



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2024 Volume III: Poetry as Sound and Object

Captain Underpants, Poetry Outside the Box

Guide for Curriculum Unit 24.03.02, published September 2024
by Sharon Ponder

In the Yale National Initiative seminar on “Poetry as Sound and Object,” Dr. Feisal Mohamed offered us “ways to reduce the threshold of intimidation when teaching poetry by focusing on poems as an experience of sound and as fascinating material objects with ties to the visual arts.”

What defines poetry even more than its form is how it sounds. The way a poem marches from line to line or how onomatopoeia for instance can bring its subject to life is what makes a piece poetic. Two main texts that will be utilized in this unit are *Henry Box Brown* and *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*.

Currently in my performing arts classes my students come from Pre-kindergarten through eighth grades. I aim to grasp students' attention and advance their wonder, curiosity and interest with hopes of reading and performing arts becoming a passion. Although I utilize a variety of traditional scripts my primary and intermediate students tend to gravitate more towards graphic novels, comic books and improvisation.

Readers, Improv and poetic theater are an integrated approach for involving my students in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. In this unit my students will share relevant and culturally reflective literature, read aloud, write scripts and poetry, perform with a purpose and work collaboratively.

(Developed for Performing Arts, grades PreK-8; recommended for Performing Arts, grades PreK-8)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2024 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use