

What does this look like in practice?

High School

Take 5 minutes to read these texts considering the information that was just shared with you about passage selection.

- ✓ Are different genres and styles represented?
- ✓ Are the passages fair, interesting, and accessible to a wide variety of students?
- ✓ Can they be used to assess several learning standards?

Take a minute to discuss with your colleagues how your classroom practice may change as a result of today's presentation.



Give Us Our Peace

Give us a peace equal to the war
Or else our souls will be unsatisfied,
And we will wonder what we have fought for
And why the many died.

5 Give us a peace accepting every challenge—
The challenge of the poor, the black, of all denied,
The challenge of the vast colonial world
That long has had so little justice by its side.

10 Give us a peace that dares us to be wise.
Give us a peace that dares us to be strong.
Give us a peace that dares us still uphold
Throughout the peace our battle against wrong.

15 Give us a peace that is not cheaply used,
A peace that is no clever scheme,
A people's peace for which men can enthuse,
A peace that brings reality to our dream.

20 Give us a peace that will produce great schools—
As the war produced great armament,
A peace that will wipe out our slums—
As war wiped out our foes on evil bent.

25 Give us a peace that will enlist
A mighty army serving human kind,
Not just an army geared to kill,
But trained to help the living mind—
An army trained to shape our common good
And bring about a world of brotherhood.

—Langston Hughes
from *The Chicago Defender*, August 25, 1945

The following excerpt is from the diary kept by Admiral Richard Byrd when he was alone in a hut at Bolling Advance Weather Base in Antarctica for five months in 1934, with outside temperatures reaching -83° !

5 ...As I saw the situation, the necessities were these: To survive I must continue to husband my strength, doing whatever had to be done in the simplest manner possible and without strain. I must sleep and eat and build up strength. To avoid further poisoning from the fumes, I must use the stove sparingly and the gasoline pressure lantern not at all. Giving up the lantern meant surrendering its bright light, which was one of my few luxuries; but I could do without luxuries for a while. As to the stove, the choice there lay between freezing and inevitable poisoning. Cold I could feel, but carbon monoxide was invisible and tasteless. So I chose the cold, knowing that the sleeping bag provided a retreat. From now on, I decided, I would make a strict rule of doing without the fire for two or three hours every afternoon.

10 So much for the practical procedure. If I depended on this alone, I should go mad from the hourly reminders of my own futility. Something more—the will and desire to endure these hardships—was necessary. They must come from deep inside me. But how? By taking control of my thought. By extirpating¹ all lugubrious² ideas the instant they appeared and dwelling only on those conceptions which would make for peace. A discordant mind, black with confusion and despair, would finish me off as thoroughly as the cold. Discipline of this sort is not easy. Even in April's and May's serenity I had failed to master it entirely.

15 That evening I made a desperate effort to make these conclusions work for me. Although my stomach was rebellious, I forced down a big bowl of thin soup, plus some vegetables and milk. Then I put the fire out; afterwards, propped up in the sleeping bag, I tried to play Canfield. But the games, I remember, went against me; and this made me profoundly irritable. I tried to read Ben Ames Williams' *All the Brothers Were Valiant*; but, after a page or two, the letters became indistinct; and my eyes ached—in fact, they had never stopped aching. I cursed inwardly, telling myself that the way the cards fell and the state of my eyes were typical of my wretched luck. The truth is that the dim light from the lantern was beginning to get on my nerves. In spite of my earlier resolve to dispense with it, I would have lighted the pressure lantern, except that I wasn't able to pump up the pressure. Only when you've been through something like that do you begin to appreciate how utterly precious light is.

20
25
30
35 Something persuaded me to take down the shaving mirror from its nail near the shelf. The face that looked back at me was that of an old and feeble man. The cheeks were sunken and scabrous³ from frostbite, and the bloodshot eyes were those of a man who has been on a prolonged debauch.⁴ Something broke inside me then. What was to be gained by struggling? No matter what happened, if I survived at all, I should always be a physical wreck, a burden upon my family. It was a dreadful business. All the fine conceptions of the afternoon dissolved in black despair.

The dark side of a man's mind seems to be a sort of antenna tuned to catch gloomy thoughts from all directions. I found it so with mine. That was an evil night. It was as if all the world's vindictiveness⁵ were concentrated upon me as upon a personal enemy. I sank to

¹extirpating — completely removing

²lugubrious — melancholy; sad

³scabrous — harsh or rough

⁴debauch — path of corruption

⁵vindictiveness — revengefulness

40 depths of disillusionment which I had not believed possible. It would be tedious to discuss
them. Misery, after all, is the tritest⁶ of emotions. All that need be said is that eventually my
faith began to make itself felt; and by concentrating on it and reaffirming the truth about
45 the universe as I saw it, I was able again to fill my mind with the fine and comforting things
of the world that had seemed irretrievably lost. I surrounded myself with my family and my
friends; I projected myself into the sunlight, into the midst of green, growing things. I
thought of all the things I would do when I got home; and a thousand matters which had
never been more than casual now became surpassingly attractive and important. But time
50 after time I slipped back into despond.⁷ Concentration was difficult, and only by the utmost
persistence could I bring myself out of it. But ultimately the disorder left my mind; and,
when I blew out the candles and the lantern, I was living in the world of the imagination—
a simple, uncomplicated world made up of people who wished each other well, who were
peaceful and easy-going and kindly.

The aches and pains had not subsided; and it took me several hours to fall asleep; but
that night I slept better than on any night since May 31st [several days earlier]; and in the
morning was better in mind and body both.

