

Lesson Plans: SS AHIS LPQ2 040 Langston Hughes' Poetry

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Grade Level : Grade 11

Subject : Social Studies - High

Standards/Assessed Benchmarks: Florida STATE FL Social Studies Standard (2008)
Grades: 9-12

Florida Sunshine State Standards

American History

5: Analyze the effects of the changing social, political, and economic conditions of the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression.

SS.912.A.5.6 Analyze the influence that Hollywood, the Harlem Renaissance, the Fundamentalist movement, and prohibition had in changing American society in the 1920s.

Description/Abstract of Lesson: The student will be able to: Develop a definition of what is meant by voice in poetry. Learn about the qualities that make Langston Hughes's voice distinctive, forceful, and memorable. Write journal entries to develop their own voices as writers. Learn how images convey strong emotions in poetry. Learn how poetry gives shape, direction, and meaning to strong emotions.

Essential Question-Scope & Sequence: **What qualities make a writer's voice forceful, distinctive, and memorable?**

Technology Connections and Teacher Materials: Biography of Langston Hughes <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/83> Modern American Poetry <http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/index.htm> National Portrait Gallery <http://www.npg.si.edu/> Poems of Langston Hughes: Dreams; Dream Deferred; Dream Variations; (attached below)

Duration : 2 Days

Vocabulary: Voices, deferred, metaphors, ephemeral, persona

Steps to Deliver Initial Instruction: Before teaching this lesson, read through the poems, have copies available, and have students access a biography of Langston Hughes. The journal entries give students practice in expressing their own voice by asking them to respond to five questions: 1. What do you see? 2. Who are you? 3. Where do you come from? 4. What obstacles have you overcome in life? 5. What do you feel strongly about?

Guided Practice with Feedback: **Defining Voice.** On the board, write a working definition of voice that is appropriate for your students' level of preparation and that reflects what they already know. The simplest definition is that a writer's voice reveals his or her personality. A strong contrast might help to make the point: read a passage from an encyclopedia (or perhaps your tax form) and read a passage from one of the poems by Langston Hughes. As you and your students work through the activities of this lesson, create a list, just below the working definition of voice that you wrote on the board earlier, consisting of additional items and qualities that contribute to a distinctive poetic voice. Use the essential question to help your students make choices about which qualities might belong in a more comprehensive definition of poetic voice. For now it is enough just to list the possibilities; as a culminating activity, students will develop a revised definition of poetic voice that incorporates the discoveries your class made while reading the poetry of Langston Hughes. Here is a little more background on the subject of voice. Unlike, say, iambic pentameter, which has a fairly constrained meaning, voice has been extended metaphorically far beyond its original sense of the vocal qualities of a particular speaker. According to one dictionary of critical terms, to speak of voice in a poem is to ...characterize the tonal qualities, attitudes, or even the entire personality of this speaker as it reveals itself directly or indirectly (through sound, choice of diction, and other stylistic devices)...[voice] reminds us that a human being is behind the words of a poem, that he is revealing his individuality by means of the poem, and that this revelation may be the most significant part of what we receive from the poem. --*Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Ed. Alex Preminger. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Independent Practice: Pass out copies of these three poems by Langston Hughes to your students 1. "Dreams" 2. "Dream Deferred" 3. "Dream Variations" Ask students to take notes on any interesting images they notice as the poems are read. Then read all of the poems aloud. Before

discussing them, give your students some silent time to read through the poems again on their own, making notes on any interesting images they find in each poem. As a class, discuss the imagery and the emotions expressed in each poem. You might wish to take each of the poems in turn, for each has something new to reveal about how vivid images may be yoked with strong emotions to create memorable poetry. With the first poem, for example, you could begin by having students identify the poem's two most prominent images: the broken-winged bird and the barren field. Then have students brainstorm all the feelings they associate with these images (for now, just "free associate" and do not censor any possibilities). Discuss how these feelings are linked with the concept and word to which the two images are metaphorically linked: "life." One of the reasons for Hughes's broad appeal is his ability to pack a great deal of meaning in a small space by creating metaphors linking images that suggest a range of widely shared feelings with general concepts such as "life" that might otherwise strike us as vague or abstract. The result is a general idea we can all grasp enlivened by vivid images whose associations we can all share.

Differentiated Instruction/Small Groups: You can apply the same approach to your discussion of "Dream Deferred," which links images that elicit feelings of strong physical revulsion (the festering, running sore, for instance) to an otherwise hazy and ephemeral idea (a "dream"). Notice that this poem does not tell you what a "dream deferred" is or what it must become; Hughes merely poses the question, leaves the answer open, although he does so with the unforgettable force that has made his poetic voice so distinctive and memorable. Note: All of us notice different sorts of things in the world around us. Some people are quick to notice the clothes others wear and to remember the details for days; other people do not notice and not remember such details to save their lives. What we see and hear and touch and smell around us--the sensual "pictures" that remain in our memories--are for poets and writers the raw stuff of memorable images and metaphors.

ESE/ESOL Accommodations & Strategies: Work with a partner to review vocabulary words and read and discuss poetry

Lesson Closure/Review: Write a short poem that expresses your personal voice. The poem can build upon ideas, images, and themes you explored in your journal, and you can use one or more of Hughes's poems as a model. When you have completed the poem, write out a definition of voice that uses some of the qualities of voice you discussed in class. Be prepared to talk in class about the ways in which your poem expresses qualities of your own voice as a writer.

Assessment with Clear & Compelling Product Standards: For journal entry, students will respond to the question: *What do you see? (What do you tend to notice in others and in the world around you? What do you tend to remember? When you think of the past, what images stay with you?)* All of us notice different sorts of things in the world around us. Some people are quick to notice the clothes others wear and to remember the details for days; other people do not notice and would not remember such details to save their lives. What we see and hear and touch and smell around us--the sensual "pictures" that remain in our memories--are for poets and writers the raw stuff of memorable images and metaphors. This journal assignment has two parts. First, students should write about a memorable event that happened more than one year ago. In their journal entries, they should emphasize two things: 1) as many physical details they can remember--clothes people wore, the weather, sounds, etc.; 2) their feelings at the time, their emotional responses to the remembered event. Next, ask students to take an analytical step back from their writing and try to come up with one or two metaphors that might make this event memorable to readers. The metaphors should match one or more details with one or more of the feelings they experienced at the time. Ask students to share one of their metaphors with the rest of class and, if it's necessary for understanding the metaphor, ask them to briefly summarize their memorable event.

Creator : Middle SS Content Team

File Attachments: Langston Hughes Dreams.pdf

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