POETIC PRINCIPLES

Canadian Poetry Unit: English 30-1

+ Blended Humanities
Approach: SS 30
Unit Purpose

Challenging the Status Quo: This unit is focused on challenging societal norms and engaging students with current events, controversial issues and differing worldviews. Students will look at how Canadian poetry can highlight and deconstruct various cultural issues. Students will take on the role of societal, as well as poetic critics and will attempt to both challenge and defend the messages found within a multitude of samples of Canadian poetry.

*This unit complements a blended humanities approach with the Social Studies 30 curriculum.*
Assessment and Evaluation

- Cumulative Annotated Poetry Portfolio
- Debate Notes, Responses and Reflections
- Figurative Language Quiz
- Inquiry Project
  - Unit Summative Assignment
Featured Canadian Poets

- Margaret Atwood – “Spelling”; “Death of a Young Son By Drowning”
- Joan Crate – “I Am a Prophet”
- Malcom Lowry – “Christ Walks in This Infernal District Too”; “The School Globe”
- Douglas LePan – “A Country Without Mythology”
- Margaret Avison “From Now – On?”
- Loreena McKennit – “The Lady of Shallot”
- “Application for a Driver’s License” by Michael Ondaatje
Lessons

- I “The Power of Talk”
- II “Prophetic Voices”
- III “Edjamacation”
- IV “1st World Country?”
- V “The Dying Identity”
- VI “Poetic Principles”
- VII “Social Responsibility”
- VIII “Mythologies and Portfolio”
- IX+X Inquiry-Based Project
Day 1: “The Power of Talk”

Agenda:

1. Pre-reading: “telephone” exercise
2. Read poem
3. Word web poems

- “Telephone”: teacher prompt – whisper, “one’s voice may stand strong and true so long as one is true through and through” → students will take turns whispering this to each other one at a time. The message will pass through all ears. Discuss how the message changes. How has the meaning changed? How does this reflect the change of society’s values, as well as individual interpretations?

- “Spelling” by Margaret Atwood
  - The power of communication; analyzing one’s voice; societal choices and expectations
  - The “first act” of self-expression
Day 1: “The Power of Talk”

**Agenda:**

1. Pre-reading: “telephone” exercise
2. Read poem
3. Word web poems

- **Word Web Poems**
  - Students will create a mission statement of no more than 6 words: ex) “One’s voice stands strong and true”
  - From these words, students will construct a poetic word web on a poster-sized sheet, writing poetic phrases that offshoot the mission statement and using the letters of this mission statement in a “crossword” format
Day 2: “Prophetic Voices”

- What is a prophet? Brainstorm what a Canadian prophet might look like/might represent? Think-Pair-Share
- Discuss the song. How is language manipulated to change meaning? Compare/contrast the original poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson with the song variation by Canadian Artist Loreena McKennit.

**Agenda:**
1. Pre-reading: connotations of “prophet”
2. Song/visual
3. Read Poem
4. You as Prophet
Day 2: “Prophetic Voices”

**Agenda:**

1. Read Poem
2. You as Prophet
3. Featured Poem: “I am a Prophet” by Joan Crate

- What prophetic statements might the artist, Loreena McKennit, be making about the world in her song?
- Featured Poem: “I am a Prophet” by Joan Crate
  - After reading the poem, how does Crate construct the Canadian First Nations perception of “prophetness”?
  - Write a written response to the poem by analyzing three or more lines from the poem and answering the question: “What makes a prophet?”
  - Responses should be 2 paragraphs in length.
Day 3: “Edjamacation”

Focus: Education and Speaking Out
- “From Now – On?” by Margaret Avison
- “The School Globe” by Malcom Lowry

Looking at Education through an alternative lens.

1. Students will read each poem orally to each other in small breakout groups (3-4/group) and will identify and describe the main themes in them. Half the class will be assigned “From Now – On?” and the other half will be assigned “The Snow Globe”. Reflections should be recorded as students will be split up in a mini jigsaw format and will make a new group with half of the members being made up from each poem analysis.

2. In the new groups, students will compare and contrast the poems with each discussion being led by the poem experts.

3. Students will then create an individual response that blends a compare/contrast approach using visual aids on a diagram response.
Day 4: 1st World Country?

