Poetry through Culture

Poetry Anthology
Grade 11
Designed by:
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Introduction

In this unit we will be discovering poetry through the Mexican Aztec Empire. Our ancestors, too, have a thing or two to say about love and war. Let’s see what they have to say...
By the end of this lesson, you will have become a published poet by using Internet resources and creating a personal poetry anthology.
Together with your peers and instructor, you will embark on a journey of culture and words that will change the way you see poetry.
• Generally, when studying poetry, you are provided with several different poems from the textbook and asked the meaning of each individual line.
• This time, before we read the actual poems, we will research the background of the Aztecs to find similarities between history and poetry.
• The following are the steps that we will take in studying the poetry genre and creating our own anthology.
The Aztec Genocide...
• The history: Cortés arrives in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) and ends the Aztec civilization
• The emotion: How would you feel if you were an Aztec? What would you do in this situation?
• The link to today: 25 Greatest Protest Songs
25 Greatest Protest Songs, 1-13

- Freedom [Live] - Rage Against the Machine - Anti-Capitalism/Indian Affairs
- Boom! - System of a Down - Anti War/Post 9/11
- Nelson Mandela - The Specials - Anti-Apartheid
- Biko - Peter Gabriel - Anti-Apartheid
- Sun City - Anti-Apartheid
- Where Is the Love? - Black Eyed Peas - Anti-War/Iraq
- Give Peace a Chance - John Lennon - Anti-War/Vietnam
- Fortunate Son - Creedence Clearwater Revival - Anti-War/Vietnam
- Born in the U.S.A. - Bruce Springsteen - Anti-War/Vietnam
- Ohio - Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young - Anti-War/Vietnam
- What’s Going On - Marvin Gaye - Anti-War/Vietnam
- Strange Fruit [#2] - Billie Holiday - Civil Rights
- Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud), Pt. 1 - James Brown - Civil Rights
25 Greatest Protest Songs, 14-25

- Blowin’ in the Wind [Live] - Bob Dylan - Civil Rights
- Rockin’ the Free World - Neil Young - Cold War/Berlin Wall
- (What’s So Funny ‘Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding - Elvis Costello - Cold War/Peace
- Do They Know It’s Christmas (Feed the World) - Famine/Africa
- People Have the Power - Patti Smith - Idealism/Activism
- Get Up, Stand Up - Bob Marley - Individualism
- Fight the Power - Public Enemy - Individualism
- This Land Is Your Land - Woody Guthrie - Individualism/Hippies
- Sunday Bloody Sunday - U2 - Ireland
- Anarchy in the U.K. - The Sex Pistols - Punk/Anti-Establishment
- London Calling - The Clash - Punk/End of the World
- The Message - Grandmaster Flash - Urban Life
With this background in mind:

- Research the Aztec empire.
- Read the poems and compare to the lyrics of the 25 Greatest Protest Songs.
- Write your own song lyrics.
- Create poems reflecting the music studied and the issues of today.
- Publish two or more poems created for the class.
- Create Poetry Anthology to complete lesson.
Resources

- Primary source poetry from the Aztec culture: http://www.freewebs.com/tecpaocelotl/poetry.htm
- The Aztec commandments (may be pertinent to the writing of your poems): http://www.sunnetworks.net/~ggarman/eightcom.html
- To submit your poem(s) for Internet publishing: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/poetry/
You can track your progress along the following rubric.

Poetry Anthology Assignment: Daily record of created poems including:
- One epitaph (10 line minimum)
- Four anagrams (5 line minimum)
- One sense poem
- One listing poem
- Two haiku poems
- Two diamond poems
- One cinquain poem
- One “Why” poem
- One Parts of Speech poem
- One simile, metaphor, and preposition poem
- One Shakespearean sonnet
- One “question” poem
- One personification poem
- One shape poem
- One Biopoem
- One acrostic poem

Poetry Anthology (Final Draft)
- Required class assignments (include rough drafts – 3 pts. each = 48)
- Cover (12 pts.) made from cardboard
- Neatness (15 pts.)
- Table of Contents (10 pts.)
- Illustrations (15 pts.)
Conclusion

Good luck on your journey to become the next William Shakespeare…
Thus they have come to tell it, thus they have come to record it in their narration, and for us they have painted it in their codices, the ancient men, the ancient women.

Thus in the future never will it perish, never will it be forgotten, always we will treasure it, we, their children, their grandchildren, brothers, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, descendants, we who carry their blood and their color, we will tell it, we will pass it on to those who do not yet live, who are yet to be born, the children of the Mexicans, the children of the Tenochcans.

-Fernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc