

Lesson Plan | Advice on Life - Teaching with poems

POEMS - Part I

LEAD-IN

Prepare some of those "postcards" we can easily find on every social media platform that have a nice picture and "life-meaning statement" on it.

Since my class and me have a group chat in a messenger we all use, I simply sent those three-four pictures to the chat and we looked at them on our phones.

Alternative 1: If you are lucky enough to have a whiteboard in your classroom, show the pictures to the class.

Alternative 2: Print them out several times on cardboard (or glue them onto it) and pass them around in class.

Start a short discussion:

- Do you agree with this resolution/advice?
- Do you think it is easy/hard to achieve?
- Would you pin it onto your fridge to follow this advice in 2017?

TRANSITION

I told the students that these resolutions and especially slogans are not that new, just the Social Media format, and that we can find these kind of advice on life throughout history. Not on social media, but in poems.

PRACTICE

Prepare about four short poems of which you also have an audio version – or can easily create it. In our English book (English G21 A5A, p. 107) there are some in the extra section, so I used them:

BREATHE (2 AM) BY ANNA NALICK

And 'cause you can't jump the track, we're like cars on a cable

And life's like an hourglass, glued to the table

No one can find the rewind button, girl

So cradle your head in your hands

And breathe, just breathe

Oh breathe, just breathe

Source: <http://www.songtexte.com/songtext/anna-nalick/breathe-2am-63b5c23f.html>



DREAMS BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Source: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/dreams-2/>

SOMEWHERE IN THE SKY BY LEO AYLEN

The lyrics can be found in Aylen's book "Rhyhoceros" or in English G21 A5A p. 107.

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIBwfa_GDp0

I MEANT TO WORK TODAY BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

I meant to do my work today –
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
And a butterfly flitted across the field,
And all the leaves were calling me.
And the wind went sighing over the land,
Tossing the grasses to and fro,
And a rainbow held out its shining hand –
So what could I do but laugh and go?

Source: http://www.yourdaily poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem_id=1151

- 1) (The students only see the titles of the poems, e.g. on the board):
Take notes on what you think the poem is about.
- 2) Compare your results with your neighbor:
- 3) Read the poems and discuss similarities/differences with your partner.
- 4) On your own: Choose one poem that fits best to your life. Explain its message and why you chose it. Use your phone as a dictionary.
- 5) Find a partner with the same person. Together, compare and discuss your results.
- 6) Find a suitable form of reading out the poem (loud, quiet, happy, sad, ...). Record your preferred style and send it to me.
One of your or both can read, you can add music, if you like, etc. It's up to you! But make sure you are allowed to use the music!

HOMEWORK: BRING HEADPHONES!



POEMS - Part II

LEAD IN

Go together with your partner from last lesson. Listen to your own recording again. Write down keywords to explain your choice of style.

PRACTICE 1

Prepare the audio files of the poems on a cloud drive (The students can listen to them but shouldn't be able to download them). Share the link.

I used the group chat for that again.

Alternative: Use bit.ly or tinyurl.com to create a very short link. Write that one on the board so that the students can open it in their browser on their phones.

Discuss what is similar/different, what you (don't) like. Take notes so that you can share your thoughts with the class.

EVALUATION

Share your results with the class. Which recording do you like better? Why?

Make sure to discuss the message of the poems. Be open to different ideas as long as your students have good arguments for it!

PRACTICE 2

Form a group with another pair who had a different poem.

Together, write your own poem about giving advice on life (≈ four lines).

Use one of your apps to create a "postcard" similar to those we had at the very beginning. Find a fitting picture and font style.

Send the picture to me and write your names only in the message.

⚠️ NO copyright infringement! Use your own ideas! Your postcard will be uploaded to our own Pinterest board!

VOLUNTARY HOMEWORK:

Create more poems using that app and send them to me for our Pinterest board.

You can have a look at our Pinterest board (work in progress!): <https://de.pinterest.com/tollerunterricht/englisch-9d-advice-on-life/>

