Concept English

2018/2019 Writing Competition: Pen A Poem for Justice



Poetry is a close relative to music. The word *lyric* literally means words. **This year our focus is on how and why words matter.** We hope students will learn that we all have access to the same words/language, but what we do with them and how we create something generates a diverse tapestry of meanings.

One such example of this relationship is a song by Common and John Legend, entitled “Glory.” It is arguable a beautiful poem about the issues and changes that resulted from the social justice movement. This song is from the film *Selma*, and was written with the support of Rhymefest.

For the past few years we have had students write essays. This year we want teachers and students to learn about this song and how it helps to support, with details, the film. It is also a perfect tie-in with African American History Month in February.

In addition to the teaching packet (attached) created by Cristy Desormeaux, we have attached a PDF that provides context/background on civil rights by Joanna Lucka. We suggest you start, however, with Activity 6 below.

Add a two to three-day study and song analysis to your current unit. Once you have engaged students in a few lessons around this piece, we want them to create their own original poems using words from the song that reflect an understanding of the people/events, images, and metaphoric phrases used by the authors.

**Grades 3-5**

**Students select 5 - 9 words from the song** and create a poem. The poem must be a minimum of 5 lines, use imagery (sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell), include an original simile or metaphor created by the student (or other appropriate literary device), and employ some repetition. (Teachers may choose to use “I Dream a World” by Langston Hughes instead)

**Grades 6-8**

**Students select 10-15 words from the song** and create a poem. The poem must be a minimum of 10 lines, have a rhythm and tone that supports its purpose using alliteration, repetition, metaphor, and explore one of the people/events, images, or metaphoric phrases identified in the packet more fully.

**Grades 9-12**

**Students select 16-30 words** and create a poem. The poem must be a minimum of 20 lines, have a rhythm and tone that supports its purpose using alliteration, repetition, metaphor, stanzas, and a synthesis of two or more people/events, images, and metaphoric phrases identified in the packet more fully.

**GUIDELINES FOR ALL WORK**

**Include:**

Title, student name, grade level, school name

No larger than Times New Roman 14 pt. type

Typed in Word (no PDFs)

Words from the song (see grade level requirements)

Lines/stanzas (see grade level requirements)

Use of imagery, figurative language, etc. (see grade level requirements)

Winning poems will take an element from the song and expand upon the people/events, images, and multiple meaning words referred to as well as shed new light on the meaning of justice. $100 1st, $75 2nd, $50 3rd, and $25 honorable mention prizes will be awarded for each grade band.

Teachers are responsible for teaching, coaching, and reading student writing, completing the attached rubric, and submitting only the top selections from her/his classrooms/schools. Webinars will be offered once a week to interested teachers/students.

**DEADLINE**

Teachers may select up to **five students from their classes** for submission to the Pen A Poem for Justice competition. Only poems following the above guidelines will be read. Please keep a copy of the work for your files, as the submissions will not be returned. **All submissions are due by Friday, March 29, 2019.** Please submit your Word document (following guidelines) to aflaherty@conceptschools.org.

The next page will be its own attachment.

Activity 6: Listen to the song and fill the gaps with the words below:

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|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| freedom  | peaceful | victory  |
| justice  | resistance  | war  |
| King  | Rosa  | weapon  |
| lethal  | Selma  | wisdom  |

“Glory”

One day, when the glory comes

It will be ours, it will be ours

Oh, one day, when the war is one

We will be sure, we will be here sure

Oh, glory, glory

Oh, glory, glory

Hands to the Heavens, no man, no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Formed against, yes glory is destined

 Every day women and men become legends

Sins that go against our skin become blessings

The movement is a rhythm to us

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is like religion to us

Justice is juxtaposition in us

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_for all just ain't specific enough

 One son died, his spirit is revisitin' us

Truant livin' livin' in us, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is us

That's why \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sat on the bus

That's why we walk through Ferguson with our hands up

When it go down we woman and man up

They say, "Stay down" and we stand up

Shots, we on the ground, the camera panned up

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ pointed to the mountain top and we ran up

One day, when the glory comes

It will be ours, it will be ours

Oh, one day, when the war is one

We will be sure, we will be here sure

Oh, glory, glory

Oh, glory, glory glory

Now the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not over

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ isn't won

 And we'll fight on to the finish

Then when it's all done

We'll cry glory, oh glory

We'll cry glory, oh glory

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ now for every man, woman and child

Even Jesus got his crown in front of a crowd

They marched with the torch, we gon' run with it now

Never look back, we done gone hundreds of miles

From dark roads he rose, to become a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Facin' the league of justice, his power was the people

Enemy is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a king became regal

 Saw the face of Jim Crow under a bald eagle

No one can win the war individually

 It takes the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the elders and young people's energy

Welcome to the story we call victory

 Comin' of the Lord, my eyes have seen the glory

One day, when the glory comes

 It will be ours, it will be ours

 Oh, one day, when the war is one

We will be sure, we will be here sure

Oh, glory, glory

Oh, glory, glory glory

When the war is done, when it's all said and done

We'll cry glory, oh glory