

Tell About the South: *The Story of Modern Southern Literature*
THE FUGITIVE POETS

Lesson Plan created by Treasure Williams, Memphis

1. Overview

- After viewing *Tell About the South* and paying particular attention to the section on the Fugitive Poets, students will discuss why this particular group of poet might have formed and become so influential. The following lesson focuses on the Fugitive Poets and how they served to represent a counterpoint to the popular belief that nothing intellectual could come from the south. At the lesson's culmination, students will create poems about the south that serve to further widen the definition of what is southern.
- Grade Level (9-12)
- Time Allotment: Two 55 minute class meetings.*

2. Instructional Objective(s)

- Students will create poems about the south.
- **English II Writing Content Standard #1:** The student will develop the structural and creative skills necessary to produce written language that can be read and interpreted by various audiences.
- **English II Viewing and Representing Content Standard #3:** The student will use, read, and view media/technology and analyze content and concepts accurately.
- **English II Speaking and Listening Content Standard #4:** The student will express ideas clearly and effectively in a variety of oral contexts and apply active listening skills in the analysis and evaluation of spoken ideas.

3. Materials

- 1 copy of *Tell About the South*, video
- Discussion Questions: (1) *Why do you believe this group chose to call themselves the Fugitives?* (2) *How might their espousal of “agrarian values” have been seen as a contradiction?* (3) *Why do you believe the Fugitives touted formal poetry?*
- Computer access to the following site:
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5655> and
<http://www.turnersouth.com/video/player/0,,5348%7C3,00.html>

4. Instructional Procedures

- *Set (Introduction):* As southerners we’ve all faced stereotypes. Some are “negative”, like the belief that southerners aren’t as smart as people from other regions. And some are “positive”, like the belief that southerners are more hospitable than people from other regions. Regardless of the motivation, these stereotypes affect us in many different ways. In this lesson, you will use the *Tell About the South* video, the discussion questions, the World Wide Web, and Microsoft Word to create poems that depict the south as you know it.
- **Instruction (Body)**
 - *Day 1 (55 minutes):* Students will view *Tell About the South* video
 - *Day 2 (35 minutes):* Students will finish viewing *Tell About the South* video. The remainder of the class should be spent answering the discussion questions.
 - *Day 3 (15 minutes):* The teacher should refresh students’ memories regarding *Tell About the South* video. Passing out graded discussion questions would be a good way to do this. *Day 3 (10 minutes):* Next, the teacher should introduce the “poems about the south” assignment, explaining that along with the discussion questions, the poem is how students will be assessed during this min-unit. *Day 3 (10 minutes):* The teacher should then distribute laptops, or sit students at pc’s. Then the teacher should take students to <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5655> and <http://www.turnersouth.com/video/player/0,,5348%7C3,00.html>, advising them to add the sites to their “Favorites” list. *Day 3 (remaining 20 minutes):* Student will begin to create their poems. The teacher will monitor progress and make sure the work is saved.
 - *Day 4 (10 minutes):* The teacher will redistribute the laptops or reseat students at pc’s. The teacher will make certain that each student has a saved poem in progress and that each student understands that they must finish their poem by the end of the class period. *Day 4 (30 minutes):* Students should use this time to complete their poems. *Day 4 (remaining 15 minutes):* the teacher should be prepared to give some tips on oral presentation (maintaining eye contact, enunciation, vocal volume, etc).
 - *Day 5 (55 minutes):* Students should present poems

- **Closure (Conclusion)**
 - If there is enough time, students could also be required to provide verbal feedback/critique at the end of each presentation. The presentations could be videotaped and played on the in class monitor to create a poetry video the class and other classes to view.

5. Supplemental Activities

- *Plans and/or websites for “further study”*: In addition to the websites included in this lesson, students may want to go to http://www.learner.org/amerpass/unit13/context_activ-1.html , and read the literary curriculum produced by the Annenberg Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.
- *Independent practice*: Students may want to find a contemporary southern poet such as Nikkey Finney or Treasure Williams, and read how they interpret the south.
- *Independent review*: Using the public library, students may want to check out ne.
- *Re-teaching, and/or enrichment*: Students may want to create their own literary magazine devoted to “modern southern voices”.

* Since *Tell About the South* is 90 minutes long, this lesson can provide the “product demonstration” in a week long mini-unit on southern writers.