



Poetry Videos

OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will learn about the processes of media pre-production, production and post-production by planning, shooting and editing video projects based on poems. (This lesson may be adapted for classrooms without access to cameras and editing equipment by doing only the pre-production phase.)

GRADE LEVELS

9-12, but may also be adapted for younger grades

- Shoot and edit video using appropriate cinematic techniques such as lighting, framing, editing, music, and graphics to produce a specific mood or atmosphere.

TIME ALLOTMENT

1-4 weeks depending on length of class periods, and the number of cameras and editing stations available. Typical time frame would be 3 50-minute class periods for choosing poems and planning the video, 3 class periods for shooting, and 4 or more class periods for editing.

SUBJECT MATTER

This lesson includes instructional goals in English and Technology Applications.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- Identify the use of literary elements in poetry
- Create storyboards and shot lists as planning tools for video projects

STANDARDS

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)
(<http://www.state.tx.us/teks>)

§110.42-45. English I-IV, Grades 9-12.

(6) Reading/word identification/vocabulary development. The student uses a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words and to build vocabulary. The student is expected to:

- (A) expand vocabulary through wide reading, listening, and discussing;
- (B) rely on context to determine meanings of words and phrases such as figurative language, idioms, multiple meaning words, and technical vocabulary;
- (E) use reference material such as glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, and available technology to determine precise meanings and usage; and
- (F) identify the relation of word meanings in analogies, homonyms, synonyms/antonyms, and connotation/denotation.



(7) **Reading/comprehension.** The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies. The student is expected to:

- (A) establish a purpose for reading such as to discover, interpret, and enjoy;
- (B) draw upon his/her own background to provide connection to texts;
- (D) construct images such as graphic organizers based on text descriptions and text structures;

(8) **Reading/variety of texts.** The student reads extensively and intensively for different purposes in varied sources, including world literature. The student is expected to:

- (C) read world literature, including classic and contemporary works; and
- (D) interpret the possible influences of the historical context on a literary work.

(11) **Reading/literary concepts.** The student analyzes literary elements for their contributions to meaning in literary texts. The student is expected to:

- (A) recognize the theme (general observation about life or human nature) within a text;
- (B) analyze the relevance of setting and time frame to text's meaning;
- (C) analyze characters and identify time and point of view;
- (F) recognize and interpret important symbols;
- (G) recognize and interpret poetic elements like metaphor, simile, personification, and the effect of sound on meaning; and
- (H) understand literary forms and terms such as author, drama, biography, autobiography, myth, tall tale, dialogue, tragedy and comedy, structure in poetry, epic, ballad, protagonist, antagonist, paradox, analogy, dialect, and comic relief as appropriate to the selections being read.

(19) **Viewing/representing/interpretation.** The student understands and interprets visual representations. The student is expected to:

- (A) describe how meanings are communicated through elements of design, including shape, line, color, and texture;
- (B) analyze relationships, ideas, and cultures as represented in various media; and

(C) distinguish the purposes of various media forms such as informative texts, entertaining texts, and advertisements.

(21) **Viewing/representing/production.** The student produces visual representations that communicate with others. The student is expected to:

- (A) examine the effect of media on constructing his/her own perception of reality;
- (B) use a variety of forms and technologies such as videos, photographs, and web pages to communicate specific messages;
- (C) use a range of techniques to plan and create a media text and reflect critically on the work produced;
- (D) create media products to include a billboard, cereal box, short editorial, and a three- minute documentary or print ad to engage specific audiences; and
- (E) create, present, test, and revise a project and analyze a response, using data-gathering techniques such as questionnaires, group discussions, and feedback forms.

§126.27. Video Technology, Grades 9-12.

(1) **Foundations.** The student demonstrates knowledge and appropriate use of hardware components, software programs, and their connections. The student is expected to:

- (A) demonstrate knowledge and appropriate use of digital and analog video systems, software applications, and communication and networking components;
- (B) compare, contrast, and appropriately use the various input, processing, output, and primary/secondary storage devices;
- (C) make decisions regarding the selection, acquisition, and use of software taking under consideration its quality, appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency;
- (E) use vocabulary related to video technology.

