

Lesson Plan "A Crow's Song"  
By Margaret Atwood

**Objectives:** Teach students close reading techniques  
Give students the opportunity to compare and contrast different texts thematically: *Animal Farm* to "A Crow's song"  
Be sure to pass each student out a copy of "A Crow's Song"  
Crow's Song" in class.

Full text can be found here:  
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org> or  
<http://poetryschmmapoetry.blogspot.com/2011/04/crow-song-by-margaret-atwood.html>

1. Teacher will model how to close-read a poem by doing a Think-A-Loud.
  - a. *Today we will do a close-reading of "Crow Song" by Margaret Atwood*
  - b. *We want to look particularly carefully at how the author is commenting on a human folly or how it is a satire.*
  - c. *First thing to do when approaching a poem is to read it in its entirety out loud.*
2. Have students go back and mark up the words that jumped out at them as being important.
3. Put students in a think-pair-share situation and share their findings with a neighbor. Instruct them to back up why they thought it was an important word.
4. After sharing their markings, have them code their markings.
  - a. Put a + sign next to all words that seem positive
  - b. Put a - sign next to all words that seem negative
  - c. Circle anything that confuses you
  - d. Underline anything that makes a statement about human folly and then draw a line to explain how it does that.
5. Have students share again in pairs and then come together as a full class.
6. For this particular poem, students should be able to identify:
  - a. "Hope" as a positive word but is then modified as negative but words such as "did not succeed" and "not allowed"
  - b. Who the "sane corpses" are
  - c. "Politics" is a negative word at the end of this poem. Why does the crow think it is negative?
  - d. Repetition of "too many" and "too many"
  - e. Students should identify the significance of the repetition of "angel."
7. After the close reading is complete, talk about what literary devices help Atwood get her message across:

- a. Personification
  - b. Repetition
  - c. Imagery – appeal to the senses
8. Discuss how this poem is satirical and what human follies it comments on.
9. After finishing the poem, work together to develop a list of human follies in our society today.
- a. Obesity
  - b. Wastefulness
  - c. Reliance on Oil
  - d. Obsession with War
  - e. Obsession with reality TV
  - f. Fixation on Violent Video Games
  - g. Apathy toward education/reading

### **Assessment**

Students will then work together to create satirical poems like Atwood's. They should use the same idea of having the perspective be from an animal. The poem must be approximately 20 lines in length. It must use one of the literary devices discussed in class.

Sample Poem Below