

Poetry and Our Dreams

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Education level: Elementary

Genre: Poetry

Time frame: 1 hour

Objective: Invite students to reflect upon their dreams.

Prior knowledge and skills: None

Required materials: a whiteboard, pencil and paper

Literary model: “Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Sequence of activities:

Introduction (20 minutes):

This lesson is intended for students to generate a poem that captures a depiction of their dreams. Begin with sharing a thought experiment about the passing of time, perspective building their writing, and how you can accomplish your dreams. This will offer a space to set an intention for the works they create and encourage them to reflect before they write.

Project the questions such as “Where will you go?”, “What will you see?”, “What kind of person will you be?” and “Who would you meet?”. Read these questions out loud and invite the students to lean into their dreams of the future. This is to invite students to dream big to get them ready for later on in the lesson.

When working with younger students (if possible), invite the class to share their dreams. Share some of your dream travel ideas or career goals to encourage the class as they follow along with the lesson.

Call upon students as they share their dreams offering comments and connections based on what they share. Close out the discussion then transfer their attention to collecting paper, and a pencil and returning to their desks.

Brainstorming (10 minutes):

Create a cloud on the board behind you and write inside the cloud, “In My Dreams” or “When My Dreams Come True”. Invite students to share their dreams. Call upon students as they raise their hands. You can always start with examples from the prior discussion. After students have recorded their dreams, ask them to reflect on what is in the cloud.

Writing Exercise (20 minutes):

Let students know that they will be writing a poem based on their dreams. The intention of this

activity is to drive reflection and goal-building skills within the students. Be sure to travel around the classroom as they write and offer them help when needed.

Ensure students have a clear understanding that they are in a safe environment for self-expression. Welcome and affirm the large goals for students. Encourage them to push the barriers of the question, from silly ideas to statements that reflect their world views. If students are struggling, provide them with alternative options and remind them this project gives them space to share what they please.

Reading (5-10 minutes):

If working with a small group, you can encourage students to read from the front of the class. Invite students to share their thoughts on the poem and encourage one another while reading their work.

If working with a large group, you can invite students to read amongst one another or from their desks.

Students are often more likely to share following another reader. If you are having issues getting them to open up and perform, you can lead by sharing the poem “Dreams” By Langston Hughes, which is pasted below.

Dreams

By Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.