

Palestinian Poetry Reading Activity

GRADES 3-5

(Poetry Reading Activity)

Number of lessons per week - 2-3

[Feel free to pick and choose activities that are appropriate for your class and/or give some as homework]

Treasured Memories

(Inspired by the poetry of Mosab Abu Toha)

In each room, dim the light's soft glow,
In the inner hallway, where shadows slow.
Away from windows, I find my retreat,
No haven of calm, in my mind worries compete.

Forget the stove, the scent of food is just a dream
A bottle of water, to cool the children's fears,
An embroidered handkerchief to wipe away their tears

Late grandparents' photos, in tender embrace,
Money and ID cards of the family whose lives have passed
A wedding invitation, memories time can't erase.
Tiny toys within a child's backpack stuffed
Nestled under my arm, a comforting weight

My pockets with treasure and purpose, filled,
Handful of soil in one, strawberry seeds in the other
I hold on tight to life's little joys, I hold on tight to sweet strong faith.
For the age on my last birthday might be the last of the years I have.

Lesson Plan:

Activity: Treasure Pockets

Objective: To inspire creativity and reflection while creating a tangible representation of personal memories. This activity fosters reflection and emotional expression, offering students a meaningful way to connect through poetry and personal experiences.

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Materials:

1. Construction paper or cardboard
2. Markers, coloured pencils, or crayons
3. Glue or tape
4. Small fabric squares or handkerchiefs
5. Small toys or trinkets
6. Small envelope or pouch
7. Seeds (e.g., strawberry seeds)
8. Small container of soil
9. Blank index cards or paper

Instructions:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by reading the poem together, and discussing its emotions and imagery. Ask students how the words made them feel and if they can visualize the scenes described.

2. Discussion (15 minutes):

Engage students in a conversation about the importance of memories and cherished items. Share examples from your own life, emphasizing the sentimental value of objects tied to family, birthdays, and special moments.

3. Brainstorming (10 minutes):

Encourage students to brainstorm personal items or memories they would want to keep close to them in a challenging situation. Discuss the significance of each choice.

4. Creation (30 minutes):

Provide each student with construction paper or cardboard. Instruct them to create a "Memory Pocket" by decorating and folding the paper into a pouch-like shape.

5. Personalizing (15 minutes):

Inside the pocket, students can add:

- Drawings or pictures representing memories (late grandparents, family events).
- Small toys or trinkets with sentimental value.
- A small envelope containing pretend money and a homemade ID card.
- A tiny fabric square or handkerchief for wiping tears.

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6. Nature Connection (15 minutes):

Discuss the symbolism of planting seeds in challenging times. Provide each student with a small container of soil and strawberry seeds. Have them plant the seeds in one pocket and the soil in another.

7. Writing Activity (20 minutes):

Ask students to write or draw on index cards about:

- A joyous moment from their last birthday or special occasion.
- Something they're grateful for.
- A positive affirmation or comforting thought.

8. Reflection (10 minutes):

Conclude the activity by having each student share one item they included in their Memory Pocket and explain its significance. Discuss how these tangible representations of memories can provide comfort and strength during difficult times.

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Things you may find hidden in my ear

by Musab Abu Toha

When you open my ear, touch it gently.
my mother's voice lingers somewhere inside.
Her voice is the echo that helps recover my equilibrium
when I feel dizzy during my attentiveness.

You may encounter songs in Arabic,
poems in English I recite to myself,
or a song I chant to the chirping birds in our backyard.
When you stitch the cut, don't forget to put all these back in my ear.
Put them back in order as you would do with books on your shelf.

The drone's buzzing sound,
The roar of an F-16,
The screams of bombs falling on houses,
On fields, and on bodies,
of rockets flying away—rid my small ear canal of them all.

Spray the perfume of your smiles on the incision.
Inject the song of life into my veins to wake me up.
Gently beat the drum so my mind may dance with yours,
my doctor, day and night.

Activity: Poetry in Our Ears

Objective: To explore the connection between emotions, sounds, and healing through creative expression. This activity not only allows students to explore their creativity but also encourages them to reflect on the emotional significance of sounds in their lives. This will foster a deeper understanding of the poem's themes and the experiences of Palestinians.

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Materials:

1. Drawing paper or sketchbooks
2. Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
3. Small objects representing different sounds (optional)
4. Glue or tape
5. Scissors
6. Writing materials

Instructions:

1. Introduction (10 minutes):

Begin by reading the poem aloud to the students. Discuss the feelings and images the poem evokes, emphasizing the sensory experience of sound and its connection to emotions.

2. Discussion (15 minutes):

Engage the students in a conversation about the sounds that bring comfort or evoke certain emotions. Ask them to share sounds they associate with different feelings, such as happiness, sadness, or excitement.

3. Sound Exploration (20 minutes):

Provide a variety of small objects that can represent different sounds (bells, crinkly paper, etc.). Allow students to explore these objects and discuss the emotions or memories each sound evokes for them.

4. Creative Expression (30 minutes):

Ask students to imagine their own "soundscapes" that bring comfort or healing. Instruct them to draw a large ear on their paper and fill it with images or symbols representing sounds that bring them joy, calmness, or positive emotions.

5. Sound Collage (20 minutes):

If available, let students cut out pictures or symbols from magazines or use printed images to enhance their soundscapes. Encourage them to arrange and glue these onto their drawings.

6. Writing Component (15 minutes):**

Have students write a short paragraph explaining the significance of the sounds they chose for their ear. Ask them to consider how these sounds make them feel and why they find comfort in them.

7. Sharing and Reflection (15 minutes):

Create a sharing circle where students can present their soundscapes to the class. Discuss the diversity of sounds and emotions represented. Encourage students to reflect on the therapeutic aspect of sounds and their impact on well-being.

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8. Group Activity (20 minutes):

Form small groups and ask students to collaborate on a collective soundscape. They can use their drawings and additional materials to create a larger representation of shared comforting sounds.

9. Class Discussion (15 minutes):

Conclude the activity with a class discussion about the role of sounds in our lives and how they can influence emotions and well-being. Connect this back to the themes of the poem and the healing power of familiar sounds.

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