

Rewriting Whitman's I Hear America

Instructions

1. You'll be rewriting Whitman's poem to better fit modern day America
 2. Your rewrite needs to be written in Whitman's writing style
 3. 3 stanzas at least (12 lines at least)
 4. One stanza should be dedicated to comparing Whitman's poem to yours / Criticising the American Dream
 5. Groups of 2 (no more than 3)
 6. This worksheet will count for 20% of your Test Grade
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Start by filling out the following prompts to help with your rewrite. You will be turning this in by Friday. Your rewrite does not need to be completed for this but you should have started.

Step 1: Brainstorm – who is singing today?

Think about people in your life or community. Who is working hard and contributing to your world in a way that matters? They can be anyone from family, friends, or even strangers in your neighborhood.

List at least 6 people or roles you want to celebrate:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Step 2: What is their 'song'?

For each person or job you listed above, **describe** what they're doing. Think about actions, tools, and sounds. These will become the "songs" in your poem.

Example: *The delivery driver singing as she weaves through traffic with packages piled high.*

Now describe each of your people in a full sentence similar to the example. You do not necessarily have to use this exact sentence for the final version of your poem:

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Step 3: Whitman rewrite checklist. Check these off as you finalise your poem before Monday

As you write your poem, you have to include:

- ☐ Include a title: *I Hear [Your America] Singing* or something similar. You can change “America” to your school, town, community, or leave it as is
- ☐ Repetition (like “singing,” “the...” at the start of lines)
- ☐ Cataloging (a list of different people/voices; similar to how Whitman does)
- ☐ Free verse (no rhyming or pattern required!)
- ☐ Imagery (what do you see, hear, feel?)
- ☐ Tone of pride and celebration
- ☐ Comparison to Whitman’s poem / Criticising the American Dream
- ☐ 3 distinct stanzas

Step 4: Write your version of the poem

Every person from the group should turn in this handout. You can work in pairs to fill out the responses.

- **Reminders for Monday's presentation**
 - You should read a part from your poem
 - Turn in the Whitman Test Response Worksheet on Archie
 - 5-6 minutes per group / pair
 - **Your Presentation should include**
 - Why you chose those specific 6 people/roles for your poem to celebrate and why they're worth celebrating
 - How does your poem compare to Whitman's (similarities and dissimilarities)
 - Relevance to modern-day America
 - 2-3 line summary of your poem
 - The poetic device you used with sentence example (imagery, figurative language)
 - How does your poem criticise the American Dream
 - **Point distribution**
 - Whitman Poem Rewrite Guidelines and Prompts - 20%
 - Whitman Test Response Worksheet on Archie - 40%
 - Presentation - 40%
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Group members: _____

Question 1: Write a summary of your poem analysing the importance of your 6 people/roles, how the use of free verse enhances the representation of modern-day America, use of imagery and figurative language, and how your poem criticises Whitman's poem/version of America/ the American Dream. Organise your response into 3 paragraphs.

Question 2: When writing the poem, what were some of the challenges/difficulties you faced?

Question 3: If you had to write a dedication for your poem, who would you dedicate it to and why? You can have separate responses to this question.

Question 4: How is the poem relevant to both of you/ modern day America? Organise your response in 2 paragraphs.