followed by shared reading, in which the class (or partners/small groups) read a text together and then apply the newly learned skill/information together. Lastly, the individual student reads a text and applies the skill/information on their own.

Jigsaw/Expert Groups: This is a collaborative strategy that also holds the individual student accountable for understanding a concept. In this strategy, different groups of students are assigned different tasks. They work on the task collaboratively as a group, becoming “experts” on that topic/task. After a designated amount of time, the students split up into different, pre-assigned groups, in which each member of the new group has worked on a different task. Each “expert” then shares with their new group what their original group had worked on.

Gallery Walk: This is an active activity that can either be collaborative or individual. Some type of task/text is divided into multiple parts and posted around the classroom. Students then are divided up into groups (or work as individuals), with each group starting at a different task. They then rotate around the room, either as they complete the task or after a designated amount of time.

Fishbowl Socratic Discussion: In this format, a small (no more than 8 students) sit in a circle while the rest of the class stands or sits outside of the circle to observe. The inner circle participates in a discussion about a text, having already done a close-read of that text and formulated thoughtful questions and comments. Students outside the circle complete a listening/evaluation activity in regards to the discussion. After a designated time, the students switch from being on the outside to the inside.

TQE Discussion: In this collaborative discussion strategy, students read and annotate a text individually, then share thoughts, questions, and epiphanies about the text with a small group using provided question stems. The group then decides on the two best questions and writes them on a board to potentially be used in a whole-class discussion

Stations: This activity can be used for multiple types of tasks and can be similar to a Gallery Walk, except that Stations tends to have students working at a particular station for an extended period of time on a more involved task. In this strategy, multiple stations are set up around the room with directions and expectations posted at each station. Students either rotate in groups after a designated period of time or as they complete the task at the station.

Exit Ticket: This often comes in the form of a Quick-Write, but is an excellent way to quickly assess student understanding at the end of class. Give students a question or short task that is related to the day’s objective, then have students respond. This response is their “ticket” to exit class for that day.

Unit Organization

Part One

The first part of my unit will focus on the basic elements of poetry. This includes an understanding of language tools such as symbolism, figurative language, word choice, tone, theme, etc. Students will need to be able to define and identify key literary terms used in many poems. Since I am planning to implement this unit at the beginning of the school year, I will start by doing a review of imagery/figurative language terms that they should already know, using several short poems that each focus on a particular device (ex. “Dreams” by Langston Hughes to review metaphor). Once we have reviewed figurative language, I will use the Gradual Release strategy to teach four mini-lessons on theme, tone, word choice, and structure. All together, these make up the SWIFT (Structure, Word Choice, Imagery, Figurative Language, Theme and Tone) technique to analyze poetry. This is the technique that we will use throughout the unit. It is important that students understand how all of these elements of a poem interact to create meaning. For example, when discussing the poem “No Man is an Island” by John Donne, we will analyze how the use of metaphor and the poem’s structure contribute to the theme. Students will often use a graphic organizer, and will always be asked to show their thinking through annotation. Students will also have an individual deliverable each day (either classwork, homework, or an exit ticket) that demonstrates their understanding of that day’s lesson. At the end of Part One, student learning will be assessed through a quiz of literary terms and will analyze a poem using the SWIFT technique.

Part Two

Part Two will be an introduction to speculative poetry. In order to introduce the general genre of speculative fiction (before moving specifically to poetry), we will discuss the specific elements of speculative fiction and I will use a well-known story (such as *Harry Potter* or *Black Panther*) as an example. Then, in small groups, students will do a gallery walk around the room, using a graphic organizer to identify speculative elements of other popular speculative stories that will be posted around the room in various forms (books, movie covers, movie clips, etc.). In the following lessons, students will use the elements of speculative poetry and the SWIFT technique to analyze several pieces of speculative poetry. We will discuss the concept of “world-building” and the importance of imagination in creating a world, or even in using elements from an already created world in poetry to create or express an idea. As a summative assessment, students will analyze a speculative poem on their own, and will also be given a scaffolded assignment to write their own speculative poems in stations that include poetic devices we have studied.

Part Three

I've titled Part Three "Understanding the Present with Speculative Poetry." In this part, students will consider how authors (and artists), use speculative poetry (including song lyrics) to process and express some kind of personal or social struggle. Each lesson, we will look at a different specific example. Students will apply the SWIFT technique and elements of speculative poetry to their analysis of the poems (done individually and with partners), and Part Three especially will include a lot of annotation as well as small and whole group discussion about these different poems. Discussion strategies will include Think-Pair-Share, Fishbowl Socratic Discussion, the T-Q-E method. Students will analyze and discuss the poetical lyrics of David Bowie's "Space Oddity," Janelle Monae's concept album *The Archandroid*, Coldplay's concept album *Myloxylo*, and some specific poems written by Jason Reynolds during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a summative assessment of Part Three, students will analyze a poem on their own, and then be guided to write their own poem about their pandemic experience (or another recent personal struggle), using elements of speculative poetry.