(2) **Foundations.** The student uses data input skills appropriate to the task. The student is expected to:

- (B) demonstrate proficiency in the use of a variety of electronic input devices including



the keyboard, mouse, disk/disc, modem, scanner, voice/sound recorder, and digital video by incorporating such components into the video-related product.

(7) **Solving problems.** The student uses appropriate computer-based productivity tools to create and modify solutions to problems. The student is expected to:

(C) create video technology products for a variety of purposes and audiences; and

(8) **Solving problems.** The student uses research skills and electronic communication, with appropriate supervision, to create new knowledge. The student is expected to:

(E) demonstrate knowledge in composition including ratio of image to frame, position in frame, line of gaze, pan/tilts, movement, and perspective;

(F) demonstrate proficiency in basic camera techniques including zoom, focus, iris control, white balance, and filters;

(G) create visual communication by applying the strategies of script writing;

(H) engage in preproduction activities including storyboarding, script writing, production, contracting, and scheduling;

(I) utilize lighting techniques including key, fill, and backlight, using incident/reflected light, color temperatures, and filter use;

(J) use audio techniques, including microphone variances and audio mixers, and edit and integrate digital sounds;

(K) participate in different roles and jobs of a production crew including executive producer, producer, director, engineer, script writer, editor, camera person, presenters, and audio technicians;

(L) apply appropriate post production techniques including editing and creating control and/or time coded tracks, transitions, audio levels, background music, and special sound effects;

(N) use character generators, fonts, colors, and principles of compositions to create graphic images;

(O) create captions and/or titles for video and graphics;

(P) use different compression techniques, and/or programs; and

(9) **Solving problems.** The student uses technology applications to facilitate evaluation of work, both process and product. The student is expected to:

(B) seek and respond to advice from peers and professionals in delineating technological tasks;

(C) create technology specifications for tasks and evaluation rubrics;

(E) monitor process and product quality using established criteria.

(10) **Communication.** The student formats digital information for appropriate and effective communication. The student is expected to:

(A) use font attributes and color to ensure that products are appropriate for the defined audience and communication purpose;

(B) use white space and graphics to ensure that products are appropriate for the defined audience and communication purpose;

(C) use camera perspective to ensure that products are appropriate for the defined audience and communication purpose; and

(D) use content selection and presentation to ensure that products are appropriate for the defined audience and communication purpose.

(11) **Communication.** The student delivers the product electronically in a variety of media, with appropriate supervision. The student is expected to:

(B) publish information in saved files, Internet documents, CD-ROM discs, or video.

(12) **Communication.** The student uses technology applications to facilitate evaluation of communication, both process and product. The student is expected to:

(A) evaluate the project for design, content delivery, purpose, and audience using established criteria;

(B) seek and respond to advice from peers and professionals in evaluating the product; and

(C) research the best method of distribution, number of copies of finished product, and appropriate method for promoting product.



MEDIA COMPONENTS

WEBSITES AND VIDEOS

My classroom website is

<http://www.nisd.net/communicationsarts/VideoTechnology>.

There you can watch my students' projects, and find handouts at the "Calendar/Handouts" link

MUSIC VIDEOS

- In addition to asking your students to bring **music videos** to class, get some older ones if you can so that the students will disconnect slightly from the music; <http://www.MTV.com> still has some excerpt clips.
- **Palm Pictures** (<http://www.palmpictures.com/index.html>) has collections of superb music videos by Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze, and Chris Cunningham that you can get on DVD (I have rented them from Netflix)

EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

- **Older experimental films** such as Maya Deren's "Meshes of the Afternoon," Luis Bunuel's "Un Chien Andalou," Robert Frank's "Frank Film" are all available on Amazon.com, but I get them from my local public library.
- **Canyon Cinema** is a San Francisco-based source for rental and purchase of independent experimental films since the 1950s: <http://www.canyoncinema.com/contents.html>.
- **Video Data Bank** is an excellent resource for videotapes by and about contemporary artists for rental or purchase, and the site also includes numerous short **viewable video clips** of the films in QT format. <http://www.vdb.org/>.
- **Post Video Art** has short films available to download and watch, but you have to be willing to devote some time to sifting

through the vast amount of content.

