WELCOME!
Teaching with Primary Sources across Tennessee, administered by the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, engages learners of all ages in using primary sources to explore major issues and questions in many different disciplines.
Contact: Stacey Graham or Kira Duke at (615) 898-2947 or www.mtsu.edu/tps

NEWS

- Interested in learning more about Tennessee's role in the War of 1812? If so, join us for a special teacher workshop on Friday, March 22, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville. This workshop is being held in conjunction with the War of 1812 Symposium, which is taking place on Saturday, March 23.
- For those of you in west Tennessee, we will be offering a full-day workshop on Friday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the University of Memphis exploring how using primary sources can help you meet common core standards in the classroom. This workshop is ideal for English/Language Arts and Social Studies teachers as well as librarians. To register, email Kira Duke.

“AWESOME” SOURCE OF THE MONTH:

[Hanging poems on a cherry tree] [1741; detail] by Toyonobu Ishikawa (1711-1785)
Why might someone hang poetry in a cherry tree? Where would you display and share your poetry?

THEME: POETRY

Few things capture the art and beauty of words like poems. Poems are among the first types of writing that children learn to read. Many people carry that early love of poetry into their adulthoods. Think of the last time you read a poem for pleasure. How long ago was it? What did the poem make you feel and think?

Primary sources on the topic of poetry can include manuscripts of poems, notes from poets, illustrations of poetry’s influence in society, and more. You don’t have to be an English/Language Arts teacher to use poetry in your classroom. Poetry touches on other subjects when it involves the historical background of the poet or events depicted, foreign languages used or alluded to, the influence of religion, the relationship of poetry with music and lyrics, etc. For inspiration, explore the poetry resources at the Library of Congress, starting at the Library’s Poetry & Literature page, as well as at any of the links on p. 2 of this issue.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 22 & 23—(Knoxville) “Exploring Tennessee’s Presidents with the Library of Congress” Workshop, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST at East Tennessee History Center in Knoxville. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
- March 1—(Hermitage) “Exploring the Legacy of President Andrew Jackson” Workshop with The Hermitage from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.
- March 8—(Franklin) "Integrating Primary Sources with Books and Film" and "Library of Congress Resources to Support Common Core," Tennessee Council for the Social Studies conference. Session times TBA.
- March 11—(Memphis) “Introduction to Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee” Workshop, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at University of Memphis. Email Kira Duke to register.
- March 22—(Franklin) “From the Web to the Exhibit Wall: Telling Your Stories through Library of Congress Primary Sources,” Tennessee Association of Museums conference. Time TBA.
LESSON IDEA—RHYME WITH MOTHER GOOSE

Rhymes make poems easier to remember and more enjoyable to read out loud. It’s no surprise that most of the poetry that younger readers encounter follow strict schemes of rhyme and meter. Use the simple poems of Mother Goose to teach your students about rhyming schemes. The Classic Books section of the Library of Congress’s Read.gov Web site contains a collection of poems illustrated in 1901, called “Denslow’s Mother Goose.” You can choose whichever poems you prefer, but we suggest these six as a good selection: 1) Baa baa black sheep, 2) There was an old woman who lived in a shoe, 3) The Queen of Hearts, 4) Simple Simon, 5) Jack and Jill and 6) Hey diddle diddle. [Warning: some of the material in other poems in this book will be considered offensive today.]

Divide the class into six groups, and assign a poem to each group. Determine which lines rhyme, and how different rhyming schemes change the way you read or listen to poems.

Each poem of the six has a rhyming scheme that matches one other poem, so you can also have the groups pair up accordingly to compare/contrast their “matching” poems. Students can also make up their own poems according to their group’s rhyming scheme.

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet Common Core State Standards for grades K-2 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Literature and Reading: Foundational Skills).

LESSON IDEA—POETRY AND POLITICS

Edna St. Vincent Millay was one of the most popular poets of the twentieth century. She established her reputation with the poem “Renascence” in 1912, when she was just twenty years old. In 1923, she became the third woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. Her poems were often published in newspapers across the country, and sometimes addressed current issues. Though Millay had written an anti-war play in 1919, by 1940 she strongly supported American involvement in World War II to the point that her 1940 collection, Make Bright The Arrows, created controversy among her literary colleagues.

On June 14, 1940, the New York Times and several other newspapers published Millay’s poem “There are no islands any more.” The poem was quickly popularized by other war supporters. Among these was the British War Relief Society, which Millay allowed to publish the poem as a broadside: There are no islands any more. Lines written in passion and in deep concern for England, France and my own country. . . .

