

Bringing Robert Frost to Life
By Susan Zizza

Central Question: How can we bring to life the poet Robert Frost, or any historical figure?

Guiding Questions:

1. What can we learn about Frost from his work?
2. What can we learn about the poet from his Franconia home, the Frost Place?
3. What can we learn about Frost from what others reveal? (Media, critics, first hand accounts)

Creative Response Project:

Scrapbook with theme: Discovering Robert Frost

Scrapbook will be assessed on visual impact, depth of understanding, supporting evidence, quality of writing (including grammar, spelling, voice) and success and extent of communicating who Frost was.

Extra Credit: Student's original poem to include in scrapbook

Activities:

1. Writing assignments, in and out of class
2. Research
3. Field trip

Sequence of activities

Pre-Day 1: Assign writing activity: What do I know about Robert Frost?

Day 1: Go around room and ask each student to tell what they know about Robert Frost. Compile on board.

Hand out three poems written at Robert Frost Place. Read one poem. Ask students to choose a line, phrase or word that is important to them.

Homework: Read handouts – poems written at Frost Place. Write answer to these questions: What do these poems reveal about Frost's personality? What do they reveal about his interests? About his family? His work?

Day 2: Divide students into three groups to discuss individual poems. Each group chooses oral historian to sum up what each poem reveals.

Homework: Map out basic design of individual scrapbooks. This is just an outline – scrapbook design will be fine-tuned over the course. Make a list of materials and methods which may be used. Components of scrapbook: may be computerized or manual scrapbook. A mix of artwork (which may include photos, artwork, digitalized

images) and text required. Text will include three Frost poems, three writing pieces on the topic: What Do I Know About Robert Frost, the final piece to be an essay with a minimum of 500 words. Extra credit: Include original poem.

Pre-Field Trip Day: Homework- Choose method of visually capturing Frost Place (drawing or photography or clip art. Student should be ready to take notes and/or use tape recorder.

Day 4: Field trip (virtual or actual) of Robert Frost Place in Franconia. Hand out question sheets for students to take notes on what the various aspects of the Frost Place (plants, poetry, farming artifacts, family and personal Frost memorabilia, historical collections) tell us about Frost's personality, interests, family and work.

Homework: Write reflections on field trip. Has the trip changed or added to my impressions and/or opinion of Frost, his life and work? If so, what is the change. Answer the question: What do I know about Frost?

Day 5: Class discussion of field trip and go over highlights of student impressions. Break up class into groups of two for research activity. Hand out list of sources for research. Students must choose a minimum of three sources for research. List choices will include newspaper articles, critics and commentaries on Frost, biographies, videos. Research purpose: to answer questions as to what media reveals about Frost's personality, work, family and interests. How does this round out picture of who Robert Frost was?

Homework: Final 500 word essay: What Do I Know About Robert Frost?

Learning activity wrap-up before turning in scrapbooks: Class discussion of how this unit has changed or affected students. Did it increase their interest in poetry or writing in general? Do they see the value in getting to know someone from the past and what did the students learn from this historical individual? What is the main impression or important factor about Frost that students would like to pass on to others? Who else in history would they like to get to know?

Indicators: Through class discussions, written papers, and weekly review of individual scrapbook progress (which includes structured individual time with student to assess progress and provide any needed assistance.) Is the student coming to see Robert Frost as a real person, with recognizable characteristics? Are they seeing how someone no longer present with us is still contributing to society as a whole and to them individually? Do they give evidence of having the skills to research an historical person? Are they developing critical thinking, asking questions that reveal they are going through their own thought process and evaluating, rather than passively copying what has already been published or revealed by others about Frost?

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