

Discussion of *Ode to the West Wind* in a 10th Grade Classroom

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Overview

This site documents a group discussion of Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* that Travis Bristol organized for a poetry unit in his 10th grade English class in March, 2006. The unit began the week before with discussions of poems by William Blake, Charlotte Smith, and others from the Romantic period. Overall, one of Travis' key goals for his English course is to give his students the language to understand literature; in his poetry unit and the discussion of *Ode to the West Wind* Travis seeks to do this by introducing students to different literary devices and to help students go "from the very superficial meaning of what the poem might be saying to the metaphorical." The structure of the discussion builds on strategies Travis used in a unit on *Othello* which, in turn, was based on discussion strategies Travis learned from a website documenting the work of [Yvonne Hutchinson](#). Travis gives each student three balls of paper to toss into the center of the room and tells them that no one can make a second or third comment until everyone else has made their first and second comment. In an interview with an observer after the class, Travis reflects on his goals, how the day and discussion went, and how his teaching of group discussions has been evolving.

"I'm really trying to hit on giving students the language to understand literature.... My sense is poetry is really the best vehicle for doing this because they're really concise pieces and they are so filled with literary devices..."

Bristol

Archives

[Class Video](#)

[After Class Interview](#)

[Resources](#)

[Ode to the West Wind](#)

[Shelly's Biography](#)

Timeline

1. Class Scribe



The scribe reads her notes from the previous class
1 minute, 25 seconds

[Slow Connection \(56K\)](#)
[Fast Connection \(384K\)](#)

2. Introduction



Travis describes the plan for the day
8 minutes, 48 seconds

[Slow Connection \(56K\)](#)
[Fast Connection \(384K\)](#)

3. Preparing for Group Discussion



Travis asks students to reflect on their last group discussion in their Shakespeare unit.
3 minutes, 36 seconds

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[Fast Connection \(384K\)](#)

4. Discussion Begins



Students talk about diverse meanings of west, seasons, and wind.
2 minutes, 49 seconds

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[Fast Connection \(384K\)](#)

5. Discussion Continues



Two students discuss how Shelly put himself into the poem
4 minutes, 53 seconds

[Slow Connection \(56K\)](#)
[Fast Connection \(384K\)](#)

6. Wrapping Up



Travis joins the discussion and asks students to reflect on it
3 minutes, 57 seconds

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