

Poetry in the Nineteenth Century

2 DAYS

High School Language Arts

DESIRED RESULTS:

What are the “big ideas” that drive this lesson?

- Students can learn a great deal by comparing the writing styles and themes of authors from the same era.

What are the “essential questions” that students will need to answer in order to understand the “big ideas”?

- What comparisons can be made between Emily Dickinson and Emmeline Grangerford? How does Emily Dickinson compare to Mark Twain/Samuel Clemens?
- Why it is valuable to compare the themes and styles of two writers from the same era?

CORE UNDERSTANDINGS:

Students will need to know:

- The overall styles of Mark Twain and Emily Dickinson.
- How Huck feels about Emmeline Grangerford’s poetry and artwork and what these things say about her.
- The reasons why Huck feels the way that he does.

Students will be able to:

- Establish criteria that allows them to compare and contrast different writers.
- Evaluate how grief and empathy are expressed in Twain’s works.
- Understand how all of the above are helpful in analyzing the nature of major characters in Twain’s works.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENTS:

- Students will create a poem in the style of Dickinson/Emmeline as Huck might have written it, expressing grief about Buck’s senseless death. The poem must be reflective of Huck’s character and allude to Huck’s adventures and feelings as expressed in the novel.
- Students will draw a picture in the same style as Emmeline Grangerford’s art that shows grief over the loss of Buck. Alternative assignment: create a picture as Huck might, that reflects his losses.
- Alternatively, students can create their own form of individualized assessment, for which they can choose their own form of creative expression.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES:

1. Read some of Emily Dickinson’s poetry about death and have students compare her poems to Emmeline’s poem about Stephen Dowling Bots.
2. Have students get into groups and make Venn diagrams indicating similarities and differences between the poems of Emily Dickinson and Emmeline.

3. Discuss the allusion to Dickinson in *Huck Finn* and what Twain might have intended by it.
4. Through these tasks, students will draw comparisons between different poets of the same era.
5. Have students assume a character's perspective to complete a creative project and emulate a particular format of poetry or style of art.
6. In order to complete these activities students will need to know some background information on Emily Dickinson and Mark Twain as well as the major developments in *Huck Finn* leading up to the Grangerford chapters.

“COMMON CORE” CONNECTIONS:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4: Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6: Assess how point of view or purposes shapes the context and style of a text.

SUGGESTED LESSON EXTENSION:

- Compare the style and subject matter of these poets with major poets of the twentieth century: what similarities and differences can be found between them?