Part Four

The final part is titled "Shaping the Future with Speculative Poetry." This set of lessons will focus on the "visionary fiction" subgenre of speculative fiction. This means that students will be putting together what they have learned about speculative poetry and their analyses and reflections on the specific personal and systemic social challenges addressed through poetry, in order to imagine and create a better world through their own speculative poem. In this final part, I will continue to use "read-alouds" and "think-alouds" to model how to understand and analyze a visionary poem. Students will then work in small groups and partners to annotate and analyze pre-selected visionary poems by diverse authors. Again, using the Gradual Release framework, students will analyze poems individually as well to demonstrate their ability to apply poetry reading skills and deep thinking about a text. This part, as well, will include a lot of discussion in small and whole group formats, as well as reflective writing through Quick-Writes and more extended textual analyses. As an additional assessment, students will be guided to write their own speculative, visionary poems about a better future. As a culminating activity for this unit, students will be able to share their poems with their class in a poetry "coffee house" event in order to celebrate their learning and creativity.

Classroom Activities

Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan One

Title: The Art of Tone in Poetry

Time: 90 minutes

Objectives: SWBAT identify the speaker and subject of a poem in order to identify tone and analyze how specific word choices impact the tone of the speaker. SWBAT cite evidence from a poem in order to support an analysis of the tone of the speaker.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.

Overview: This lesson will be towards the end of Part One of my unit. This lesson builds on previously taught and practiced skills, such as analyzing structure, figurative language, and word choice. In this lesson students will learn what tone is and how to identify a speaker's tone in a poem.

Lesson Activities/Format:

Hook/ Introduction : Key:	Display <i>The Arrival of Cortes</i> by Diego Rivera. This is a mural, with lots of different "stories" within one frame, so have students jot down
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<p>-Formative assessments are underlined</p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p>- Collaborative activities are italicized</p>	<p>the different things that they see for about 2 minutes. <u>Then, have students share.</u></p> <p>-Then, <i>activate prior knowledge and ask “Who is Cortes?” as a quick think-pair-share.</i> Once the class has identified the historical role of Cortes (conquering Mexico), ask them to identify which person in the mural they think is Cortes. Students may be surprised, so discuss how he looks different from expected. -Then, compare the Cortes in Rivera’s painting with the Cortes in Maurin’s painting <i>The Conquest of Mexico: Hernando Cortes.</i></p> <p>-Ask and discuss: How are the paintings different? What do the differences tell us about how the artist feels towards Cortes and the conquest of Mexico? After discussing, explain that this feeling of the artist towards their subject is called “tone.”</p>
<p>Mini-lesson:</p> <p>Key:</p> <p><u>-Formative assessments are underlined</u></p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p>- Collaborative activities are italicized</p>	<p>-Have students copy the literary definition for tone, and pass out “Tone Words with Definitions” handout.</p> <p>-Using pencil, <u>have students circle three words to describe Rivera’s tone towards Cortes. Then underline three words to describe Maurin’s tone towards Cortes.</u></p> <p>-Begin with Maurin. <u>Have students share words that they chose and write them on the board</u> (make sure the class agrees and discuss any that don’t fit). Then ask “what specific things about this painting made you choose these words?”</p> <p><u>-Repeat this exercise with Rivera’s painting.</u></p> <p>-Explain that artists reveal their attitude towards their subject (tone) by using things like color, posture of the character, surrounding characters, etc. In writing, authors convey their tone through things like diction (word choice), syntax (the way words are organized), rhythm, and structure.</p> <p>-Display and provide a copy of the poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” By Robert Frost (My students will have read <i>The Outsiders</i> in 7th grade, and so this is also an opportunity to make a connection to prior learning).</p>

	<p>-Read the poem out loud one time all the way through.</p> <p>-Say that when you read it again, you're going to focus on identifying the speaker and the subject of the poem, i.e. who or what does the speaker seem to be talking about? Read it a second time, and think aloud about who the speaker is (presumably Frost), and why Nature is the subject. Point to the use of "her" twice at the beginning and why "her" indicates Nature.</p> <p>-Read it a third time, thinking out loud and making annotations on the board for things students should already know (figurative language, structure, word choice). Pause to allow students to copy annotations onto their own paper.</p> <p>-Then, look at the list of tone words and think through why some words (contemplative, pessimistic) describe the tone of the speaker and why some words don't, based on the imagery and word choice used in the poem.</p> <p>-Explain that understanding the tone is important to understanding the theme. Tell students to look back at the two paintings. <i>Ask: What is the "big idea" (i.e. theme) of each? How is that theme related to tone?</i></p>
<p>Practice/Lesson Activities:</p> <p>Key: -Formative assessments are underlined</p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p>- <i>Collaborative activities are italicized</i></p>	<p>-Provide students with the text of Alice Walker's poem "Women" and also display it on the board.</p> <p>-Read the poem out loud all the way through.</p> <p>-Then, have students read the poem a second time with their partner, thinking about who the speaker is and who/what the subject is. Have them write this down. Then, discuss as a class to come to an agreement.</p> <p>-Then, have students read the poem a third time with their partner, discussing and annotating for structure, figurative language, and word choice. We will then go through and discuss their annotations.</p> <p>-As a class, we will look at the list of tone words, and discuss what the tone of the speaker seems to be towards the subject and why. Students will make notes on their handout.</p>

