



## Using Poetry Videos in the High School Classroom

### Concept:

There is an ancient tradition, which some living poets also honor, of reciting the same poem more than once at a reading so it can be heard a second time. The video recordings from our Festivals give you the opportunity to hear the poets read poems two, three, or as many times as you'd like.

You and your students can "rehear" the poem just as you would reread a written text, and revisit particular phrases, lines or passages. Rehearing a poem reveals layers and nuances easy to miss at first, not only in the poem itself, but in the poet's voice, delivery, and expression.

It is the human connection we experience that makes hearing a poet read his or her own poem unique. One of the beauties of the Dodge Poetry Archive is the intimacy of the footage. What could be more human than seeing the expression on the poets' face shift, or hearing the poets' voice change as the audience responds?

### How To:

We invite you to watch these videos in your classroom as a way to welcome students into the world of contemporary poetry. Each poets' video is 5-8 minutes long. You can play one video per day or one every few days. Or you can devote a longer time to watch several videos in one sitting.

**You may be tempted to teach the poems or to immediately ask students for their feedback and ideas about the poems. However, one of the most important gifts you can give them is to allow them time to simply listen and savor their own experience.** Tell them before you play the video that they have no responsibility, no "assignment" other than to listen. That's all. No quiz will follow. They won't be asked to analyze the poem. All they have to do is listen attentively and be open and receptive to whatever happens.

Give them a moment to quietly reflect, without any discussion. And play the poem again.

You can end the activity right there. Devoting time each week to just listen to a few poems will vividly make the point that hearing poems aloud is a worthwhile activity in itself.

Odds are, many of your students will be eager to talk about their responses.



After a moment, ask students how they responded to the poems or poets, which did or didn't speak to them. Be certain to reassure them that they are not being asked to interpret or explicate, but simply to share their personal reactions. The purpose of the conversation is to give

all students a way to share their experience of the poems. No students' experience is more valid or valuable than any another, so encourage students to remain respectful and welcoming of their classmates' points of view.

Such an experience and exchange could connect them to each other and to poetry in unexpected ways. Remind them that for tens of thousands of years, young people were first exposed to poetry as they were to storytelling and music: by listening.

Whatever further steps are taken, and there are countless options, don't forget that **being read to is one of the universal pleasures**. Allow yourself and your students the chance to be read to by some of our most talented living poets.

It is of utmost importance that if you do explore any of these poems further with close reading, that none of your students' original personal responses be revisited as examples of misinterpretations. The safe environment of mutual respect necessary for that first activity to succeed must be maintained. Instead, let the students as a group discover through multiple readings what the text actually includes. This will allow them to personally experience that reading, like writing, is a process. Almost no one gets it perfectly right the first time.

To encourage students to reflect on the poems, you can have them write an ungraded journal entry or jot down some notes about what strikes them about the poems between each listening. Students do not need to analyze or judge the value of the poems, but rather jot down what is most memorable or vivid. Did anything raise a question in their minds? Did any lines or words stick with them? Invite them to write again after a second or third listening to discover what changes in their perception of the poem.

### **Resources:**

The **Dodge Poetry YouTube channel** ([www.youtube.com/grdodge](http://www.youtube.com/grdodge)) features video clips from the 2006, 2008 and 2014 Festivals. **In the coming months, we will post a new video from the 2014 Festival every Friday.**



## **Common Core Standards:**

### Reading: Literature:

- Key Ideas and Details: RL.9-10.2, RL.11-12.2
- Craft and Structure: RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.6, RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.5, RL.11-12.6
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: RL.9-10.10, RL.11-12.10

### Speaking and Listening:

- Comprehension and Collaboration: SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1

### Language:

- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.9-10.4, L.9-10.5
- Knowledge of Language: L.11-12.3, L.11-12.5