<http://www.post-videoart.com/>.

- **Underground Film.org** is a non-profit website distributing digital films: Their mission is to "create a digital film library with the widest breadth of content possible; broaden exposure by making hard-to-find works available through Internet distribution." <http://www.undergroundfilm.org/>.
- **The Internet Archive:** hundreds of open source video and images (<http://www.archive.org>), along with hosting services. (The Prelinger Archive has moved here.)

POETRY VIDEOS

- <http://video.e-poets.net/>. **The Videotheque** is e-poets' collection of poems that move, speak, and paint images in time; curated by Kurt Heintz, Director of Chicago's Guild Complex Poetry Film festival.
- <http://www.gerardwozek.com/video.htm> has some very inspiring descriptions of poetry videos by **Gerard Wozek**.
- **Museum of American Poetics** <http://www.poetspath.com/> features "an array of multimedia investigations that trace the finest in American poetics."
- **Poems That Go** <http://www.poemsthatgo.com/index.htm> is multimedia-enhanced poetry; awesome!
- Two PBS poetry series have excellent websites:
United States of Poetry <http://www.worldofpoetry.org/usop/>
Voices and Visions <http://www.learner.org/catalog/extras/vvspot/>

STORYBOARDS

- <http://www.thestoryboardartist.com/moviethumbpage.html> and
- http://www.sbdoc.com/Home_main.html are storyboard artists' pages with great examples.



- Adobe Educational has an excellent lesson plan for teaching about storyboards:
<http://www.adobe.com/education/digkids/lessons/storyboards.html>

FLEXIBLE COPYRIGHTS

Creative Commons

<http://creativecommons.org/> is a terrific non-profit organization that celebrates the concept of sharing. It is an invaluable resource for teachers and students who use media, with downloadable files, opportunities for publishing, lesson plans, and more.

SOFTWARE

Deciding which video editing software to use is not easy. There is a huge range available, from under \$100 to over \$1000. Good editing software is expensive and often requires a high-priced computer to run effectively, but you can achieve reasonable results with software costing less than \$100 on a “regular” classroom computer.

More than \$500

Apple Final Cut Pro (Macintosh)

<http://www.apple.com/finalcutstudio/finalcutpro/>

Adobe Premiere (PC)

<http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere/main.html>

\$200-\$500

Apple Final Cut Express HD (Macintosh)

<http://www.apple.com/finalcutexpress/>

Under \$100

Ulead Video Studio (PC)

<http://www.ulead.com/vs/runme.htm>

Free Download

Windows Movie Maker (PC)

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.mspx>

MATERIALS

You will need the following to complete these activities:

PER COOPERATIVE GROUP

Storyboard forms, poems, “Analyzing Your Poem” handout; Peer Feedback rubrics

Ideal situation: video camera, videotape, microphones, access to video editing software

PREP FOR TEACHERS

- Collect a wide variety of poetry for students to select from
- Collect examples of music videos, commercials and short experimental films to inspire students. (If you ask students to bring in examples, be sure to preview them first!)

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: SETTING THE STAGE

Show examples of creative music videos, artfully made commercials, short experimental films and poetry-based multimedia (see “Media Components” section above for examples). Discuss the various techniques and approaches used.

Discuss the relationship between a music video and the song on which it is based. Ask students to consider: what is the function of a music video? What does it do for the song? For the performer? For the record company?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Poetry Video Pre-Production

Divide class into groups of 4-5 students (depending on number of cameras and editing stations available.) Each group will choose a



poem. Complete the Poetry Video Pre-Production Handout and Analyzing Your Poem Handout (in Appendix). Create a storyboard to illustrate the shots to be used in the video interpretation of the poem. Plan a schedule for shooting.

