



Classroom activities

A defence of 'poesie'

Activity summary:

Many people have written about poetry in order to defend it as a meaningful genre and explain why it remains valuable to the author's time. Reading Mary Wollstonecraft's 'On Poetry' and Percy Shelley's 'A Defence of Poetry'. How well do these work as a defence of poetry? Write your own piece to defend poetry. You should write either a short poem (under 20 lines) or a comment piece in newspaper style (maximum 200 words).

Suggested groups: Y10-13

Resources:

Copies of both the Mary Wollstonecraft and Percy Shelley pieces mentioned, in the exhibition.

Word-processing facilities or writing materials.

Learning Objectives:

- * Greater understanding between literary form and content.
- * Careful analysis of poetic discourse.
- * Creative engagement with a view to personal expression of arguments on the area.
- * Increased awareness of the value of humanities.

AO and Syllabus links:

Respond to texts critically, sensitively and in detail, selecting appropriate ways to convey their response, using textual evidence as appropriate.

Relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions.

Read analyse and evaluate a range of texts.

Formulate, clarify and express ideas with an awareness of the changes in standard English.

Further information:

More theoretical essays could be set on the two works, for more obvious analysis.

Students could also look at Sir Philip Sidney's *A defence of poesie* as a seminal work in this branch of aesthetics.