



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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## **Searching Literature to Find and Fall in Love with Your Own Voice**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.01.04  
by Sandra K. Friday

My unit focuses on how voice expresses attitudes and feelings of protagonists, some of whom think of themselves as helpless victims, some who are trying to break out of their victim image, and some who have managed to liberate and empower themselves completely. Students will experiment with a variety of ways of reading/acting the voices in poems, short stories, and excerpts from autobiography for the class. Based on these interpretive performances, the class will practice making observations backed up with evidence from the literature as to what the attitudes and feelings are that are being expressed. They will compare the degree to which the voices of the protagonists express a range of feelings of victimization or liberation and why. Some protagonists' voices express the whole range within one selection.

Throughout my unit, students will experiment with and explore their own voices, based on the voices in the literature we are reading. Ultimately, each student will produce a portfolio of his or her own work based on these experiments and explorations. Of course, students will share with the class the voices in their work.

My unit also includes activities that give students the opportunity to practice each of the four Language Arts CAPT questions in which they will all need to demonstrate proficiency in order to meet the state requirements for graduation.

(Recommended for English and Literature, grades 7-12.)

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