

Working Music, Sea Chanties, & Call-and-Response Poetry

Target Grade Level: 5th-10th

Time for Lesson: 60 minutes – Possible Long Term Research Project

Overview & Major Themes

Introduce students to poetry and sea chanties as an introduction to work on board *Constitution* and to call-and-response poetry. Students will explore several sea chanties or “work songs” illustrated in several well-known movies, the language involved, and the reasons for them. Students will write their own “sea chanty” or “work song”, using creative writing to develop thematic connections.

Objectives	Outcomes	Materials & Resources
<p>Students will hear or read at least 3 examples of “call-and-response” poetry, sea chanties, or “work songs”.</p> <p>Students will explore at least one period in history where a group of people made use of “call-and-response” poetry.</p> <p>Students will draft 1 poem, representative of “call-and-response” style, using creative writing skills.</p>	<p>Students will understand the purposes served through “sea chanties” and other “work songs”.</p> <p>Students will use creative writing skills to draft original poetry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard/Chalkboard • Handout of lyrics of “work songs” • Computer/Television/ Movie Player • Access to www.youtube.com, or several movies that include work songs (listed below)

Time	Instructional Activity
15 min.	<p>As an introduction to the activity, begin by showing brief clips of several sea chanties, or “work songs”, at least one that includes a “call-and-response” poetry style. An educator could use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master and Commander Sea Chanty • Moby Dick Sea Chanty • The Muppet Show, Episode 220 • Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs “Whistle While You Work” or “It’s Off to Work We Go” • O Brother Where Art Thou – Opening scene of chain gang at work

Time	Instructional Activity
5 min.	Work together with students to define “work songs.” Finally, explain that these songs, often in call-and-response with a leader, set a pace and rhythm for a task. Often, the task takes a team effort that is coordinated, like a dance group dancing together, or sailors hauling a heavy object together.
5 min.	Weaving Through History: As a general rule, sailors aboard naval vessels like <i>Constitution</i> were not allowed to sing sea chanties during their work, but many sailors came from or moved onto other merchant vessels where chanties were allowed. Why do you think sailors aboard <i>Constitution</i> were not allowed to sing during their work? Officers demanded silence because they wanted to be able to relay orders without the confusion of song.
10 min.	What other groups of people do we know of who worked together to complete arduous or tedious tasks where a “work song” with a call-and-response style would have been present? Think movies, books, or Hollywood. Allow students to name. (Mariners, Africans who were enslaved, Army – Boot Camp trainees, Railroad Workers, Cowboys, Prisoners, Chain Gangs, etc.). Many of these “work songs” were in a call-and-response style. Visit Colonial Williamsburg’s website for a further discussion about Slave Work Songs here, and where students can listen to examples: www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/february03/worksongs.cfm .
2 min.	Pass out lyrics to several “work songs,” so that students have an example of this type of poetry.
30 min.	Students work together or on their own to create poetry that would be an example of their own work song. Students will either need to: 1. Pick a chore or a task to accomplish with their work song, or 2. Pick a group of people in history that would have used a work song, and write lyrics for them.

Students may: read their poetry out loud, sing their “work song”, or illustrate their work song to hand in or perform at a later time.

Lyrics to Poplar Sea Chanties

Haul on the Bowline

Haul on the bowline, our bully ship's a rolling,

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul on the bowline, Kitty is my darlin',

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul on the bowline, Kitty lives in Liverpool,

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul on the bowline, the old man is a growlin',

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul on the bowline, it's a far cry to payday,

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul on the bowline, so early in the morning.

Haul on the bowline, the bowline Haul!

Haul Away Joe

Louis was the king of France

Before the revolut-i-on

Away, haul away, we'll haul away Joe

But then he got his head chopped off

Which spoiled his constitut-i-on

Away, haul away, we'll haul away Joe

(To me) way, haul away

We'll heave and hang together

Away, haul away, we'll haul away Joe

Once I was in Ireland

Digging turf and pratties

And now I'm on a Yankee ship

Hauling on sheets and braces

Now when I was a little boy

And so me mother told me

That if I didn't kiss the girls

Me lips would all grow mouldy

Way haul away

We'll haul away the bowline

Way, haul away

The packet is a-rollin'

Heave Away

Come get your duds in order
For we're going to leave tomorrow
Heave away, me jollies, heave away

Come get your duds in order
For we're going to cross the water
Heave away me jolly boys, we're all bound away

Sometimes we're bound for Liverpool
Sometimes we're bound for Spain
But now we're bound for St. John's town
To watch the girls a-dancing

Now it's farewell Maggie darling
For it's now I'm going to leave you
You promised me you'd marry me
But how you did deceive me

I wrote me love a letter
And I signed it with a ring
I wrote me love a letter
I was on the Jenny Lind

Sometimes we're bound for Liverpool
Sometimes we're bound for Spain
But now we're bound for St. John's town
To watch the girls a-dancing