

STUDENT TASK

Poetry and Storytelling Café

Grade Level 3-5 **Do Something**

Handout: Do Something Student Planning Guide , Progress Monitoring Worksheet, Assessing Your School & Community

Rubric: Poetry and Story Telling Rubric

Web Version: <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/student-tasks/do-something/poetry-and-storytelling-cafe>

What?

Students write and share original poems and stories about community issues or themes present in the central text.

Estimated time

One week

Why?

Setting up a café is exciting for students and helps build community. Poetry is an accessible and personal genre through which to express ideas and feelings. Oral storytelling brings history and culture to the communication process. This task encourages classroom communities to come together and share writing in a safe, supportive and inspiring space.

How?

GET READY

1. Review or explore elements of both storytelling and poetry.
2. Select and read various poems and stories together as a class.
3. Assess student interest in artistic modes of expression. Students may work together individually or in partnerships or small groups depending on their preferred medium.
4. Make note of literary devices and strategies used to convey ideas and feelings such as:

- Descriptive language to help the reader or listener visualize the feeling or message
- Repetition for emphasis
- Comparisons such as similes and metaphors
- Alliteration

GET SET

1. Introduce students to the Do Something Student Planning Guide. Instruct them in mapping the steps necessary to complete poems and stories.
2. Share the sample rubric or adapt it into a checklist for students. Refer to the rubric to define expectations.
3. As a class, generate topics that connect to central text themes.
4. Show students video clips of poetry and storytelling performances.
5. Help students decide whether to write a poem or an original story (fiction or creative nonfiction).
6. Students will work individually on writing but can work with partners to peer review each other's work.
7. Have students practice telling their stories or reciting their poems aloud.
8. Ask students to provide feedback to each other related to performance elements such as eye contact, expression, delivery clarity and volume.

GO!

1. Students finalize their poems and stories and prepare to perform in the cafe showcase.
2. Decide location for the cafe based on your school community, resources and schedule. If possible, invite families, other grades and community members.
3. Think about creative ways to transform space into the cafe.
 - Consider mood lighting, tablecloths, flowers for decoration, etc.
 - Consider serving snacks or beverages.
 - Students can help with set up and decorations.
 - Students should be encouraged to show support for each performer.
4. Throughout the showcase, tie poems and stories back the literacy work being done in class, the central texts and the overall social justice themes.
5. Take photographs of the cafe event and use them in a digital or paper scrapbook that celebrates the event.

Reflect

Students can journal about how their poems and stories reflected central text themes. Some suggested reflection questions include:

- What topic or theme from the central text was included in your poem or story?

- What important message did your poem or story express to your audience?
- How can poems or stories be a form of social action?

English language learners

The heavy language focus of this task can be challenging for students learning English, so be sure to check in and scaffold the experience throughout. Graphic organizers can help with the poetry or story-writing process. This project engages linguistic and intra-personal learning modalities throughout the writing process, and the inter-personal modality during the performances.

Connection to anti-bias education

Poetry and storytelling are personal, expressive forms of writing that help students develop their voices and convey thoughts, feelings and understandings related to social justice topics. By hearing multiple performances, students can learn from and appreciate other perspectives, a foundational element of anti-bias curriculum.



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