

NAVIGATING YOUR LEARNERS THROUGH THEIR POETRY JOURNEY

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CHALLENGES WITH TEACHING POETRY

- Unseen poetry and poetry in general are a stumbling block/challenge for most students.
- Figurative language is difficult for students to understand and interpret.
- Themes and messages are out of the realm of the learner

WAYS TO APPROACH THE PROBLEM

- Teachers need to teach these concepts by:
- Using resources that appeal to learners.
- Showing examples of figurative language and poetic devices from everyday life.
- Showing students that they are capable of enjoying and even creating poetry.



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Next Step:

Learn TWIST. This is the overall approach to any poem. Work through each of the parts when you read through your poem for the second time.

T

Themes/major ideas that run through the poem.

W

Key words that you can unpick in detail.

I

Major images created by metaphors/similes/personification/words.

S

Structure- enjambment, rhythm, rhyme, repetition, minor sentences, monologue, stanzas, conversational style etc.

T

The thoughts and feelings of the speaker in the poem.

music is poetry
with
personality

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Let's look at the lyrics of *Pretty Hurts* by Beyoncé.

Do you think this could be a good unseen poem resource?

How many of the requirements for good resources does it meet.

Use the checklist to identify which requirements it meets with a brief motivation.



Tips for choosing a Resource Text



To Teach Unseen Poetry

1

Deal with a relatable topic or text type

2

Contain structural features of poems like stanzas, rhyme scheme and rhythm



3

Be rich in figurative language



4

Contain themes that are easily identifiable and familiar to learners



5

Provide opportunities for enrichment activities like language teaching and vocabulary extension.



THE TITLE *PRETTY HURTS*

CONTAINS TWO FIGURES OF SPEECH.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THEM?

PERSONIFICATION –

PRETTY IS BEING GIVEN THE HUMAN ABILITY TO CAUSE HURT.

OXYMORON-

PRETTY IS A POSITIVE THING

PLACED NEXT TO

A NEGATIVE ACTION OF ‘TO CAUSE INJURY’

Can you explain the imagery found in the following lyrics?



**PERFECTION IS THE
DISEASE OF A NATION...
YOU CAN'T FIX WHAT
YOU CAN'T SEE
IT'S THE SOUL THAT
NEEDS THE SURGERY**

PRETTY HURTS — BEYONCE

- When you face an imagery question follow these easy steps to answer it:
 - **1. State that it is effective.**
 - **2. State the figure of speech being used.**
 - **3. Identify the A and B- what is being compared to what**
 - **4. Describe or explain B.**
 - **5. Explain how A is like B.**

- **Comment on the effectiveness of the imagery** simply means:
- *Give your opinion on whether the imagery (comparison created with figurative language) works.*

PERFECTION IS THE DISEASE OF A NATION

COMMENT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ABOVE IMAGERY?

- This is **effective (it works)** as the **metaphor** used here does show us perfection is **infecting'/harming/an illness** the country by comparing perfection (A) to a disease of a nation (B)
- **B- a disease is harmful and can lead to death. It can also spread and infect many citizens in a country/nation.**
- **A – Perfection is like B –a disease of a nation as it is infecting many people and causing harm through the efforts to achieve perfection such as severe dieting, eating disorders, mental illness and even harmful plastic surgery.**

FIND EXAMPLES OF CONTRAST IN THE LYRICS

Some imagery contrast each other.
In the image identify how the
contrasting images convey a critical
view of the media's impact on ideas
of beauty.

Blonder hair, flat chest
TV says bigger is better
South beach, sugar free
Vogue says
Thinner is better

**My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;**



**Ain't got no doctor or
pill that can take
the pain away
The pain's inside
And nobody
frees you
from your body
It's the soul, its
the that needs surgery
It's the soul
that needs surgery**

Now create your own poetry activity or questions from the lyrics above or the rest of the song or even a song of your own choosing.

INSULTS AS IMAGERY:

Comment on the effectiveness of the following imagery found in these insults:

1. He's so lonely, he walks down Lover's lane holding his own hand
2. For Tom to get an idea, it would require a surgical process.
3. He goes through life pushing doors marked 'PULL'
4. If bird droppings were brains, she would have a clean cage.
5. Please speak your mind, I'll enjoy the silence.

10 FUN POETRY ACTIVITIES

I. Poetry Slam

Students recite their favourite poems or their own poems. Each student from the audience can give one 'like' to the performer. The winner is the one who gets more likes.

II. Two-Dollar Summary

Students write a two-dollar summary of the poem. Each word is worth 10 cents.

III. Ask the Author

Pair up students and hand out a poem to each pair. Students read their poems and think and write down one question they'd like to ask the poet. Then students rotate the sheets with poems and answer the questions until they get their poem back.

IV. Mad Libs

Prompt students for words to substitute blank spaces in the poem such as a noun, adjective or verb, before reading the poem aloud.

V. Gallery Walk

Place different poems around the room and get students to walk, read the poems and come up with one-word titles for each poem (write them on post-it notes and attach the notes to the poetry exhibits).

VI. Let the Music Play

Students select background music for the poem. Play a few music pieces and ask students to select the best piece and justify their choice.

VIII. Dramatise it

Have students dramatise the poem.

VII. Make it Visual

Students come up with a way to depict the poem either with an illustration or arrangement of the text.

IX. Feel the Beat

Get students to read the poem rap/hip-hop style, or sing the poem to the tune of a popular song.

X. Write your Own Poem

Students write their own poems.