

Promise – a creative response to ‘praise song for my mother’ essay

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Promise – a creative response to ‘Praise Song for My Mother’ Teaching notes

The aim of this task is to encourage students to write creatively using some of the ideas from ‘Praise Song for My Mother’ before reading the poem as a way of helping sensitising students to its ideas and language. The task could be developed by asking students to give feedback to one another on their work, and the most able or creative could be asked to redraft, then analyse and explain aspects of their work. Suggested activities: 1. Model brainstorming the levels of meaning and association in a common symbol e.g.

star. Try to draw out the difference between universal symbols, any with more personal significance, and those that have culturally specific meanings. Example: 2. Ask students whether a mother or parent could be a ‘star’ to their child? You may want to model (now or after step 4) using these ideas to write a stanza of the poem, or work collaboratively as a class to write a stanza, or ask students to work in pairs to write a short stanza and share some with the class.

This will help prevent all students from following the same format as the teacher model. 3. In pairs or small groups, ask students to repeat this task using A3 paper, choosing the symbol of water, moon and/or sunrise. 4. Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups to feedback and add ideas, or use the ‘circuit training’ technique to get students really engaging with the work produced. Try to display outcomes so that everyone has access to the ideas. 5. Share ideas about what hopes a mother or father might have for their child.

What goals might s/he want it to achieve? What lessons or values might s/he want to teach it? (This will inform the final stanza of the poem.) 6. Students could move onto writing their own poem, either using the poem frame, or their own ideas.

7. Finish the activity with peer review and feedback. This could work as a plenary, and you might want to show students the poem now, as a way of exploring Nichols’ creative choices. Promise Write a poem Use the writing frame below and any ideas you have about symbols and word associations to write a poem from a parent to their child: In the final stanza of your poem, try to show what hopes a mother or father might have for his or her child. What goals might they want their child to achieve? What lessons or values might they want to teach them? Keep the symbols suggested here or replace them with your own, as you prefer. Promise A parent to his or her child I will be water to you I will be the moon to you I will be sunrise to you I want you to When you have finished your poem, swap it with a partner and try to give each other some feedback. Annotate their poem with your ideas. 1.

What do you like about their poem? Why? 2. Can you suggest any words or phrases they could use which would improve their poem? 3. Do you have any questions about the symbols? Extension task: Redraft your poem, taking account of any helpful feedback. Now annotate your own poem with the following ideas. • Try to explain why you chose particular words or phrases.

- What feelings, images or ideas were you trying to communicate?
- Which of the symbolic meanings you used in your poem have universal significance,

which are personal, and which are specific to a particular culture?

————— Christmas star-spangled banner (American symbol) you look up to the stars sign of success or fame as in movie star birth, blessing, hope, redemption Christian symbol associated with birth of Jesus, a light in the darkness star sign – your personality/identity ‘written in the stars’ shows you your future they are used for navigation or finding your way, give you direction/guidance goals as in ‘reach for the stars’ shining, bright, beautiful, hope, always there for you even though you can’t see them S t a r