

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site



On Site or Post-Visit Lesson: *Reflections on the Rock* Grades 9-12

Lesson Length

30 minutes

Common Core State Standards

Writing Standard

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3). CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA.Literacy-W.11-12.3



Speaking and Listening Standards

- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate (See grades 9-10 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations). CCSS.ELA.Literacy-SL.9-10.4
- Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate (See grades 11-12 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations). CCSS.ELA.Literacy-SL.11-12.4

Materials Needed

- Paper & Pencils
- Poems from *Honey and Salt* by Carl Sandburg (see attached)

Procedure

This lesson takes place on the rock behind the house.

Activating Strategy

Think-Pair-Share - Pose this question, “Why do you think that Carl Sandburg chose this place to pursue his writing?” Allow time for students to individually process their thinking in response to the question. Then ask students to discuss their answer with a partner.

Teaching Strategy

1. At the large rock outcrop located behind the house (This is a spot where Carl Sandburg often went to read, write and sit). Have a discussion as to why Sandburg might choose to come to this spot. Ask questions such as “Would this be an inspiring place?” “What are some themes that Sandburg might write about in this spot?”

2. Ask students to remember the pre-visit lesson completed in class. Discuss how Sandburg's writing was often inspired by events and things which were around him.
3. Read a couple of poems such as "Lesson", "Metamorphosis" & "Elm Buds" from the book *Honey and Salt* by Carl Sandburg. This book was written while living at Connemara and several of the poems have elements of nature.
4. Tell students that they will have a chance to write their own original poems while sitting on the same rock that Carl Sandburg did. Students may write any form of poetry however their poems must have a theme that is relevant and important to their life, current events and/or current surroundings.
5. Have students find their own spot on the rock (make sure they stay within your sight and within hearing distance). Remind students that this is a quiet activity and no talking should be heard.
6. Allow students 15 minutes to write, giving them a five minute "time's up" warning. If students have completed their poem before the 15 minutes they should remain where they are sitting in silence. When the 15 minute period has passed students should gather together once again. Students willing to share their poems should be encouraged to do so.

Summarizing Strategy

Quick Talk - Establish a specified time frame (1-2 minutes). Tell students to engage in a "quick talk" to a partner that summarizes their reflections on their writing.

Lesson

by Carl Sandburg

In early April trees
end their winter waiting
with a creep of green on branches.

In early October the trees
listen for a wind crying,
for leaves whirling.

The face of the river by night
holds a scatter of stars
and the silence of summer blossoms
falling to the moving water.

Come clean with a child heart.
Laugh as peaches in the summer wind.
Let rain on a house roof be a song.
Let the writing on your face
 be a smell of apple orchards in June.

Metamorphosis *by Carl Sandburg*

When water turns ice does it remember
one time it was water?

When ice turns back into water does it
remember it was ice?

Elm Buds

by Carl Sandburg

Elm buds are out.
Yesterday morning, last night,
 They crept out.
They are the mice of early
 spring air.

To the north is the gray sky.
Winter hung it gray for the gray
 elm to stand dark against.
Now the branches all end with the
 yellow and gold mice of early
 spring air.
They are moving mice creeping out
 With leaf and leaf.