—Richard E. Byrd
excerpted and adapted from *Alone*, 1938
G.P. Putnam's Sons

⁶tritest — most overused

⁷despond — state of hopelessness

5 ...By natural design, dogs' ears have evolved to hear certain kinds of sounds. Happily, that set of sounds overlaps with those we can hear and produce: if we utter it, it will at least hit the eardrum of a nearby dog. Our auditory range is from 20 hertz to 20 kilohertz: from the lowest pitch on the longest organ pipe to an impossibly squeaky squeak. We spend most of our time straining to understand sounds between 100 hertz and 1 kilohertz, the range of any interesting speech going on in the vicinity. Dogs hear most of what we hear and then some. They can detect sounds up to 45 kilohertz, much higher than the hair cells of our ears bother to bend to. Hence the power of the dog whistle, a seemingly magical device that makes no apparent sound and yet perks the ears of dogs for blocks around. We call this sound "ultrasonic," since it's beyond our ken,¹ but it is within the sonic range for many animals in our local environment. Don't think for a moment that apart from the occasional dog whistle, the world is quiet for dogs up at those high registers. Even a typical room is pulsing with high frequencies, detectable by dogs constantly. Think your bedroom is quiet when you rise in the morning? The crystal resonator used in digital alarm clocks emits a never-ending alarm of high-frequency pulses audible to canine ears. Dogs can hear the navigational chirping of rats behind your walls and the bodily vibrations of termites within your walls. That compact fluorescent light you installed to save energy? You may not hear the hum, but your dog probably can.

20 The range of pitches we are most intent on are those used in speech. Dogs hear all sounds of speech, and are nearly as good as we are at detecting a change of pitch—relevant, say, for understanding statements, which end in a low pitch, versus questions, which in English end in a raised pitch: "Do you want to go for a walk(?)" With the question mark, this sentence is exciting to a dog with experience going on walks with humans. Without it, it is simply noise. Imagine the confusion generated by the recent growth of "up-talking," speech that ends every sentence with the sound of a question?

25 If dogs understand the stress and tones—the *prosody*—of speech, does this hint that they understand language? This is a natural but vexed² question. Since language use is one of the most glaring differences between the human animal and all other animals, it has been proposed as the ultimate, incomparable criterion for intelligence. This raises serious hackles³ in some animal researchers (not thought of as a hackled species, ironically), who have set about trying to demonstrate what linguistic ability animals have. Even those researchers who may agree that language is necessary for intelligence have nonetheless added reams of results to the growing pile of evidence of linguistic ability in non-human animals. All parties agree, though, that there has been no discovery of a humanlike language—a corpus⁴ of infinitely combinable words that often carry many definitions, with rules for combining words into meaningful sentences—in animals.

40 This is not to say that animals might not understand some of our language use, even if they don't produce it themselves. There are, for instance, many examples of animals taking advantage of the communicative system of nearby unrelated animal species. Monkeys can make use of nearby birds' warning calls of a nearby predator to themselves take protective action. Even an animal who deceives another animal by mimicry—which some snakes, moths, and even flies can do—is in some way using another species's [*sic*] language.

The research with dogs suggests that they do understand language—to a limited degree. On the one hand, to say that dogs understand *words* is a misnomer. Words exist in a

¹ken — recognition

²vexed — problematic

³raises serious hackles — arouses anger

⁴corpus — collection

45 language, which itself is product of a culture; dogs are participants in that culture on a very
different level. Their framework for understanding the application of the word is entirely
different. There is, no doubt, more to the words of their world than Gary Larson’s *Far Side*
comics suggest: eat, walk, and fetch. But he is on to something, insofar as these are
50 organizing elements of their interaction with us: we circumscribe the dog’s world to a small
set of activities. Working dogs seem miraculously responsive and focused compared to city
pets. It is not that they are innately more responsive or focused, but that their owners have
added to their vocabularies types of things to do.

One component in understanding a word is the ability to discriminate it from other
words. Given their sensitivity to the prosody of speech, dogs do not always excel at this.
55 Try asking your dog on one morning to *go for a walk*; on the next, ask if your dog wants to
snow forty locks in the same voice. If everything else remains the same, you’ll probably get
the same, affirmative reaction. The very first sounds of an utterance seem to be important
to dog perception, though, so changing the swallowed consonants for articulated ones and
the long vowels for short ones—*ma for a polk?*—might prompt the confusion merited by
60 this gibberish. Of course humans read meaning into prosody, too. English does not give the
prosody of speech syntactical leverage but it is still part of how we interpret “what has just
been said.”

If we were more sensitive to the *sound* of what we say to dogs, we might get better
responses from them. High-pitched sounds mean something different than low sounds;
65 rising sounds contrast with falling sounds. It is not accidental that we find ourselves cooing
to an infant in silly, giddy tones (called *motherese*)—and might greet a wagging dog with
similar baby talk. Infants can hear other speech sounds, but they are more interested in
motherese. Dogs, too, respond with alacrity⁵ to baby talk—partially because it distinguishes
speech that is directed *at* them from the rest of the continuous yammering above their
70 heads. Moreover, they will come more easily to high-pitched and repeated call requests
than to those at a lower pitch. What is the ecology behind this? High-pitched sounds are
naturally interesting to dogs: they might indicate the excitement of a tussle or the shrieking
of nearby injured prey. If a dog fails to respond to your reasonable suggestion that he come
right now, resist the urge to lower and sharpen your tone. It indicates your frame of mind—
75 and the punishment that might ensue for his prior uncooperativeness. Correspondingly,
it is easier to get a dog to *sit* on command to a longer, descending tone rather than repeated,
rising notes. Such a tone might be more likely to induce relaxation, or preparation for the
next command from their talky human. ...

—Alexandra Horowitz
excerpted from *Inside of a Dog*, 2010
Scribner

⁵alacrity — eagerness