



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2017 Volume III: Poetry and Public Life

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## Poetry of Defiance-From the Progressive Era to Today

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In a music-obsessed generation, how do I make history fun and engaging and relevant? Tapping into their love of contemporary music, this unit is designed to help my students discover their voice in a world where they feel they have no voice.

During this unit students will read and analyze selected poems of the Progressive Era and compare it with contemporary music lyrics. This curriculum will provide a concise background of events leading up to the Progressive Era and examine poets from disenfranchised groups of the progressive era to provide a type of voice that is missing from the narrative of our history textbooks. Students will understand that African-Americans, women, and the urban poor—despite institutionalized oppression—found creative ways to speak out and protest, then as now, against the status quo.

My unit is written for 11<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History classes, but can be modified for A.P. U.S. History.

(Developed for United States History, grade 11; recommended for AP United States History, grade 11)

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