	<p>-On the same handout as the other two poems, students should have a third poem. About 1/3 of students will have Pablo Neruda's "Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market", about 1/3 of students will have Sherman Alexie's "How to Write the Great American Indian Novel," and the last 1/3 of students will have Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" on their handout (these poems are differentiated, listed from most to least challenging and can be assigned to students based on reading level or given at random)</p> <p>-Have students individually read their 3rd poem through fully. On their 2nd read, they should identify the speaker and the subject. On their 3rd read, they should annotate for structure, figurative language, and word choice. Then, they should identify 1-3 tone words that they think describe the speaker's tone towards the subject. On their handout they will write these words.</p> <p>-Once students are finished, I will have them get into groups according to the poem they had. In the groups, each student should share their tone words, then they will be directed to discuss the speaker's tone and evidence from the poem and come to an agreement as a group.</p> <p>-Students will go back to their seats and I will call on students from each group to share.</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>-After sharing, students will respond to two questions on their handout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain in complete sentences who the speaker of the poem is and what their tone is towards the subject. Make sure you use specific evidence from the poem in your explanation. 2. Describe your group's discussion. Was your group able to come to a consensus about the tone words? Did everyone contribute or mainly just a couple people? Did people use evidence from the poem in their discussion? Did people listen to each other?
<p>Materials Needed:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Arrival of Cortes</i> by Diego Rivera https://homepages.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/mexico/mexicocity/rivera/4870.jpg 2. <i>The Conquest of Mexico: Hernando Cortes</i> by Nicholas Eustache Maurin

	<p>https://fineartamerica.com/featured/conquest-of-mexico-hernando-cortes-nicholas-eustache-maurin.html</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Tone Words Handout http://talkswithteachers.com/35-words-describe-tone/ 4. “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost https://poets.org/poem/nothing-gold-can-stay 5. “Women” by Alice Walker https://genius.com/Alice-walker-women-annotated 6. “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel” by Sherman Alexie https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52775/how-to-write-the-great-american-indian-novel 7. “Ode to a Large Tuna In the Market” by Pablo Neruda 8. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/49322/ode-to-a-large-tuna-in-the-market 9. “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise
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Lesson Plan Two

Title: Writing Speculative Poetry

Time: 90 minutes

Objectives: SWBAT write 4-6 different speculative poems in order to express creative thinking and demonstrate an understanding of the elements of speculative poetry and poetic devices

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Overview: This lesson is taken from the end of Part 2 of my unit, “An Introduction to Speculative Poetry.” In this lesson, students will be applying their knowledge of the elements of speculative poetry as well as poetic devices. Students will demonstrate their knowledge and express their creativity by writing their own speculative poems in different poetry writing stations.

Lesson Activities/Format:

Hook/Introduction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Display and hand out copies of Mary Soon Lee’s poem “Venus, As It Might Have Been” -Read the poem out loud and briefly do a <u>“turn and talk”</u> to discuss the poem’s meaning. - <u>Then, have students annotate the poem using the SWIFT technique, as well as identify elements of speculative fiction within the poem.</u>-Briefly <i>discuss why this poem is considered speculative poetry</i>, reviewing earlier lessons in Part 2 (elements of speculative poetry)
Mini-lesson:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Explain that students will be applying their understanding of poetic structure, devices, and elements of speculative poetry by writing a few of their own poems today. Emphasize that in poetry, each word should be thoughtfully chosen to create meaning and imagery (use specific word choice examples from Hook poem) - Explain that students will be rotating between 6 different stations (students should already be seated in pre-assigned groups at the six stations), writing a different kind of poem at each station and using various tools to help them -Do an example of Station 3: Art-based magnetic poetry. Display Salvador Dali’s painting <i>The Persistence of Memory</i> as well as about 20 various words (put in boxes on smartboard to be able to move

	<p>around into a poem). Demonstrate and talk through how to use the words to create a poem based on the painting, adding additional words as needed</p> <p>- (do a quick example of other stations, as needed)</p> <p>-After completing example, briefly explain directions for each station and expectations for transitions, work at the station, and outcomes. Students should spend about 10 minutes per station (some students may need more time to finish a poem). Each poem written will need to include an element of speculative poetry and at least 2 poetic devices that we have discussed in class.</p>
<p>Lesson Activities:</p>	<p>Station 1: Roll the Dice Poetry</p> <p><u>Directions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll one die to determine which item will be used as your inspiration 2. Roll both dice to determine how many lines your poem will be (must be at least 4) 3. Roll one die to determine the number of words in your first line 4. Write your first line 5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you have completed all your lines 6. Review your poem and edit 7. Write a title for your poem <p>Station 2: Blackout Poetry</p> <p><u>Directions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a page to create your poetry 2. Scan the page and identify an “anchor” word - this is a word related to a speculative element, that you feel is meaningful and significant in some way 3. Then, read the text in its entirety, lightly circling words/short phrases that resonate with you and/or connect to the anchor word in some way 4. Rewrite all of the circled words onto another piece of paper, keeping the words in exactly the same order.

