

# LESSON PLAN: THE POETRY OF EMILY DICKINSON

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	<b>Unit:</b>
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<b>LESSON TOPIC:</b>	The Poetry of Emily Dickinson with <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>
<b>AIM:</b>	As Cricket, the main character in <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i> , searches for her mother, she is reminded of one of her mother's favorite poems by Emily Dickinson, "Hope is the thing with feathers". Students can use the book to learn more about Emily Dickinson and her poetry.
<b>OBJECTIVES:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify Emily Dickinson as a well-known American poet.</li><li>2. Provide information about Emily Dickinson's life.</li><li>3. Define the word "metaphor" and identify its use in the poem "Hope is the thing with feathers."</li><li>4. Discuss how "hope" and "the thing with feathers" are similar and why Dickinson used this comparison.</li><li>5. Define new vocabulary words identified in "Hope is a thing with feathers."</li><li>6. Recognize how Dickinson's poetry affected the characters in <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>.</li></ol>
<b>GET STARTED/ DO-NOW:</b>	Instruct students to read the handout "About Emily Dickinson" with information from the Emily Dickinson Museum. Have them make a list of three facts they learned.
<b>MINI-LESSON:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. As a class, discuss the fact the students learned from the "About Emily Dickinson" handout. During the discussion, provide the class with additional information about Dickinson. (Possible resources: <a href="https://www.biography.com/people/emily-dickinson-9274190">https://www.biography.com/people/emily-dickinson-9274190</a>Biography and <a href="https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/emily-dickinson">https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/emily-dickinson</a>)</li><li>2. Using a projector or smartboard, look at the timeline of Dickinson's life as presented on this webpage: <a href="https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/sites/default/files/about_emily_life/Timeline_Web091709b.pdf">https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/sites/default/files/about_emily_life/Timeline_Web091709b.pdf</a></li><li>3. Using a projector or smartboard, look at Dickinson's family tree as presented on this webpage:</li></ol>

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	<p><a href="https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/sites/default/files/about_emily_family_and_friends/Family_Tree091709.pdf">https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/sites/default/files/about_emily_family_and_friends/Family_Tree091709.pdf</a></p>
<b>MAIN ACTIVITY:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>, we learn Cricket’s mom liked Emily Dickinson’s Poem #314 “Hope is a thing with feathers”. Later, Miss V. read the poem to Percy. Read “Hope is the thing with feathers” aloud by having one student read the entire poem or by having three students take a turn reading a stanza.</li> <li>2. Have the students look up the words <i>perch, gale, sore, abash, chilliest</i> and <i>extremity</i> and write down the definitions. If individual computers are not available, look up the words as a class.</li> <li>3. Explain metaphors to the class. What metaphor did Dickinson use in the poem? Discuss how “hope” and “the thing with feathers” are similar. Ask students why they think Dickinson compared the two.</li> <li>4. Have the students answer the following questions either in a class discussion or on a sheet of paper: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">On pages 50 – 51 in <i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i>, Cricket says, “<i>Hope is the thing with feathers.</i>” <i>Mama said that every time she saw a cardinal. “Emily Dickinson wrote that in a poem.” She said that every time, too. Mama called cardinals good-luck birds because they’re easy to find when you need a smidgeon of beauty. They’re kin to tanagers but don’t fly off to South America for the winter.</i>” Discuss why Mama may have liked the poem so much. What do you think she was hopeful for? Why do you think she said it whenever she saw a cardinal?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">On page 113, we find out that the poem is also one of Percy’s favorites. Why do you think Percy liked the poem? After Miss V. read the poem, <i>Percy held out his paw for the lady to shake, jumped up, ran over to the edge of the garden, and dug five holes, one right beside the other.</i> Why do you think Percy did that after hearing the poem?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">What is something you are hopeful for?</p> </li> </ol>
<b>CLOSING ACTIVITY:</b>	<p>Emily Dickinson compares hope to a bird. Ask the students what else hope could be compared to and why.</p>

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<b>EXTENSIONS:</b>	<p>Have each student write their own poem comparing an emotion with a living thing. Some abstract words they can use include excitement, joy, fear, friendship, love, anger, hatred, frustration, or pride.</p> <p>Have the students create a poster featuring Emily Dickinson’s Poem #314 “Hope is a Thing with Feathers”. Use markers, colored pencils, watercolors, or other media to illustrate what the poem means to them.</p> <p>Have each student choose another poem by Emily Dickinson to share with the class. Have the student tell what they think the poem means. Why did he/she choose that poem?</p> <p>Research the life of Emily Dickinson. What facts about the way she lived led to her being misunderstood?</p>
<b>CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING:</b>	Students write a short report about what they learned about Emily Dickinson and her poetry.
<b>MATERIALS:</b>	<p><i>Smack Dab in the Middle of Maybe</i> by Jo Hackl</p> <p>Computer and projector or smartboard for class discussion</p> <p>Computers for student use or computer and projector or smartboard for researching definitions</p> <p>“About Emily Dickinson” handout</p> <p>Markers, colored pencils, watercolors, or other media</p>
<b>TECHNOLOGY:</b>	Look up timeline and definitions online.
<b>COMMON CORE STANDARDS:</b>	<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6-8.4</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6-8.5</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.2</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.1</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.4</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.5</p>