2. Poetry Video Production

Use video cameras to shoot the video as planned in the storyboard.

3. Poetry Video Post-Production

Use editing software to capture and edit the video footage. Add appropriate text, graphics narration, music and sound effects.

When rough cuts are complete, groups will view each others' projects and complete the Peer Feedback rubric. Groups will finalize editing based on feedback.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY

CLASSROOM FILM FESTIVAL

Entire class will view and critique poetry videos together. Encourage students to comment on the criteria on the Rubric.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

TECHNOLOGY

- Publish poetry videos on the Web
- Make DVDs and CD-ROMs for distribution

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Seek out distribution opportunities for the poetry videos: a school film festival, Internet publishing, local and national video contests and festivals



APPENDIX A: Poetry Video Project: Pre-Production

Your assignment is to make a 2-4 minute video based on a poem, in the same way that a music video is based on a song. You can take many different approaches to this project, such as:

- a literal interpretation of the poem
- a story inspired by the poem
- a performance of a reading of the poem
- an abstract experimental piece inspired by or accompanying the poem

You may use an existing poem by an established poet, or an original one that you have written. The poem itself can be read on the audio track, and/or appear in superimposed text, or merely be referenced as inspiration in the credits.

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1. **Find** a poem (turn in a copy with this page). The poem for this project will become the “script” for your project.
 2. **Analyze** the poem according to the guidelines on the back of this page.
 3. **Brainstorm** the shots or images that will become your video. Brainstorm ideas for audio, and plan how you will acquire sounds you will need, such as music, voiceover narration, and/or sound effects. You may not use any copyrighted music for this project. Your music options include: compose your music in Apple Soundtrack; find original music by local performers; look at websites such as Creative Commons for music that has “flexible copyrights” for sharing.
 4. Complete a detailed **storyboard** (complete with labels for types of shots such as ECU, LS, etc.), shot list broken down by locations, and shooting schedule.
 5. **All Pre-Production materials must be completed and approved before shooting may begin.**

Group members:

Poem Title: _____ (please attach a copy)

Author: _____

Pitch your idea to me: briefly explain the approach you will take in translating this poem to video, including a description of the images and sound and how they relate to the poem:

Explain how the text of the poem will be included in the video (spoken, visible text, other):



APPENDIX B: Analyzing Your Poem

As a group, apply these guidelines to your poem to be sure you understand it fully before you start brainstorming ideas for your video. Scribble lots of notes on scratch paper as you answer these questions:

1. What is the **dramatic situation**? Who is the speaker (or speakers)? Is the speaker a male or female? When and where does this poem take place? What happens in the poem? If it is a series of events, be sure you understand their sequence from stanza to stanza. Does the poem follow a chronological order? Are there flashbacks? Is there foreshadowing? Distinguish the order of the plot from the order of the poem.
2. What is the **structure** of the poem? What are the parts of the poem and how are they related to each other? What gives the poem its coherence? What are the structural divisions of the poem? (Look at punctuation to get clues about structure) Does the poem use an established form such as sonnet, haiku, sestina, villanelle?
3. What is the **theme** of the poem? What point is the poet trying to make?
4. Are the **grammar and meaning** clear? Use a dictionary and make sure you understand all the words in the poem, especially words you which don't seem to fit in the context of the poem. Also make sure you understand the grammar of the poem; poetry often uses variations on conventional grammar for effect.
5. What **images and figures of speech** are used? What are the similes and metaphors of the poem? In each, exactly what is compared to what? What sensual images--of sight, smell, touch, taste, sound—are evoked in the poem?
6. What is the **tone** of the poem? (The mood or atmosphere of a work, manner of speaking, a tone of voice, the inferred attitude of the poet. If the poet's attitude is different from the speaker's, then there is probably some irony in the poem.) Does the tone change within the poem? Who is the speaker's implied audience? What is his or her attitude toward the audience?
7. What **figurative literary devices** does the poem use (in which the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning)? As you know from English class, there are many, but start with metaphor, simile, personification, irony, oxymoron, hyperbole.
8. Read the poem out loud and **listen** for the **rhythm and intonation**. Look at the poem on the page and notice the white space, which indicates silence between the words. Is there a pattern to the silences? Listen for sound effects in the poem--alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia.