- Focus: critiquing social conditions
- Poem: “Christ Walks in This Infernal District Too” by Malcom Lowry
  - Discuss the social critiques Lowry is making
  - In pairs, students will construct agree/disagree statements to debate with other pairs in 1-minute intervals
  - EXAMPLE: side 1 debates 60 secs, side 2 debates 60 seconds, closing remarks (30 seconds each).
- Research and debate prep #2: students will research the concept of social injustice in Canada and will provide a case study to support their position in a future class debate.
Day 5: “The Dying Identity”

- “Death of A Young Son By Drowning” by Margaret Atwood
- Discussing the death of a child
  - Why does society look at the death of young children in a different light? What critique is being offered about children through Atwood’s poem? About society? About death? About assimilation vs. patriotism?
- Research and debate prep #1: students will research the concept of assimilation and will provide a case study to support their position in a future class debate
- A four-line poetic stanza summarizing the research they found will be created and included as a follow-up
Day 6: “Poetic Principles”

- Students will research and share Canadian two poems featuring themes connected to the central focus of this unit – poetic principles
  - Sharing will include: reading of one of the selected poems; written critique of the poem’s meaning and identification of theme; paragraph summary defending or criticizing the poet’s “poetic principles”

**Agenda (2-3 days)**

1. Introduction of Research Assignment
2. Research Period
3. Sharing Period
Day 7: “Social Responsibilities”

- Question for Discussion: Post the following question on the board as a debate topic for students to respond to in their poetry portfolios
  - Should Albertans be eligible for drivers licenses at the age of 16?

- Discuss student responses in quartet discussion groups

- Read the poem “Application for a Driver’s License” by Michael Ondaatje
  - Poem analysis
  - Social responsibility: who is at fault if a young driver commits an error?
  - What is this poem saying about social responsibility
  - Debate Prep response (Sponge)
Day 8: Mythologies + Portfolio

- “A Country Without Mythology” by Douglas LePan
  - 1st Reading: silent, individual
  - 2nd Reading: teacher-led
  - 3rd Reading: round-robin with students leading
  - 4th Reading: annotations and TPCAST analysis

- Students will analyze LePan’s poem critically and will use it as the first entry into their poetry portfolio
- Poetry Portfolios will be constructed and individualized (aesthetic student-created art, quotations and images will litter the covers 😊)
- Students may use duotangs, small 1-inch binders or mini-scrapbooks
- Following the TPCAST analysis, students will create a visual representation (diagram, symbol, illustration) that represents the poem’s central theme → follow-up next class to discuss theme as a featured concept
- POEM LINK: http://www.complextutoring.com/?q=node/239
Days 9+10: Inquiry Project Assignment

- Students will research and respond to the following inquiry prompt: “In what ways do ideology and identity impact one’s role on the global stage? Consider class, relationship to land, religion, progressivism, collectivism, environment.

- LA and Social Studies Skills (from P.O.S.):
  - Interpretation, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of ideas, knowledge and understanding of curriculum
Unit Assignment Descriptions

Assignments

- Poetry Portfolio
- Debate Assignment
- Figurative Language Quiz
- Unit Summative Inquiry Project
Students will prepare **two** case studies to debate the following statement: “Canadian society is neglecting its social responsibilities as a world leader.” Students may argue in either the affirmative or the accusative.

**Debate prep should include:**
- Research of two pertinent case studies, with source credit (MLA)
- INTRO: A short opening statement (20 seconds)
- BODY: A 3 minute (+30 seconds permitted) speech declaring the student’s position, including a summative poetic statement made by the student
- CONCLUSION: Poetic Statement: 2 stanzas in length (4 lines/stanza minimum). This statement summarizes the poetic meaning of your analysis and should connect to one or more of the central themes discussed in previous poetic selections.
Poetic Debate Assignment

- Debate Reflections: students include their debate speech + poem in their poetry portfolios. Their debate reflection will include the following points:
  - Strengths of student’s argument
  - Areas for improvement
  - Figurative language used effectively in poetic summation

- Additional Assignment Option:
  - Students may reflect on the poetic summation created by one of their peers. A copy of the poem should be annotated by a peer, analyzed and then included in the student’s poetry portfolio
Poetry Portfolio

- Collection of Poems Analyzed throughout Unit
  - TPCAST framework
  - Anecdotes
  - Reflections & Connections to Case Studies

- Compare/Contrast Analysis
  - Critical response to poetry and connections to case studies

- Visuals
  - Poetic visual responses and deconstructions
Inquiry Project Assignment

- Students will create a position paper that compares a core social issue as expressed by one of the featured poets in the Poetic Principles unit.
  - Length: 5-6 pages in length, double spaced.

- Compare/Contrast Analysis
  - Students will use information from both a featured poem (or a poem of their selection by the same author), as well as research information to state and defend their position in response to the prompt.
Figurative Language Quiz

- Students can prepare for a quiz on figurative language by visiting the following link:
  http://www.quia.com/quiz/449371.html

- Figurative Language Quiz/Assessment
  - Terms: metaphor, allusion, symbols, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia