



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2007 Volume I: American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

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## Uncovering Your Students' Authentic Voice

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.01.03  
by Judith J. Katz

This unit proposes to show students how reading helps you become a better writer and vice versa especially as reading and writing both relate to the idea of authentic voice. The underlying idea is to give students a broader base of prior knowledge by exposing them to some great American writers they most certainly would not read on their own and by giving them the vocabulary they need to understand, analyze, and synthesize the voices of those writers. I want them to begin to ask and answer what is arguably one of the primary essential questions of literature: What is this writer doing and what effect is it having on me?

Students are rarely given a guided opportunity to use the well-developed voices of famous writers, speakers, and singers as an actively working model for finding their own authentic voice. Identifying and working with literary elements - including personalized content, audience, syntax, sound, and rhythm - contributes to the creation of an authentic voice whether that voice belongs to an established, revered writer or to a student whose voice is just emerging.

(Recommended for English Language Arts, grade 10, and Creative Writing, grade 12.)

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