5. Choose which words/phrases you want to keep and which you want to discard in order to create your poem. Your final poem should be between 10-20 words
6. Then , return to the original text and erase the circles around words you are not using, making the other circles more bold.
7. Finally, add a drawing or design to your page that connects to your poem, being careful to not draw over your circled words and instead emphasize them through your drawing

Station 3: Art-based Magnetic Poetry

Directions:

1. Choose a painting to use as the inspiration for your poem
2. Using the magnetic/cut out words, arrange a poem that is related to the painting you chose in some way. Your poem should be between 10-20 words. You may add any words that you need to make the poem make sense or add imagery, etc.

Station 4: Book Spine Poetry

Directions:

1. Find books that inspire who or whose title seem intriguing/poetic.
2. Stack the books to make a poem out of the lines, adding words as needed (Your poem should be somewhere between 10-20 words)

Station 5: Paint Chip Poetry

Directions:

1. Choose a speculative topic from the container/list
2. Write a poem based on that topic, using 2-5 of the color names from the paint chips (poem should be between 10-20 words)

Station 6: Visual Inspiration Haiku

Directions:

1. Look at the images provided and choose one that inspires you

	<p>2. Using descriptive words, use the format provided to write your own speculative haiku based on the image</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>-After 45-60 min. of poem writing, students will choose two of their best poems and respond to the following questions: 1. Why did you choose these poems as your best? Be specific about the poetic devices you used. 2. Explain how each of these poems could fit into the “speculative poetry” genre.</p> <p>-Students will submit their annotation of “Venus, as it Might Have Been” as well as the two poems they chose, and their poem reflection for me to review.</p>
<p>Materials Needed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Venus, as it Might Have Been” by Mary Soon Lee https://www.analogsf.com/assets/6/6/POEM_Venus.pdf 2. <i>The Persistence of Memory</i>, by Salvador Dali https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79018 3. Station 1 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. 1 set of dice per student c. Various speculative pictures, words, books, movie covers, etc., each labeled with a number from 1-6 4. Station 2 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. Copied pages from speculative fiction books and short stories (as a modification, circle key words that indicate a speculative element for students to use as their anchor word)-enough for at least 1 page per student. c. Markers/colored pencils, pencils with erasers 5. Station 3 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. Several printed out paintings (in color) of some type of speculative scene (<i>Suggestions: The Two Fridas</i>, by Frida Kahlo, <i>Monet’s Salle à Manger Jaune</i>, by Mickalene Thomas, <i>Somewhere There Must be a Future</i>, by Wolfgang Lettl, <i>Three Musicians</i>, by Pablo Picasso, <i>Skyscrapers and Tunnels</i> by Fortunado

	<p>Depero, <i>Golconde</i>, by Rene Magritte, <i>Sunrise by the Ocean</i> by Vladimir Kish)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Magnetic words and magnetic boards (alternatively, cut out and laminate a variety of words for students to use - this would be a great time to throw in some vocabulary words to practice!) <p>6. Station 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. Variety of books (all genres, though the more speculative fiction the better!) <p>7. Station 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. Variety of Paint Chip cards (found at most paint/hardware stores) c. -container with cut out speculative topic ideas (alternatively, just type these ideas onto a laminated paper for students to share) <p>8. Station 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Printed Directions b. Variety of images/photographs related to various speculative elements (ex. Space, magical creatures, the future, etc.) c. Handout that outlines the form of a haiku, with an example http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1072/haiku_pattern.pdf
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Lesson Plan Three

Title: Using Speculative Poetry to Explore Reality

Time: 90 minutes

Objectives: SWBAT analyze specific words and phrases in order to determine meaning and theme. SWBAT analyze and evaluate Monae's use of speculative poetry to convey themes and issues in real life.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.

Overview: This lesson would occur during Part Three (“Understanding the Present with Speculative Fiction) of my unit. In this lesson, students will analyze Monae’s use of allegory/alter-ego to communicate themes of oppression and individuality. In particular, we will focus on the song “Cold War” and its message in the context of *The Archandroid* concept album and the saga of her alter-ego, Cindi Mayweather. Students will also compare the music videos of two different songs, and how the videos contribute to the meaning of the song.

