



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2005 Volume I: The Uses of Poetry in the Classroom

The Inspired Voice: Invoking Poetry through Music

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The *Inspired Voice: Invoking Poetry through Music* curriculum unit is designed to engage students by using music as an entry point for poetry. The unit also encourages students to discover and use their own creative voices as they begin to think about the sources of inspiration for others. The classroom activities solicit personal responses to music, explore music in the context of poetry, and provide a space for students to experiment and create. Students develop and practice skills as they identify literary elements, use details to speak about a work, and understand the historical engagement of poetry, music and the musical influences in poetry.

The unit is divided into seven sections: Silence, an exercise in recognizing voice; *The Good Song*, a close look at music; *Medium and Purpose*, an introduction to performance poetry; *Same Song, Different Medium*, an experiment with form; *A Survey of Voice: Harlem, Beat, Last Poets and Hip-Hop, and Slam*, an analysis of poetry and its musical influences throughout the eras; *A Battle of Voice: Harlem, Beat, Last Poets and Hip-Hop, and Slam*, a poetry competition; and *A Poetry Concert*, where students create and perform original work. The unit may be completed in about fifteen ninety-minute classes.

(Developed for Pre-AP English and Creative Writing, grades 9 and 12; recommended for English and Creative Writing, grades 9-12)

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