Poetry Across the Ages: Unit Overview

ENG3U, Grade 11 English (University), Unit 4. 12 classes of 75 minutes (about two and a half weeks).

The big question

How has poetry changed over time, and what has stayed the same?

Students travel from Shakespeare's sonnets to the Harlem Renaissance, the First World War and Modernism, reading 27 public domain poems by Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, both Brownings, Hopkins, Whitman, Dickinson, Dunbar, E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), McCrae, Owen, Teasdale, Frost, Eliot, McKay and Hughes, alongside contemporary poems chosen by the teacher. Activities include a timeline gallery walk, sonnet surgery, a war poetry then-and-now pairing and a recorded reading with a soundscape. The unit ends with a personal poetry anthology and a poetry café. A complete Poetry Reader is included.

Lessons

#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
1	**The Poetry Timeline**	1	What makes something a poem?	R 2.1, R 1.1, R 1.6	Gallery walk of seven eras; the reading toolkit
2	**Sonnet Surgery**	1	How does form shape meaning?	R 2.1, R 2.3, W 2.3	Shakespeare 18 and 130; Barrett Browning 43; rewriting a couplet
3	**The Romantics**	1	Can feeling see further than reason?	R 1.6, R 2.3, R 3.3	Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats; expert groups
4	**Victorian Voices**	1	How does a speaker reveal himself?	R 1.4, R 2.3, W 2.3	My Last Duchess; Pied Beauty; dappled things
5	**American Voices**	1	Loud or quiet: how does form express a world view?	R 2.1, R 2.3, W 2.2	Whitman and Dickinson; editing Dickinson; imitation
6	**Masks and Rivers**	1	How can form be resistance?	R 1.8, R 1.6, R 2.3	Dunbar, McKay, Hughes; poetry circle
7	**War Poetry, Then and Now**	1	How did the First World War change poetry?	R 1.6, R 1.8, W 2.5	McCrae, Owen, Teasdale; contemporary pairing
8	**Making It New**	1	What made poetry modern?	R 1.4, R 2.1, R 2.3	The Road Not Taken; Prufrock; two monologues
9	**Indigenous Voices**	1	What continues, and what changes?	R 1.1, R 1.8, W 2.5	Tekahionwake; a contemporary Indigenous poet; my place

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#	Lesson	Classes	Question	Expectations	What's inside
10	**Sound and Soundscape**	1	How is performance interpretation?	OC 2.5, M 3.4, M 3.3	Recorded reading with a soundscape
11	**Anthology Workshop**	1	How do I compare, create and explain?	W 1.4, W 2.3, W 2.5	Comparative thesis; original poem; creator's statement
12	**Poetry Café**	1	What is a poem now?	OC 2.3, OC 2.5, W 4.1	Open mic; listening room; submit anthology (summative)

Assessment

Type	In this unit
Assessment for learning	Timeline gallery, sonnet anatomy, surgery report, expert group sheet, Duke's confession, two voices chart, poetry circle, two views of war, misreading test, Prufrock image map, past and present, performance plan, planners
Assessment as learning	Peer feedback, café notes, unit reflection
Assessment of learning	Poetry anthology: comparative analysis, original poem, creator's statement and recorded reading, with a rubric in the Summative Tasks file

Texts

All 27 poems are public domain and are included in the Poetry Reader, with a glossary of poetic terms. Poets include:

- **Renaissance to Victorian:** Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Hopkins
- **American voices:** Whitman, Dickinson
- **Resistance and renaissance:** Dunbar, E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), McKay, Hughes
- **War and Modernism:** McCrae, Owen, Teasdale, Frost, Eliot

Contemporary poems are chosen by the teacher from licensed board resources, including at least one by a First Nations, Métis or Inuit poet (Lesson 9 lists suggested poets). Some poems use the language of their time; lessons include guidance for discussing it. In the creative tasks, students write about their own lives and places rather than imitating Indigenous voices or ceremonies. Lesson 7 pairs well with Remembrance Day.

What's in each lesson

- Teacher lesson plan with expectations, timed sequence, differentiation, look-fors and answer guides
- Slides with speaker notes
- Student handouts and organizers
- Editable Word and PowerPoint files, plus PDFs

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