



The English-Speaking Union National Shakespeare Competition SONNET LESSON PLANS



Week 6: *Holding a Sonnet Recitation Festival*

Note: 1-2 x 50 minute class periods (depending on the number of students in the class).

- **What's On for Week 6 and Why?**

This week students draw their work with their sonnets to a close by participating in formal recitations, assessing and reflecting on their progress. At this celebration or festival of Shakespeare's sonnets, they complete final presentations of their sonnets, and each sonnet recitation is assessed for a grade.

- Students will:
 - Present their sonnets for a final grade.
 - Provide constructive feedback to their peers.
 - Reflect on their experiences.

- **Which Standards Are Highlighted?**

Common Core English Language Arts:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-12.4
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-12.5

NCCAS National Theatre Education:

- NCCAS.NSTE.9-12.2 & 7

- **What Will You Need?**

- An open workshop (that can comfortably accommodate the whole class)
- *Judges' Evaluation Form* (enough copies so that every student can complete one form for themselves and one form for each of their classmates)
- A set of numbered cards (enough for every student in the class to choose one)

- **What Will You and Your Students Do?**

Note: First collect homework from Week 5 (each student's *Sonnet Goals Handout*).

1. Play a few warm-up games with the students (those which ideally warm-up up their bodies and voices and allow them to relax). Note: Check online for theatre games and tongue twisters you can use.
2. Students sit back down and randomly draw the numbered cards to determine the students' order of presentation. Remind them that this class is a formal recitation, which simulates part of the community-level Competition (where students are also asked to recite sonnets in addition to monologues). It provides them with a final assessment opportunity for their sonnet work. Tip: Encourage the students to be focused and committed to their sonnets.
3. Have each student introduce and recite his or her sonnet for the entire class. Pause between presentations to let the students complete their feedback sheets. Omit oral comments after the presentations.
4. Students complete an evaluation form for every student in the class, including themselves.
5. Students begin writing a journal entry reflecting on their process, progress and presentation. Note: This step may be completed for homework.
6. Celebrate! Take some time to honor the class as a whole. Sonnet presentations take bravery and nerves of steel; every student has taken some degree of risk and grown during the process.
7. Provide each student with feedback on their presentation. Although this task need not be done today, please provide it to them prior to the community-level competition.



The English-Speaking Union
National Shakespeare Competition
SONNET LESSON PLANS



Notes and Suggestions about Evaluation:

Providing feedback on the formal presentations can be uncomfortable because:

- The process makes some of the students feel very vulnerable.
- Each student is at a different place in terms of risk-taking.
- No matter how airtight the rubric is, there is still a degree of subjectivity involved.

A method of assessment that both satisfies the students and works for you is involving the students in the assessment process. Each student completes a formal rubric for every other student, and each student completes a formal rubric for his or her own presentation as well. You also complete a rubric for each student. Then average the scores, and give the students a final rubric that summarizes those scores.

We recommend this format for a number of reasons:

- The students give each other incredible feedback.
- More eyes, ears and minds involved in the process help bring more ideas to light.
- The averaged score provides a more objective analysis.
- The student scores and comments help you assess your own efforts at evaluation.

- **How Did It Go?**

To assess this lesson plan in your classroom, ask yourself:

1. Did each student turn in a thoughtfully completed *Sonnet Goal Handout*?
2. Did each student present their complete sonnet for their peers?
3. Was growth evident in each student's presentation?
4. Did each student provide positive, constructive feedback for their classmates?

- **What's for Homework?**

Ask each student to complete the following assignments for the next class:

1. Finish writing their journal entry, explaining how they felt about their process, progress and presentation. (If time permits, this entry may be developed into a full reflection paper.)
2. Review all peer feedback.
3. Set new goals based on this feedback.
4. Continue developing their relationship with sonnets and recitation.
5. Continue preparing for the community-level Competition (**school winner only**).