

Langston Hughes

by Jennifer McEvoy

Resources

The Library of Congress

The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with nearly 128 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. The collections include more than 29 million books and other printed materials, 2.7 million recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.8 million maps, and 57 million manuscripts.

Standards

- IL.1.C.1e > Identify how authors and illustrators express their ideas in text and graphics (e.g., dialogue, conflict, shape, color, characters).
- IL.2.A.3c > Identify characteristics and authors of various literary forms (e.g., short stories, novels, drama, fables, biographies, documentaries, poetry, science fiction).
- IL.2.A.3d > Identify ways that an author uses language structure, word choice and style to convey the author's viewpoint.
- IRA.1.2 ...demonstrate an understanding and respect for cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity in the teaching process
- IRA.2.12 ...teach classic and contemporary children's and young adults' literature, and easy-reading fiction and nonfiction for adults, at appropriate levels
- IRA.2.6 ...show that students need opportunities to integrate their use of literacy through reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing visually

Lesson Plan

Overview and Rationale

This lesson will be used to teach about Langston Hughes, the poet. It will be a part of the students' study of poetry and provide a perspective that is rarely seen in schools today, even though the poetry is wonderful! The students will incorporate listening,

reading, writing, and visually representing in one lesson to help them have a full grasp of the concepts, views and ideas presented by Mr. Hughes.

Objectives

Students will read poetry, books, and websites for comprehension.

Students will discuss poetry, especially in relation to Langston Hughes.

Students will write a biography of Mr. Hughes.

Students will visually represent one of Mr. Hughes' poems for the class.

Materials

1. ***Langston Hughes Reads and Talks about His Poems***. Sound recording. Spoken Arts, 1970.
2. Access to Library of Congress website - www.loc.gov
3. ***Langston Hughes a biography*** by Milton Meltzer 1968
4. ***Langston Hughes, American Poet*** by Alice Walker 1974
5. ***The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes***. Edited by Arnold Rampersad. New York: Knopf, 1996, c1994.
6. ***The Dream Keeper and Other Poems***. Illustrations by Helen Sewell. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1932; New York: Knopf; dist. by Random House, 1986.
7. ***The First Book of Rhythms***. Pictures by Robin King [pseud.]. New York: F. Watts, 1954.
8. ***The Block: Poems***. Collage by Romare Bearden; selected by Lowery S. Sims and Daisy Murray Voigt. New York: Viking, 1995.

Other books about Langston Hughes if found as well as other poems and collections of poetry by Langston Hughes.

Procedure

1. Students will listen to recordings of poetry by Langston Hughes.
2. As a class, we will discuss what the students thought about what they heard. Did they like it? What made it unique? Did it follow the forms of poetry that they already know? What differences did they find in the poetry they have learned about so far? Then we will move on to talking about Langston Hughes. Has anyone heard of him? If so, what do they know? Teacher will then give some background information.

3. Students will be able to visit the Library of Congress website and read more about Langston Hughes. They will read the articles about him and answer the questions that are spread throughout the articles.

4. In groups of 2-3, students will research more about Langston Hughes, starting with provided books. They will learn about his life and write a short biography about him to be turned in.

5. In the same groups of 2-3, students will research the poetry of Langston Hughes. They will have access to the books found by the teacher, but they will also have the opportunity to find different sources. The students will pick a poem (or 2 if they are short - must get permission to use each poem from the teacher) and come up with a way to visually represent the poem to the class. Ideas include a rap, oral reading, acting out, drawing a picture, etc.

6. This will be taking place over the course of a few days/1 week. At the end of the week students will make their presentations to the class.

Assessment

1. QUESTIONS FROM LOC WEBSITE - Students will hand in the answers to their questions for a completion grade. The teacher will check for appropriate answers to the provided questions. Student answers will vary.

2. BIOGRAPHY - Students will have a checklist of things that need to be included in the biography (date of birth, date of death, how he got started as a writer, etc.). The checklist will be used to make sure that everything is in the paper. Appropriate use of punctuation, style, and grammar will be taken into consideration for the final grade.

3. VISUAL REPRESENTATION - This will count toward class participation points. If students can explain how and why they came up with their representation, they will receive full points.