

Title: The Change and Process of Emily Dickinson

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Grade Level: 10-12

Subject/Content: English/The Poetry of Emily Dickinson

Summary of Lesson: Students read a brief history of Emily Dickinson and some of her poetry. They analyze Dickinson's work based on her thematic focus on life and death.

Focus Question: What are the major themes in Emily Dickinson's poetry. Why did she focus so much on this theme?

Databases(s): *Student Resources In Context*, *LitFinder* (if available)

Procedures:

Steps/Activities by teacher:

1. Students search *Student Resources In Context* for biographies for Emily Dickinson.
2. Highlight key points in Emily's life for students and discuss some of the events that stand out as significant in her life.
3. Have students use the school library or *LitFinder* (if available) and search for the poems published by Emily Dickinson.
4. Have the students read at least ten poems of their choosing. From the ten they should choose five that represent the themes of life and death.
5. For each of the five poems selected the students should complete a three-column analyses:

How to do a three-column analysis- with the poem centered on the page, divide the page into three columns, one to the left of the poem, one containing the poem itself, and one to the right. Read the poem at least twice, noting the title, and paraphrasing the LITERAL meaning of the poem on the left. Then re-read the poem 1-2 times more marking the poem for TOOLS the poet uses, noting words and images that stand out, shifts, figurative language, form, etc. Cover the basics first. In the final column- FIGURATIVE, try to move from a literal understanding to a deeper level, noting the connotations of those words, images, figurative language, etc. At the bottom, write a thematic or thesis statement.

6. Have students use their five analysis notes to write a poetry analysis essay of Emily Dickinson's poems.

Steps/Activities by student(s):

1. Search *Student Resources In Context* biographies for Emily Dickinson.
2. Use the school library or *LitFinder* (if available) and search for poems by Emily Dickinson.
3. Read at least ten poems, but choose only five that focus on the themes of life and death.
4. For each of the five poems complete a three-column analysis.
5. Use your analysis of each poem to write a poetry analysis essay focusing on the major themes in Dickinson's poetry.

Outcome: Students will study the poetry of Emily Dickinson focusing on her thematic handlings of life and death. They will then write an analysis essay.

Related Activities: Students write their own poems about life and death.