Homage to a Mockingbird: Poetry in Motion

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Abstract:

This curriculum unit will examine social injustice, social order and social responsibility in the context of Harper Lee’s classic novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and poetry. During this unit the goal of my teaching is that students will discover that learning is an active process that integrates many skills.

Making dialogue with the text will shed light on the novel’s historical background, the economic and social climate of the 1930’s, and the parallels between Harper Lee’s life and the life of Scout, the narrator. Conversely, this illumination will enable students to create meaningful poetry which celebrates conscience, collaboration, and courage as they write odes, haikus, sonnets, and found poems, etc., in response to themes and characters embedded in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Students will learn from this approach that poetry can have a social, cultural and propagandistic function as did their predecessors in The Harlem Renaissance and The Black Arts Movement.

Finally, students will make connections which deepen their understanding of their role in writing poetry of social protest and triumph for the next generation of *To Kill A Mockingbird* readers.