



English 10-2 and 20-2
Can be adapted for 10-1 and 20-1

Developing
Self-Esteem

Living
Respectfully

Preventing
Prejudice

Respecting
Diversity


I Am More Than What You See

Lesson 3 Listening to Other Voices

Contributor Carol Koran, Catholic Central High School, Lethbridge, Alberta, Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Separate Division No 4

Lesson Objective

This lesson allows students to experiment with creative writing using the voice of a character from the text they are studying. Students will have an opportunity to consider a point of view different from their own. This activity is designed to help students develop empathy with others and to think about another person's feelings and needs. Students will also practise the ELA skill of creative writing, either through poetry or journal writing.

 **Time** One or two 50 minute classes

✂ Materials

- Student Handout 1 "Common Figurative Expressions"
- Student Handout 2 "Writing in a Character's Voice"
- Student Handout 3 "Simple Poetry Forms"
- Teacher Resource 1 "Figurative Language"
- Teacher Resource 2 "Samples of Student Writing"

Getting Started

Knowledge Now

Distribute Student Handout 1. Invite students to fill in as many answers as they can on their own.

Engaging Interest

Go over the answers with the students. During this activity, ask the following questions:

1. Would a person new to Canada understand the meaning of these phrases? Why or why not?
2. Can you think of any other phrases you use among your peers that your parents or grandparents might have trouble understanding?

Learning Activities

Explain to students that today's lesson has two components: to examine some common forms of figurative language and to examine the concept of writer's voice. This will help prepare them for their own creative-writing task.

Use Teacher Resource 1 to go over the most common forms of figurative language: simile, metaphor and personification. Explain that writers often use figurative language to intensify their meaning or ideas. Figurative language is effective because it creates images in a reader's mind, or because a single phrase can communicate many ideas (for example, "He is a tiger on the basketball court"). Figurative language also contributes to a writer's voice.

Voice is the means through which the personality of the speaker or the author comes through in a piece of literature.

Assessment/Analysis

Read with students some poetic selections from a text you are currently using. Ask students to suggest answers to these questions about each poem:

1. What feelings of the writer come through in the poem?
2. What personality characteristics of the speaker are communicated through the poem?
3. Can you identify any figurative language used by the writer in this poem?

Suggested poems and texts:

"Woodtick," by Joy Kogawa—*Literary Experiences 1*

"Where Have You Gone," by Mari Evans—*Literary Experiences 1*

"I Grew Up," by Lenore Keeshig-Tobias—*Imprints 12*

"To You Who Would Wage War Against Me," by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm—*Viewpoints 12*

"Sometimes My Body Leaves Me," by Lorna Crozier—*Viewpoints 11*

Discuss how understanding a writer's voice can help us perceive things from that writer's point of view.

Application

Use the Cooperative Carousel Activity to generate ideas about different characters and their voices. You will need to have prepared large sheets of chart paper, with a different character's name from the text you are studying at the top of each sheet. Choose characters whose personalities are strongly portrayed in the text. Post these sheets around the room.

Divide the students into small groups, with each group beginning at a different sheet. At your signal, each group should think about the personality, feelings, needs and desires of the character listed on their sheet. They should then write down words, phrases or even images that help define the character.

At your signal, the groups move to the next sheet, where they can read what has already been written and add more ideas. Continue this process until the groups have all visited every sheet.

Students can use the ideas generated by this activity as they write their own poetry or journal entries.

Distribute Student Handout 2—Writing in a Character’s Voice. Remind students of the following:

1. Students will need to create a written response in **the voice of a character**.
2. Students should carefully consider the personality of the character they will be imitating. The ideas collected during the Carousel activity should help.
3. The response may be in the form of a journal entry or a poem. The assignment suggests three responses, either all in the same voice or using more than one character’s voice. You may adjust this requirement according to the needs of your classroom.
4. For students who would like to try writing poetry, Student Handout 2 has some examples of simple poetic forms.
5. Students will also engage in a meta cognitive activity as they answer the following questions: Why did you choose this character? What message or feeling did you want to communicate through your writing?

Teacher Resource 2 has examples of poetry written by students for this assignment and could be used to give students an idea of how the assignment may be addressed.

Activities for Extension and/or Integration

Students may want to add images to their writing or to display their journal entries and poetry for others to read.

The poem “Moose” from the ATA monograph *Education Is Our Buffalo* is an excellent example of a poem written in three voices—the jogger who “rescues” a baby moose, the narrator/poet who comments on the event, and the old Cree who cares for the animal. It also offers some thoughts on the Aboriginal experience in residential schools and may generate interesting discussion on point of view.