NOW look at your notes and find ways that your answers to these questions can be translated into audio and video. Draw diagrams, sketches, make more notes. Include all of these notes pages with your Pre-Production materials to be graded.



APPENDIX C: Poetry Project Peer Feedback

Watch the project **twice**: once to get an overview of the video, and a second time to provide constructive criticism. The goal of this peer review is to improve your classmates' projects by pointing out strengths and weaknesses that may not be apparent to them.

CRITERIA	Strong	OK, but could be improved	Weak	COMMENTS/EXPLANATIONS
Video Are a variety of different shots and camera angles used?				
Are shots and camera movements carefully done?				
Are all shots properly focused, with good composition and exposure?				
Audio If voices are part of the soundtrack, can you understand what they are saying?				
Is music (if used) appropriate for the style and tone of the poem? Does it fit well with the other audio that is used? Does it enhance the video?				
Suggestions for audio that could be added or used differently, such as sound effects, music or voices:				
Editing Do the lengths of shots and the pacing of the editing fit the style and tone of the project?				
Are transitions, video filters, and superimposed video used in a creative way to enhance the project?				
Is the text easy to read (consider font, size, color, duration, placement)? Does the text enhance the project?				
Suggestions for other ways that transitions, filters or superimposition could be used:				
Paraphrase the theme of the video in one or two sentences.				
Describe the tone of this project (serious, humorous, thoughtful, mysterious, creepy, etc.)				



<p>Is the tone consistent? If not, point out where it is not and what could be done to fix it.</p>	
<p>Describe any parts of the video that were confusing or unclear to you. What could be done to fix it?</p>	
<p>What parts of the video are the most vivid and interesting for you?</p>	
<p>What questions did you have when you finished watching the video?</p>	
<p>Describe anything else you might have done differently if this was your project.</p>	
<p>Your honest, anonymous opinion of the video:</p>	



Appendix D: Poetry Video Project: Grading Rubric

CRITERIA	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	UNACCEPTABLE
<p>Production: Technical Competence—Are a variety of different shots and camera angles used? Are shots and camera movements carefully done? Are all shots properly focused? Did you pay attention to composition and exposure? Is the audio recorded so that it is of good quality and easy to understand?</p> <p>Points _____/40</p>	<p>Yes, <i>plus</i> creative use of the camera and exemplary attention to focus, composition, exposure; excellent audio quality</p>	<p>Yes, some variety of shots; most shots in focus with good composition and exposure; adequate audio quality</p>	<p>Little or no attention was paid to proper use of the camera; some shots are out of focus, camera movements are careless, AND/OR little attention to composition and exposure; AND/OR poor audio quality</p>
	40.....37	36.....33	32.....
<p>Post-production: Editing —Does the style of the editing enhance the meaning and imagery of the poem? Are edits performed cleanly and purposefully? Does the music enhance the video? Is audio used effectively? Is the video within the 2-4 minute time limit? Does the video include: superimposed video tracks, text, appropriate transitions, and video filters?</p> <p>Points _____/40</p>	<p>Yes, <i>plus</i> very creative use of the features of the editing program</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Sloppy editing; AND/OR project is too long or too short; AND/OR project does not include required elements</p>
	40.....37	36.....33	32.....
<p>Professionalism —Did your group manage their time well? Did they stay on task while working on the project even without supervision from the teacher? Did they make this project a group effort? Did they finish on time? Did they use their “downtime” wisely?</p> <p>Points _____/20</p>	<p>Yes, <i>plus</i> EXTRA effort and initiative was made to get the project done</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Time was managed poorly, the group did not stay on task, AND/OR downtime was used badly</p>
	20.....19	18.....17	16.....