Lesson Activities/Format:

<p>Hook/Introduction:</p> <p>Key:</p>	<p>-Provide students with a handout of the lyrics for “Many Moons.” The handout should also include <u>several questions to go with the short film.</u></p>
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<p>-Formative assessments are underlined</p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p><i>-Collaborative activities are italicized</i></p>	<p>-Show students Monae’s short film “Many Moons.” Pause half-way through to <u>discuss ideas about what the short film is about/what is happening</u>. Guide students to understand the basic idea of an auction of androids, and that the song is written in a first person perspective of the main android character. Finish watching video.</p> <p>-Have students respond to questions using the video and lyrics (Think), then Share with their partner their responses to the questions. We will then briefly discuss as a class.</p> <p>Questions for handout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the setting for this short film? 2. Describe the identity of the character singing the song. 3. Read Verse 1 through the Hook. What does the singer seem to be saying to those listening? 4. In what ways would this song/film be considered speculative?
<p>Lesson Activities:</p> <p>Key:</p> <p><u>-Formative assessments are underlined</u></p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p><i>-Collaborative activities are italicized</i></p>	<p>-I will explain that this song sets the context for a story about an android, Cindi Mayweather, which extended through several EPs and concept albums (explain the term “concept album”), including <i>Archandroid</i>.</p> <p>-Review the term “metaphor.” Using Think-Pair-Share, ask “based on the lyrics and imagery in the film, in what ways might androids be a metaphor for something/someone else?” Discuss their responses as a class.</p> <p>-Summarize the story of <i>Archandroid</i> in the context of the <i>Metropolis</i> saga.</p> <p>-Provide students with the lyrics to “Locked Inside” and “57821.” Assign each student and their partner one of the songs to analyze.</p> <p>-Using mini/modified Expert Groups, have students partner up with a member of the group near them to work on analyzing the same song together. Students will use the SWIFT technique to annotate and analyze, as well as annotate for any speculative elements evident in the lyrics.</p>

	<p>-Once pairs have finished analyzing/annotating their assigned song, have students rotate to be with one other group working on their same song to compare annotations and discuss the theme of the song.</p> <p>-Then, have students go back to their original pair to share their analysis of the song with their partner (who should have analyzed the other song)</p> <p><u>-As a class, discuss “How does Monae use these songs to convey themes and issues in real life?”</u></p> <p>-Then, explain that the final song they will be analyzing is “Cold War,” which in the story, is in between the other two songs on the album. Tell them it is from the perspective of the android, Cindi Mayweather. When watching, tell students to start thinking about the theme of the song. Show the music video for “Cold War.”</p> <p>-After watching, <i>discuss initial reactions</i>. Then have students individually annotate the song.</p> <p><u>-Then, discuss as a class what the theme of the song may be. Be sure that students use specific lyrics as evidence.</u> Ask how the theme of this song seems to relate to the other songs and the world of Metropolis.</p> <p>-Before showing the music video again, tell students to think about how the themes in this story, and particularly this song, may be metaphorical (or allegorical) for either Monae’s life or something else in real life. Tell them to pay attention to how this music video is created to be much more personal and authentic than the first “Many Moons.”. Watch the music video again.</p> <p>-After watching, <u>discuss students’ thoughts about the video and possible metaphors/allegory using the speculative setting</u>. Then, display some interview quotes from Janelle Monae about the significance of the song and her own struggles.</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>Finally, have students write a paragraph responding to the following question: “Based on the lyrics you analyzed, your knowledge of the Metropolis world, and the music videos you watched, how does Monae use speculative poetry to convey</p>

	themes and issues in real life? Be sure to cite evidence from the lyrics in your response.”
Materials Needed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Handout with “Many Moons” Lyrics https://genius.com/1058378 and questions 2. “Many Moons” Music Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZyyORSHbaE 3. “Locked Inside” Lyrics https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/janellemone/lockedinside.html 4. “57821” Lyrics https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/janellemone/57821.html 5. “Cold War” Music Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqmORiHNtN4 6. “Cold War” Lyrics https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/janellemone/coldwar.html

Lesson Plan Four

Title: Sparking Change through Visionary Poetry

Time: 90 minutes

Objectives: SWBAT analyze specific words and phrases of a poem in order to determine the theme. SWBAT synthesize the many speculative poems they have studied in order to determine a common theme and evaluate how poets use visionary poetry to build worlds and inspire change.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.

Overview: This lesson would take place towards the end of Part 4, “Shaping the Future with Speculative Poetry.” In an earlier lesson, students would have learned the term “visionary poetry” and analyzed several visionary poems, discussing the world-building that happens in these poems, the call to action that is often present, and why they are considered speculative. In this lesson, students will focus on analyzing a specific poem that helped spark the Arab Spring, then bring together the many poems they have read to make meaning and evaluate how poets use their words to inspire and create change.