Learner Outcomes for Subject and Level

Senior High English Language Arts

- 2.1.2 construct meaning from text and context
 - understand and interpret content
- 2.2.1 understand and appreciate textual forms
 - Relate form, structure and medium to purpose, audience and content
- 2.2.2 relate elements, devices and techniques to created effects
- 5.2 work within a group
 - 5.2.1 cooperate with others and contribute to group processes

Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

Working cooperatively in groups

Respecting different points of view

Communicating thoughts and feelings

Teaching Strategies

	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
<p>Go to www.sacsc.ca Click on Resources, Strategies for strategy descriptions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperative carousel 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lecture

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literature 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Journaling ▪ Creative response 	

Supplementary Resources

- Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA). 2006. *Education Is Our Buffalo*. Edmonton, Alberta: ATA.
- Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett. 1996. *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Dramatists Play Service)
- Eric Walters. 1998. *War of the Eagles* (Orca Book Publishers)
- *Whale Rider*, (film)

Figurative Language

Figurative language is used by writers to add meaning to writing and to create powerful images. The following are three common types of figurative language:

Simile—A simile is a comparison between two things using the words *like* or *as*. For example:

The stars sparkled like diamonds in the wintry sky.

She is as cautious as a child taking his first steps.

Metaphor—A metaphor is a comparison that does not use the words *like* or *as*.

The night was a whisper of sounds.

She had a heart of stone.

Personification—Inanimate objects or concepts are given human qualities or actions.

The face of the moon gazed sternly back at me.

Her laughter trampled my feelings beneath its feet.

Teacher Resource 2

Samples of Student Writing

The following poems were written by students studying the play *The Diary of Anne Frank*
(Used with permission)

An acrostic poem on Anne, using the voice of her father:

A—Always inquiring, questioning, speaking
N—Not happy with her mother; not happy without me
N—Nazis have taken my child
E—Everywhere, there is only silence.

A free-verse poem, using the voice of Peter:

Untitled

Her diary. I wonder what could
Be her words of me in that secret little
Book she writes to every night. I wondered
And awed at the fact that it interested
Me to think about it.
I was anxious to see.
After being with Anne tonight,
She seems grown up. I think her brain
Has finally caught up to her.
Her lips, soft as pillows and her
Rosy red cheeks astonished my very
Perspective on a lady.
Maybe this war could be worse.
Maybe, just maybe.
I didn't sleep. I haven't for almost
Two whole sunrises. Love, it seems,
Has its effects. If not love, then
What? Friendship?
We'll see.

Common Figurative Expressions

For each of the figurative expressions below, write a literal explanation in the blank. The first has been done for you as an example:

1. It's been raining cats and dogs. **It's been raining a lot.**
2. I have to catch a few winks.
3. Could I take a rain check on that?
4. Just use a little elbow grease to clean that.
5. He makes me climb the wall.
6. That was a close call.
7. I hate people who just pass the buck.
8. I think I crashed and burned on that math test.
9. The new student teacher is hot!
10. You're going to drive me crazy!

What other expressions do you commonly use with friends that your parents, grandparents or a person new to Canada might not understand?

Student Handout 2

Writing in a Character's Voice

In this activity, you will have the chance to experiment with writing in the voice of a character from the literature we are studying. You will need to empathize with the character and to consider his or her personality, feelings and thoughts in order to write in the character's voice.

1. You will need to write up to three poems or three journal entries in the voice of one or more characters. All three pieces may be in the same voice, or you may choose to try using different voices.
2. Choose the character whose voice you wish to use. Brainstorm personality characteristics, experiences, needs and feelings associated with your character. You may use the information collected during the carousel to help you.
3. Your teacher has a handout on simple poetry forms that you may use to create your own poems.
4. Write a rough draft of your poem or journal entry. Share this first draft with a partner for feedback.
5. Try to use figurative language in your writing—simile, metaphor or personification. Remember to carefully select words, images and ideas that reflect your character's voice.
6. Write a final draft of your journal entries or poems and submit these to the teacher.

Simple Poetry Forms

Remember that, although these forms are simple, the ideas they express are not. Good poetry means selecting the best words and images to convey a message. The form need not be complicated.

Acrostic Poems

An acrostic poem uses each letter in a name or word to provide structure to the poem. The name or word is written vertically on the page, and the ideas are connected to the first letters. For example:

D—Drives his old red Chevy as if he is seventeen
A—Awkward around my friends
D—Do I think I will ever be as old as he seems?

Cinquain

A Cinquain is a five-line poem. (*Cinq* is five in French).
Each line of the poem has a specific number of syllables.
First line—2
Second line—4
Third line—6
Fourth line—8
Fifth line—2

School
A time to laugh
A time to learn and think
Not enough time to become me
Lost time

Diamante

This poem has the shape of a diamond because of the structure of each line. It is meant to show two contrasting ideas or characteristics. Note how the poem changes half-way through.

Summer
First line—the subject of the poem
Warm, Free
Second line—two words to describe the subject
Swimming, Biking, Golfing
Third line—three words that end in -ing
Relaxed, Unscheduled, Focused, Required
Fourth line—first two descriptive words about the subject; second two are opposite
Studying, Yawning, Learning
three words ending in -ing on the opposite topic

Cooler, Quieter
two descriptive words of the opposite topic
September
second topic—opposite of the first topic

Free Verse

This form of poetry does not require you to have any specific rhyme or rhythm in your poem. The poem achieves its meaning from a careful selection of words and images. The line lengths also help stress the meaning of the poem. You can decide where to begin and end a line without worrying about proper sentence structure.

Concrete or Shape Poetry

In this type of poem, the structure or shape of the poem also communicates a meaning. The poem may be in the shape of an object or symbol that has meaning for the character about which the poem is written.