

To Whom Are We Speaking With

Age Group:, undergraduate, graduate, community audience

Materials: The Pact, Jennifer Militello , writing materials, one completed poem draft

Medium: in person or virtual

Time: 45 - 65 minutes

Lesson Overview: through reading, discussion and exploration, this lesson offers an opportunity for students to examine the idea of audience and ways of handling addresses in poems.

The Lesson

Opening Discussion:

From your writing/reading experience who can a poem address?

How can a poem address multiple audiences at once?

What are ways of handling addresses in poems (think “you”, names etc.)

Read and Discuss

Chemistry 28 + A City Mapped Out in Conversation 71

Discussion:

Although this poem is absent of a direct address/you how does this poem handle it's address?

Who is the poem addressing? How do we know?

What is the affect of having a lack of “you”/direct address?

Jobs Comfort 43

Who could this poem be addressing?

What is the affect of having a non-defined “you” in this poem?

Read and Discuss: Direct Address

The Pact 50, Dear His 53, Sibling Frankenstein 17

Discussion

Who are these poems addressing?

What craft choices do the poems use to clarify their addresses (who they are speaking to)?

What is the affect of having a direct address? Compare it to the previous poems (without or with an ambiguous “you”

Writing

With your poem draft complete the following writing activity

1. Read your poems: who was this original poem addressing?
2. Re-draft the poem so it specifically/directly addresses its intended audience? (Think: title, surrounding images etc.)
3. Return to the original draft: redraft the poem to address both the intended audience and the reader (think: “you” address, expanding to a central “truth” in the content etc.

End Discussion:

In what ways did you change your poem to great a direct address?

How did this tonally change the poem? Did you change any content of the poem? If so, why?

How did your poem change to address the reader?

What effects did this have on the your reading of the poem?

Critical/Research & Creative Writing Assignment

The Pact is filled with poems about familial relationships both speaker and parent and speaker and sibling. This creative assignment will allow us to blend the world of research and creative work and create both a cri and creative writing work

A. Opening Work

1. Read: pages 11-18 of The Pact (on sibling relationships) and 41-42, 51-52, 57-59 (on mother daughter relationships)
2. Write down notes on craft choices the poems make to handle the address. Think title, details, addresses, etc.
3. Write down notes on “what we know” about the relationships after reading the poems (aim for at least 5 details for each.

B. Research Work

1. Begin research on a sibling relationship or parental relationship: this can be from a fictional story, history, celebrity etc.
2. List the people and what the nature of their relationship is.
3. Create a list of facts about this relationship: things to consider include would be historical details, tonal standing (good/bad/otherwise), key events, any quotes etc. This should be around 10 different details

Creative Assignment

Using your research and reading from parts A + B select one of the people from the relationship and create a persona poem about the relationship in the voice of said person. Be sure to include the following

1. At least 5 details from your research
2. Look back at your notes from reading The Pact and implement at least 2 different ways of handling the craft elements of writing a poem about a relationship.
3. Re-write the poem from the other voice.
4. Include at least 3 of the same details from 1-3 but from this voice’s perspective

Reflection/Critical Writing Assignment

On Research

Describe the nature of the relationship you chose to research? Create a (cited) 3rd person narrative of their history together. Include key events and the central emotional core of the relationship. Be sure to include at least 5 different key events.

On Writing

In what ways was your poem in conversation with 'The Pact'? Find at least 2 direct quotes from 'The Pact' that display craft elements you used in your poem. How did you go about selecting which details to select for your poem? Describe the experience of writing from both perspectives? In what ways did your poem change in the new voice? What does this work have to do about the idea of "different truths"?