Lesson Activities/Format:

<p>Hook/Introduction:</p>	<p>-Display poem “If the People Wanted Life One Day” by Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi (also provide a paper copy).</p> <p>-Have students read the poem to themselves first, <u>then do a quick write (2 min.) about what they think it means, focusing on specific lines.</u></p> <p>-Read the poem out loud to the students, and have them <i>discuss with their partner, then as a whole class, what the poem is about and what the speaker is saying.</i> Ask whether or not this would be considered visionary poetry and why.</p>
<p>Lesson Activities:</p> <p>Key:</p> <p><u>-Formative assessments are underlined</u></p> <p>-Summative assessments are in bold</p> <p><i>-Collaborative activities are italicized</i></p>	<p>-Explain that this poem, written by a Tunisian living under French rule in the early 1900’s, is one that helped spark the Arab Spring, which started in Tunisia.</p> <p>- Show the beginning of the History.com video to provide students with background information about the Arab Spring</p> <p>-While students are watching, pass out the article “The Poetry of Revolution” <i>for students to read with their partner</i> when finished watching the video</p> <p>-When finished reading, students should use evidence from the article and previously read poems to answer the question “how can speculative/visionary poetry incite revolution/change?” <u>This should be an individual, 4 minute quick-write.</u></p>

	<p>-After students have written individual responses, <u>have students, in groups of 4-6, use a white board or paper to list poems they have read that encourage some kind of personal or societal change. They should also include a specific line from each poem. Emphasize that groups should be discussing these poems together as they write them down.</u></p> <p>-After about 10 minutes of groupwork, <u>have groups share the lines/poems they chose and discuss the initial question from their individual quickwrite.</u></p> <p>-Display and read aloud the following quote from the introduction to <i>Octavia's Brood</i>, written by Walidah Imarisha: "Whenever we try to envision a world without war, without violence, without prisons, without capitalism, we are engaging in speculative fiction. All organizing is science fiction. Organizers and activists dedicate their lives to creating and envisioning another world..."</p> <p><u>-Have students discuss this in their groups: "What is Imarisha saying here about activism and speculative fiction? Do you agree or disagree? Brainstorm examples to support your position." Then, discuss as a whole class.</u></p> <p>-Finally, display the poem "I Dream a World" by Langston Hughes and read out loud.</p> <p>-Explain to students that tomorrow they will be working on writing their own visionary poems based on this poem. In order to do that though, they will be brainstorming problems that they see currently in society, then using their imaginations to brainstorm how it could be different/better.</p>
<p>Assessment:</p>	<p>Before students leave, have them revisit their initial quick-write ("how can speculative/visionary poetry incite revolution/change?") and add to their response based on class discussion and other texts. They will submit this before they leave class.</p>
<p>Materials Needed:</p>	<p>1. "If the People Wanted Life One Day" by Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi https://arablit.org/2011/01/16/two-translations-</p>

	<p>of-abu-al-qasim-al-shabis-if-the-people-wanted-life-one-day/</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. History.com video about the Arab Spring https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fgcd5ZcxDys 3. Article “The Poetry of Revolution” https://www.huffpost.com/entry/the-poetry-of-revolution_b_828282 4. White boards/chart paper for each group (and dry erase markers/markers) 5. “I Dream a World” by Langston Hughes https://allpoetry.com/I-Dream-A-World
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Resources

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Ganley, Rick, and Mary McIntyre . “Lifelines: How COVID-19 Has Led To Collective Trauma.” *Morning Edition* , New Hampshire Public Radio, 4 May 2020, www.nhpr.org/post/lifelines-how-covid-19-has-led-collective-trauma.

This article presents information about the psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on society as a whole. In the article, the local host for NPR’s Morning Edition interviews a sociologist about why this kind of “collective trauma” occurs and how these massive changes can also be opportunities for healing, as well as “are also openings for potentially some radical restructurings of society.”

“Coldplay's Chris Martin: 'Mylo Xyloto' Was Inspired by the Recession': NME.” *NME Music News, Reviews, Videos, Galleries, Tickets and Blogs | NME.COM*, NME , 31 Oct. 2011, www.nme.com/news/music/coldplay-211-1281559.

This article provides some background information about the inspiration for Coldplay’s dystopian concept album Myloxyloto. In it, Martin says that he was feeling angry about the cause and effects of the 2008 financial crash. In other articles, Martin also says that the album was meant to be reminiscent of other movements that have used art for social change during periods of unrest.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. “The Danger of a Single Story.” *TED*, TED Conferences , 2009, www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/details?language=en.

In this TED talk Adichie tells a story about her background in which she grows up in Nigeria but mainly reads stories about white British children. She goes on to

explain why it is important that other stories are told, not just the “single story” of a particular culture in a particular time and place that is not representative of people’s true experiences.

Bloom, Sandra L. *Creating Sanctuary: toward the Evolution of Sane Societies*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.

This book uses decades of real experience and research with trauma victims to analyze and explain the psychological, biological, and sociological causes and effects of trauma.

Brooks , Kinitra. “Colloquium with Kinitra Brooks: 'The Conjure Woman's Garden: Black Women's Rootworking Traditions'.” *The Hutchins Center for African & African American Research*, Harvard University , 6 Feb. 2019, hutchinscenter.fas.harvard.edu/event/colloquium-kinitra-brooks-conjure-womans-garden-black-womens-rootworking-traditions.