Lead a discussion with students about the United States’ level of involvement in World War II in 1940 and 1941. Assign students the poem to analyze as homework. Students should come to class prepared to discuss how Millay addresses the issue of American support for the war. What is Millay’s argument? Do they think the poem would have been effective at convincing Americans to support the U.S. entry into the war? Can your students think of any current writers or celebrities who have created controversy by speaking out on political issues?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet curriculum standards for high school U.S. History (Era 8) (Standard 5.0: History and Standard 6.0: Individuals, Groups, and Interactions) and Common Core State Standards for grades 9-10 and 11-12 ELA-Literacy (Reading: Literature).
Lesson Idea—Poetry of War’s Survivors

Lyrical Legacy: 400 Years of Songs and Poetry is designed to facilitate the analysis of poems and songs within the classroom. The site divides American history into nine chronological periods, each of which features a song and a poem. The poems included for “The New Nation: 1783-1815” and “Postwar United States: 1945-1968” were written by veterans. An anonymous former soldier wrote about his experiences in the Revolutionary War, while Archibald MacLeish, a veteran of World War I who became the Librarian of Congress, wrote about the legacies of soldiers during World War II.

Divide students into small groups. Give each group a copy of “Lines written by a Revolutionary Soldier” (undated) and “The Young Dead Soldiers Do Not Speak” (1941). Ask the students to first read the poem by the Revolutionary War veteran. Then, ask each group to brainstorm about the following questions: “What is the overall message of the poem?” “Why do you think the veteran wrote the poem?” and “Does the poem change how you think about the Revolutionary War?”

Next, ask the students to read MacLeish’s poem. Ask each group to discuss these questions: “What themes in this poem are similar to the Revolutionary War poem?” “How is this poem different, both in content and style, from the other poem?” and “How do both poets use language to honor the nation’s soldiers?” Finally, review all of the questions as a class and ask students why veterans might choose to use poetry to describe their experiences.

This idea can be adapted to meet state curriculum standards for high school English Language Arts (Standard 8: Literature) and Common Core State Standards for grades 9-12 ELA/Literacy (Reading: Literature).

Featured Feature—Found Poetry Activities

The Library of Congress Teacher’s Page offers multiple resources exploring how you can use primary sources in found poetry activities. What exactly is found poetry? Found poetry challenges students to read and analyze primary sources; then use those sources to retell a historic event in poetic form. These are great activities for English/Language Arts teachers looking for ways to work in more informational text to meet the new common core standards.

The Library of Congress offers a primary source set and a lesson plan to get you started. In the Found Poetry primary source set, you will find a wide selection of primary sources, including sources related to Langston Hughes, Alice Paul, Walt Whitman, and many others to help your students get started. Be sure to check out the teacher’s guide for tips on beginning a found poetry activity. The Found Poetry with Primary Sources: The Great Depression lesson plan is designed for middle and high school students. This lesson plan utilizes the American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1940 collection. Students are challenged to explore this collection and create poetry based on what they have learned about the life experiences of individuals during the Great Depression.
What Burns said [in] 1782 holds good in 1915. Take his tip / printed by David Allen & Sons Ld., Harrow, Middlesex. [1915]

Who is Burns? How do you interpret this verse? What is the tip that you should follow? Do you think people might have been persuaded by this poster? Can you think of other examples of poetry being used in persuasive marketing?

"Autumn," poem by Helen Keller, 27 October 1893. [detail]

A young Helen Keller wrote this poem for her mentor, Alexander Graham Bell, who had recommended her to her teacher Anne Sullivan only six years before. How do the words and imagery in the poem invoke the five senses? How does it change how you read the poem to know that the author was both deaf and blind from a very early age? How do you suppose people with disabilities experience poetry differently?

Drafts of Langston Hughes's poem "Ballad of Booker T.,” 30 May-1 June 1941. (Langston Hughes Collection) [detail]

Renowned poet Langston Hughes (1902-1967), an African American, typed at least four versions of his poem “Ballad of Booker T.,” before he was satisfied with it. What changes to the first draft of the poem are visible above? What suggests that he edited as he typed and then made additional changes afterward? Click here for the final version.

The President's assassination [n.d; detail]

The Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana includes several poems and song sheets printed in response to Lincoln’s assassination. (Search the collection for “poem.”) Why would a poem have been considered an appropriate way to mourn Lincoln? Who do you think read these poems and sang these songs and why? Do we still remember significant figures in this way today?