

National Theatre, National Politics Creative Challenge: Poetics of Political Figures

<https://thenationaldcpolitics.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th)

Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Creative Writing

Estimated Time: 15-20 min

Materials Needed: Pen or pencil, paper, *I Am Poem* prompts (see below)

Activity Format: Individual or group

Summary: This learning activity will help students process historical information. Students will communicate their ideas through an oral presentation and written poem.

Activity Guide

- Either individually or in groups, instruct students to read either the "Lincoln and Booth" or "Desegregation" section of the *National Theatre, National Politics* website:
<https://thenationaldcpolitics.org>.
- After students have read the webpage they will create an "I Am Poem" to help them process the material. To create an "I Am Poem", students will take one of the phrases listed on the handout below, such as "I feel" or "I wonder", and use it to start their poem. For example, the beginning of an "I Am Poem" could be, "I feel like today will be a great day". In this instance, the prompt was, "I feel" and it was used to start the poem.
- Encourage students to be creative and have fun. They may choose to write their poem from the perspective of a historical figure, or as themselves. Students will share the poems they create and any evaluative comments with the class.
- Some sample "I Am Poems" based off of The National Theatre website are:
 - I wonder what life will be like without segregation
 - I hope I will be able to see president Lincoln at The National Theatre
- Consider the following questions for reflection with your students following the assignment:
 - What was it like to place thoughts and ideas down in the form of a poem?
 - Did you connect to anybody else's poem? If yes, explain why.
 - What worked for you in completing this assignment?

I Am Poem Prompts

I am...

I cry...

I wonder...

I understand...

I hear...

I say...

I see...

I dream...

I feel...

I try...

I want...

I hope...

I pretend...

I touch...

I feel...

I worry...

National Theatre, National Politics Creative Challenge: Celebrate Your DC Story

<https://thenationaldcpolitics.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th)
Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Creative Writing
Estimated Time: 20 - 30 min

Materials Needed: Pen or pencil, paper, computer or tablet
Activity Format: Individual

Summary: This learning activity will encourage students to examine their political views as they relate to storytelling and will allow them to express themselves through creative writing and videography.

Activity Guide

- After reviewing the *National Theatre, National Politics* website, encourage students to look at their community/family/school with fresh eyes. Perhaps the politics of today will bring up thoughts about students' own citizenship. Remind them that their unique voice matters and has political significance. Ask them to think about their own personal experiences as a part of the District of Columbia community. What political/historical events have they lived through? How has the landscape of Washington, DC impacted their life experiences?
- Students will write a short story that consists of 250-350 words. This story should highlight the love, challenges, growth, and ups and downs that take place in students' communities/neighborhoods. Encourage students to use this as a time to reflect, reset, advocate, or bounce back as they allow the "pen to paper" experience to guide them in describing the story they want to share.
- Next, students will collect images to create a slideshow that exemplifies aspects of their stories. Images may include words, symbols, or students' own photography.
- Finally, students will record a voiceover to accompany their slideshows that is no more than one minute long. The voiceover should summarize the most important parts of their stories and demonstrate what the Capital City looks and feels like to them as individuals.
- The slideshows and voiceovers can be presented to the entire class.

National Theatre, National Politics Creative Challenge: Current Events Storyboard

<https://thenationaldcpolitics.org>



Activity Overview

Grade Level: High School (9th – 12th)
Subjects: ELA/Literacy, Creative Writing
Estimated Time: 45 - 60 min

Materials Needed: Pen or pencil, paper, materials available to use as props or costumes
Activity Format: Individual or group

Summary: This assignment is designed for students to produce an original storyboard based on current events. The storyboard can be used to explore how students' stories connect with and inspire others.

Activity Guide

- Direct students to consider their perspectives on the political state of the world and its implications on their lives. What are some of the challenges and areas of strength or growth that students have observed? Guide students to select one hot-topic, then reflect to think of ways they can advocate for change or promote active solutions.
- Students will come up with a pitch for a new TV show, short film, cartoon, or storybook based on the current events of the time. To assist with the pitch, students will construct a storyboard that outlines one scene from the story they create. A storyboard is a sheet of paper or poster board that has short descriptions and visual representations of moments in a story. Have students consider why they selected a particular current event. What makes it political? What about this particular issue makes it interesting, difficult, or exciting?
- Next, students will create a short (1-3min) performance dramatizing a moment from their story board. Encourage students to be creative and use existing classroom resources as props or costumes. Instruct them to be mindful of who the intended audience is as they are constructing their story.
- Finally, students will present their story board and pitch and perform their short scene for the class.