This resource is really a video of a talk given by Kinitra Brooks, in which she reflects on the traditions of her grandmother and reflects on ways of knowing. These roots-centered ways of knowing are directly connected to epistemic agency.

Chavis, Geri Giebel. *Poetry and Story Therapy: the Healing Power of Creative Expression*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2011.

This book uses numerous examples and research to make the argument that poetry (and stories) can and should be an important part of the therapeutic process. The author gives many suggestions and tools for how to do this.

DeMain, Bill. “The Story Behind The Song: Space Oddity by David Bowie.” *Classic Rock Magazine*, Louder, 13 Feb. 2019, www.loudersound.com/features/story-behind-the-song-space-oddity-david-bowie.

This article provides background information about the song “Space Oddity” written by David Bowie. Contrary to what many thought the song meant at the time, it reflected the sense of isolation in a vast universe that Bowie feared for himself and his society at the beginning of the space age.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 1993.

This classic book is a discussion of systemic psychological oppression and how to elicit change through education. A main focus of Freire’s thesis is that the oppressed must be educated and empowered through their own desires and

curiosity in order to make any real change to a system. It is particularly relate to this unit because Friere says that they must also be able to imagine themselves as equally powerful.

Félix, Doreen St. “The Otherworldly Concept Albums of Janelle Monáe.” *Culture Desk* , The New Yorker , 1 Mar. 2018, www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-otherworldly-concept-albums-of-janelle-monae.

This helpful article discusses the stories of Monae’s concept albums, analyzing them through a cultural and personal lens.

Gambuto, Julio Vincent. “Prepare for the Ultimate Gaslighting*.” *Medium*, Forge, 4 June 2020, forge.medium.com/prepare-for-the-ultimate-gaslighting-6a8ce3f0a0e0.

This article was written in June and deals with the struggles and grief that many were feeling at the time due to the pandemic. He makes the argument, though, that instead of “getting back to normal” as quickly as possible (particularly through buying things and making ourselves busy), that we should use this time to really reflect on our lives and consider changes, personal and systemic, that should be made.

Imarisha, Walidah. *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, edited by Adrienne Maree Brown, AK Press, 2015, pp. 3–5.

This is a collection of speculative short stories inspired by and meant to inspire social justice movements. Named in honor of the groundbreaking speculative author Octavia Butler, the book seeks to give voice to diverse authors, particularly African Americans, and encourage social activism with the idea that “all organizing is science fiction.”

“Janelle Monae - Cold War, Live @Nobel Peace Prize Concert 2011.” Performance by Janelle Monae , *Youtube* , 12 Dec. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f99Oe8sSz4.

This is a video of Monae’s performance of “Cold War” at the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize Concert. Before the song starts, Monae explains that she, as a young African American woman, did “not always feel empowered,” and so she wrote this song so that others would. This is helpful when discussing how Monae uses speculative poetry to communicate real-life issues.

Nilly , N.E. “What Is Speculative Fiction? - Articles That Never Die (GreenTentacles).” *Science Fiction, Fantasy, & Horror - Web Design, Graphic Design, Interactive Media Development by Greententacles*, Mar. 2002, www.greententacles.com/articles/5/26.

This article provides a resource about the history and definition of speculative fiction. It also provides quotes from several other authors and magazine editors about speculative fiction and how the term has evolved.

Ortiz, MD, Robin, and Laura Sinko, PhD, RN, CCTS-1. "Responding to the Trauma of COVID-19." *Health PolicySense* , Penn LDI, 2 July 2020, ldi.upenn.edu/healthpolicysense/responding-trauma-covid-19.

This post provides information about how Covid-19 has caused an exacerbated existing trauma in many people's lives and in society as a whole. The authors propose several ways to address this issue, including through policy initiatives and a community response.

Pulliam-Moore, Charles. "From Metropolis to Dirty Computer: A Guide to Janelle Monáe's Time-Traveling Musical Odyssey." *Movies* , Gizmodo , 2 May 2018, io9.gizmodo.com/from-metropolis-to-dirty-computer-a-guide-to-janelle-m-1825580195.

For those unfamiliar with the story of Cindi Mayweather in Monae's Metropolis series, this article provides a guide that helpfully explains characters and plot lines in the context of the EPs and concept albums. I'd also recommend using the comments and interpretation found on genius Lyrics for each of the songs as an additional resource.

"School Information ." *District Performance Office* , The School District of Philadelphia, Feb. 2020, www.philasd.org/performance/programsservices/open-data/school-information/#school_lists.

This provides data about specific school demographics in the School District of Philadelphia.

Thomas, Ebony Elizabeth. *Dark Fantastic: Race and the Imagination from Harry Potter to the Hunger Games*. New York University Press, 2019.

This new, excellent book provides a framework for analyzing race in speculative fiction and analyzes the portrayal of people of color in several popular movies/shows. This book was the foundation for the class *The Dark Fantastic: Reading Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Comics to Change the World*.

