

Title: Wordsworth’s poetry — Making Modern Day Connections

Grade Ranges:

 K-4

 5-8

 X 9-12

Subject Tag:

Language Arts: Literature: British Literature

Writing Guides: Writing Composition

Synopsis:

This lesson focuses on Wordsworth’s sonnet “The World is Too Much With Us.” After reading the poem, students work independently with the poem using reader response criticism. The students will then work in pairs to discuss and share ideas about the poem. Next, a whole class discussion focuses on unfamiliar vocabulary in the poem, literary techniques, and then a more complete understanding of the poem based on the discoveries and connections that students make. The written assignment at the end of the lesson (which may be completed out of class) is a letter to Mr. Wordsworth, using proper letter writing techniques and addressing the issues he presents. The assignment also asks students to explain to Mr. Wordsworth how he might feel about today’s society.

Keywords:

Wordsworth, romantic poetry, sonnets, poetry analysis, Romanticism, letter writing, allusion

Body:

1. Ask students to read the sonnet “The World is Too Much With Us” by William Wordsworth. (Available online at <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/rp/poems/wordswor22.html>.) As they read, they are to mark unfamiliar vocabulary, words, or phrases they understand or like, and words or phrases they find confusing. After marking these, they also need to make written notes about these sections, responding by making personal connections or connections to other texts. The emphasis at this point is not on understanding the complete poem, but on discovering meaningful sections, lines, and ideas.
2. After students finish, have them meet in pairs and exchange papers. Each student “responds to the responses” — in writing. Then the two students meet to discuss ideas and questions about the sonnet.
3. When the class reassembles, it may be necessary to cover the following literary terms: sonnet, allusion. Unfamiliar vocabulary may include sordid, boon, pagan, lea, and forlorn. The definitions of these words may be teacher directed, or the students may arrive at these definitions through context clues. You might want to read the poem aloud at this point or ask for a student volunteer.
4. Involve the entire class in a discussion about their responses to the sonnet.

5. After the discussion, the students are to write a formal letter to Mr. Wordsworth about his sonnet. The letter should address the ideas presented in the poem and have specific references to the text. The letter should also include a section that explains how some of his concerns still exist in the 21st Century, and how we as a society are trying to deal with these issues.

Related Links:

Romanticism

Features:

- ___ Contains special education tips
- ___ Quick Activity (less than 30 minutes; story starter)
- ___ Requires Internet access for students to complete

Objectives:

1. Students will relate the poet's ideas to their own experiences and ideas.
2. Students will examine the poet's ideas and techniques, including figurative language and vocabulary.
3. Students will engage with the text and read carefully, asking questions as they read.
4. Students will convey their understanding of the poem by writing to a specific audience and with a specific purpose

Standards:

NY: 1. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding;
2. Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation

NYC: A5a. Participate in the establishment and operation of self-directed work teams.
E2b. Produce a response to literature. **E5a.** Respond to poetry using interpretive and critical processes.

CT: CT: 1. Reading and responding: Students will read and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts. **2. Producing texts:** Students will produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

NJ : 3.3 Students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes; **3.4** Students will read various materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis

Prerequisite Skills:

1. Some exposure to reader-response (not required but helpful)
2. Some background on Romanticism (not required but helpful)

Time Required:

50-60 minutes (could be extended if writing is during class)

Technology and Materials Needed:

1. Copies of William Wordsworth's "The World is Too Much With Us," available online at <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/rp/poems/wordswor22.html>
2. Final copies of letters should be typed on a computer

Procedures**Assessment Criteria:**

1. Class participation. Students should complete the note taking/reader responses/peer sharing, and these can be collected for a grade.
2. Formal letter, which is well edited and contains specific references to the text

Recommended Lesson Plan Review Date:**Review Comments:**