

Literacy and the Law



Lesson Title: Lesson 2: Poetic Justice: the Synthesis of Fiction and Nonfiction in Found Poetry

Context of the lesson within the project: This lesson follows an introduction to the unit through discussion of the novel *Journey to Topaz*. Students will now explore connections between the historical fiction account of Yuki's family in Topaz and the primary source documents they research and/or diary entries of third grade students in the Topaz camp from the nonfictional primary source, *The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary*, by Michael O. Tunnell and George W. Chilcoat. After reading and discussion of the materials in teams, students will create found poetry to convey their own opinion of what it meant to be in the camps. (See student samples)

Standards Addressed:

Common Core Reading, Writing and Language Standards

Reading

Literature and Informative Text Standards

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.

Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Writing

Text Types

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

Vocabulary Acquisition/Use

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

Essential Questions/Issues in this lesson:

What is justice?

Is civil disobedience ever justified? Explain.

In what ways do people react to race and differences between one another?

How can poetry incite empathy?

How does poetry express ideas differently than prose?

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Objective(s):

Students will participate in learning activities (reading, discussion, and writing) synthesizing fictional and nonfictional reading sources to create their own “found” poetry to convey a personal point of view of the Japanese-American experience from any point of view (Yuki’s, the public, etc.)

***Assessment:**

This objective will be assessed through teacher observation and a rubric for the student-created poetry.

***Quality Criteria for assessment:**

- Use of language arts standards for: writing, revision, and editing for the appropriate grade level.
- Clear evidence in the poetry of critical thinking, synthesis of ideas, and purposefully applied point of view.

RUBRIC

Criteria	Absolutely!	Almost!	Not yet!
Use of specific language to convey point of view and theme			
Use of figurative language and poetic devices (sensory, analogy, metaphor, repetition, onomatopoeia, rhyme, verse, emotional impact, etc.)			
Use of newly acquired academic vocabulary			
Use of revision for specific word choice and content			
Use of appropriate language conventions (Capitalization, grammar, punctuation in the context of poetry)			
Poetry uses critical thinking, synthesis of ideas, and point of view			

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Materials and Resources Needed:

Found Poetry: Highlighters, *The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary*, by Michael O. Tunnell and George W. Chilcoat, CreateSpace, 2011 copies of *Journey to Topaz* book, and any primary source images or documents that will jumpstart student creativity.

Learning Activities:

(5 minutes)

1. Hook:

Have students read the poem “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost and discuss what they think it means. The following steps may provide more scaffolding. (*You can use any poem that involves a decision and choice.*)

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173536> (*This site has the poem and a reading of the poem for students who may need that accommodation.*)

(15 minutes)

2. Students can highlight “power” words that stand out to them as important to the meaning of the poem and then discuss it. (e.g. *diverge*) In your “power” words, do you see examples of onomatopoeia (*on-uh-mat-uh-pee-uh*) in the power words you have chosen? This is a noun like “cuckoo, meow, honk, or boom – imitation of a sound.
3. You can provide them with questions of constructive inquiry. What do you think the road is? Could the road symbolize something? Is this an analogy, or a metaphor? Does the poem rhyme? Have you ever made a difficult choice that affected your future? Are all experiences good? Which path is best?
4. Come together whole group and discuss the power of poetry to convey a deep message. Ask: What is different about poetry rather than prose? Do you as a reader react in a different way? (*Many answers may include a reference to the reader feeling a part of the poem and able to “interpret” and put his/her own emotions into the poem.*)
5. You may choose to go deeper with this inquiry by asking students to find a poem showing emotion and bring it in to share with the group.

(20 minutes)

6. Put students in reading pairs and give each team a diary entry copied from the book, *The Story of a Japanese-American Internment Camp Based on a Classroom Diary*

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or you can use other nonfictional sources of experiences of Japanese-Americans during the camp occupations. Students will take Handout 1 (Nonfiction Reflections) with them to complete together after reading their entry. It is recommended to give different entries and sources to each pair for a more diverse and powerful whole group discussion later. Give each pair time to complete their thoughts and jot them down on paper.

7. Then have each student in the pair jot down a list of “Power” words or “important” words or phrases that really moved her/him in a list they will use later.
8. Come together in a whole class discussion (a circle of chairs or a new and unusual seating arrangement is recommended to add a level of novelty for students. Facing everyone in a circle adds to the power of each person’s input.
9. Have team’s share out; you may wish to have students record responses in charts to look for patterns.
10. Lead the discussion into a synthesis of experiences of fictional Yuki and her family with the children from the actual camp of Topaz. How do those experiences relate?

(20 – 30 minutes)

11. Introduce the task to be completed individually.

- A. Handout 2 (Found Poetry assignment with Rubric, use rubric to introduce expectations)
- B. Let students know they can use their list of “Power” words or phrases they “found” in various sources along with any words from Journey to Topaz, our class discussion charts, and their OWN words to create a poem about the Japanese Internment Camp Experience.

(10 minutes)

12. **Closure:** Collect and share some poems. Reflect on the essential questions for this lesson.

- What is justice?
- Is civil disobedience ever justified? Explain.
- In what ways do people react to race and differences between one another?
- How can poetry incite empathy?
- How does poetry express ideas differently than prose?