Toliver , S.R., and Keith Miller . "(Re)Writing Reality: Using Science Fiction to Analyze the World ." *English Journal* , vol. 108, no. 3, Jan. 2019, pp. 51–59., secure.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/1083-jan2019/EJ1083Jan19Rewriting.pdf.

This article outlines the research of Toliver as she worked with a group of teens, using science fiction writing as a means for them to express their frustration with social issues and also as a way to explore possibilities for how those issues could potentially evolve in the future. Her study shows that science fiction can be an excellent tool to express and explore these issues, even for students who may not be otherwise engaged.

Reading List for Students

- Alexie, Sherman. "How to Write the Great American Indian Novel by..." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52775/how-to-write-the-great-american-indian-novel.
- Angelou, Maya. "Still I Rise by Maya Angelou." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise.
- Bowie, David. "David Bowie – Space Oddity." *Genius*, 11 July 1969, genius.com/David-bowie-space-oddity-lyrics.
- Donne, John. "No Man Is an Island by John Donne." *By John Donne - Famous Poems, Famous Poets. - All Poetry*, allpoetry.com/No-man-is-an-island.
- Frost, Robert. "Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, poets.org/poem/nothing-gold-can-stay.
- Giovanni, Nikki. "A Journey by Nikki Giovanni - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, 2012, poets.org/poem/journey.
- Hughes, Langston. "Dreams by Langston Hughes - Poems | Academy of American Poets." *Poets.org*, Academy of American Poets, poets.org/poem/dreams.
- Hughes, Langston. "I Dream A World by Langston Hughes." *By Langston Hughes - Famous Poems, Famous Poets. - All Poetry*, AllPoetry, allpoetry.com/I-Dream-A-World.
- Lee, Mary Soon. *Venus, As It Might Have Been*. www.analogsf.com/assets/6/6/POEM_Venus.pdf.
- Lundberg, John. "The Poetry Of Revolution." *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 17 Nov. 2011, www.huffpost.com/entry/the-poetry-of-revolution_b_828282.
- McKay, Claude. "America by Claude McKay." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44691/america-56d223e1ac025.

Monae , Janelle. “Janelle Monáe (Ft. Deep Cotton) – 57821.” *Genius*, 18 May 2010, genius.com/Janelle-monae-57821-lyrics.

Monae , Janelle. “Janelle Monáe – Cold War.” *Genius*, 12 Feb. 2010, genius.com/Janelle-monae-cold-war-lyrics.

Monae , Janelle. “Janelle Monáe – Locked Inside.” *Genius*, 18 May 2010, genius.com/Janelle-monae-locked-inside-lyrics.

Monae , Janelle. “Many Moons .” *Genius*, 1 Aug. 2008, genius.com/1058378.

Neruda, Pablo. “Ode to a Large Tuna in the Market by Pablo Neruda.” Translated by Robin Robertson , *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/49322/ode-to-a-large-tuna-in-the-market.

Reynolds , Jason. *i Am Jason Reynolds*, 2020, iamjasonreynolds.com/.

Sandburg, Carl. “I Am the People, the Mob.” *Poetry Out Loud*, www.poetryoutloud.org/poem/i-am-the-people-the-mob/.

“Three Translations of Abu Al-Qasim Al-Shabi's 'If the People Wanted Life One Day'.” *ArabLit & ArabLit Quarterly*, 17 Jan. 2011, arablit.org/2011/01/16/two-translations-of-abu-al-qasim-al-shabis-if-the-people-wanted-life-one-day/.

Walker , Alice. “Alice Walker – Women.” *Genius*, 2016, genius.com/Alice-walker-women-annotated.

Walker, Margaret. “For My People by Margaret Walker.” *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/21850/for-my-people.

Materials for Classroom Use

“35 Words To Describe Tone.” *Talks with Teachers*, talkswithteachers.com/35-words-describe-tone/.

“Cold War (Official Music Video).” Performance by Janelle Monae , *Cold War* , www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZyyORSHbaE.

Dali , Salvador. “The Persistence of Memory .” *Salvador Dali* , MoMA , 2019, Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York , www.moma.org/collection/works/79018.

“Haiku Pattern Template .” ReadWriteThink, 2007.

Here's How the Arab Spring Started and How It Affected the World , History.com , 8 May 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fgcd5ZcxDys.

Maurin , Nicholas Eustache. *Conquest of Mexico: Hernando Cortes* , Fine Art America , 11 Nov. 2014, fineartamerica.com/featured/conquest-of-mexico-hernando-cortes-nicholas-eustache-maurin.html.

Monae , Janelle, director. *Many Moons . Many Moons Official Short Film* , <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZyyORSHbaE>, Apr. 2009, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZyyORSHbaE.

Rivera , Diego. "The Arrival of Cortes." *The Arrival of Cortes* , Bluffton University , 1951, National Palace in Mexico City , homepages.bluffton.edu/~sullivanm/mexico/mexicocity/rivera/4870.jpg.

Appendix

Content Standards

Below is a descriptive list of the English and Language Arts Common Core Standards that are addressed throughout this unit.

Reading Literature

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7

Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.