BRITISH COUNCIL

Level: Advanced

Target: Young adult learners, mature learners, literature students

Time: Approx. 90 min

Main aim(s):

- To introduce students to three of Dylan Thomas' most celebrated poems

- To raise students' awareness of main themes in English literature

- To promote intercultural discussion and understanding

Subsidiary aim(s):

- To help students expand their vocabulary

- To give students opportunities to develop the four skills

- To give students opportunities to discuss more complex issues

- To give students the opportunity to explore films and plays

Materials:

- Student worksheet

- Access to Jeremy Harmer's recording of *Do not go gentle into that good night*. Link:

  https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dylan-thomas

- Dictionaries

- Optional: pictures of baptisms, weddings, and funerals

- Optional: access to video readings of *And death shall have no dominion*, *A Refusal to Mourn the Death,*

  by Fire, of a Child In London and *Do not go gentle into that good night*.

  Link: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dylan-thomas

Introduction:

This unit is designed to introduce students to Thomas' poems which focus on the theme of death. We recommend you use it with older learners and consider if your students are mature enough to deal with the topic. The subject is likely to bring religious issues and beliefs to the surface and it is important that students are aware that they should keep an open mind, and that differences in opinion should be expressed respectfully. Focus on the language and ideas in the poems; keep a positive attitude and motivate your students to see this as an opportunity for intercultural exchange.

Procedure

Stage and stage aim(s)	Timing (min)	Interaction	Procedure	Differentiation
Lead in and contextualisation **to predict vocabulary present in the poems** **to engage student with complex issues** **to help with personalisation and individual response to the poems**	10	teacher-student student-student	Tell students that the lesson focuses on three of Dylan Thomas' poems that share a common theme. Pair-work: Students do **Task 1** in the worksheet. Give students time to talk about such ceremonies they have attended themselves. Keep the discussion at pair work level: these issues and concepts are more easily communicated to another individual than to the whole class.	**Note to the teacher:** some students may have experienced personal loss and some may live in conflict zones where death is a daily experience. Be sensitive and use your common sense when dealing with issues in this lesson. Collect some pictures of baptisms, marriages and funerals and use them as visual prompts for the speaking task. **If you have access to a classroom computer and projector**, find some pictures on the internet, and copy and paste them into PowerPoint slides to make their visualisation easier and more attractive.
Reading **to facilitate the reading task** **to engage students with close reading** **to provide the opportunity for vocabulary development**	15	teacher-student student-student teacher -student	Ask students to read the information in the box or just tell them about those events in Thomas' life. Put students in pairs and let them choose between A or B. Students do **Task 2** in the worksheet**.** Allow students some time to check the dictionary if they need it and discuss their answers at the end of the activity. Group feedback. Use the answer key to guide you, but accept variations if your students can convince you that their choice is possible. Use the opportunity to model and drill the pronunciation of the words in the lines.	With **lower level groups**, you may need to give students more time to consult the dictionary. **If you have access to the internet in class**, at the end of the activity you can play the audio recordings of the poems. Link to recordings: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dylan-thomas

Speaking **to develop critical reading skills** **to give students the opportunity to personally respond to the poems**	05	student-student teacher-student	Pair-work: Students do **Task 3** in the worksheet. Group feedback. Focus on the lines in the poems. Accept possible interpretations.	With **advanced groups** this may be an opportunity for real engagement with the poems. Allow students time to discuss their answers. If you are using this lesson with **lower level groups**, you may find the need to scaffold the discussion a bit more: focus on the poems titles instead. Guide them on the discussion, but *avoid the temptation to give them* 'the correct interpretation'.
Listening and reading **to listen for detail**	10	teacher-student individual work teacher- student	Contextualise the listening. Students do **Task 4** in the worksheet individually and then compare answers. Group feedback.	Link to recordings: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/dylan-thomas **If you don't have access to the internet in class** at all, you can read the poem aloud yourself. With **lower level groups** you may need to play it more than twice and break the listening into parts. Pause after the lines with gaps to give students time to write.
Speaking **to develop critical reading skills** **to give students the opportunity to personally respond to the poems**	05	student-student teacher-student	Pair-work: Students do **Task 5** in the worksheet. Group feedback. Focus on the questions about other poems and poetry in their own language. Give students the opportunity to share information with the whole group.	**Advanced groups** and **students of literature** are more likely to have knowledge of similar poems. If your students do not have such knowledge, provide a few examples from the list on the next page. The last question works best with multilingual groups. If you are working with **a monolingual group**, explore possible regional differences.
Language work **to raise students' awareness of how poets use language** **to improve students' vocabulary**	15	teacher-student individual work teacher - student	Refer students to the first lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 60. Elicit meaning. Contextualise the activity. Refer students back to the poems. Students do **Task 6** in the worksheet individually and then compare their answers. Allow them time to use their dictionaries. Students compare their answers in pairs. Group feedback.	

Speaking and consolidation **to give students an opportunity to discuss the topic in a lighter way** **to prepare for homework**	05	student-student	**A whole lesson talking about death can be quite a depressing experience. Bring your students back and lead them to look at the issue from a more positive perspective.** Pair-work: students do **Task 6** in the worksheet.	Find some pictures of movies on the internet and use them to prompt the discussion. A list of films that broach the topic from different angles is detailed below. **If you have access to the internet and a projector in class**, choose a couple of films and play the trailers.
Homework	05	teacher-student	Assign the homework. If you think your students are capable of more complex analysis, ask them to link issues in the film to ideas and concepts in the poems.	Choose between paper and pen, or blog versions of the task, but if you go for the electronic one, make sure all your students are capable of doing that.

Poems - Suggestions

Come Not, When I am Dead, by Alfred Tennyson
The Lucy Poems, by William Wordsworth
To One Shortly to Die, by Walt Whitman
Funeral Blues, by W.H. Auden
Up-Hill, by Christina Rossetti
Lights Out, by Edward Thomas

Films - Suggestions

The Lion King
Dead Poets Society
Meet Joe Black
Schindler's List
Titanic
The Hunger Games
The Others
Atonement
Four Weddings and a Funeral
Any of the Shakespearean Tragedies

Lesson plan by Chris Lima