



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



Odes These Days

by Brittany Rogers

DURATION: 1.5 hours

GRADE LEVEL: Middle School

WRITING LEVEL: Developing Writers

FOCUS: odes

EXAMPLE POEM

[Ode to Gossips](#) by **Safia Elhillo**

Check in | 15 minutes

What is the person or thing you have missed the most during the quarantine? Describe this thing or person using 5 similes or metaphors.

EXAMPLE | I wish I could have a brownie ice cream sundae right now. Sundaes make me as happy as a candy drunk toddler; after I eat this prized treat, I become a stuffed teddy bear.

Resource Building | 15 minutes

Create a list:

- 5 of your favorite things
- 5 small things you're grateful for
- 5 people you wouldn't be yourself without

Close Reading | 20 minutes

READ | [Ode to Gossips](#) by **Safia Elhillo**

- Is gossip a positive or negative word in this poem?
- How does this poem show reverence to the speaker's mother and aunts?
- What details does this poem use to give context to time/ place/ and culture?

WATCH | [Ode to Dj Khaled](#) by **Amir Safi (YouTube)**

- What does the speaker admire about DJ Khaled?
- How does the speaker use repetition and music to enhance this ode?

DEFINITION | **ODE**: a poem written in praise of a person, place, or thing. Although many modern odes are less formal, they nonetheless count as a show of reverence and celebration.



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Writing Prompt | 20 minutes

Write an ode to an ordinary thing that you love or appreciate.

What makes this item so important to you? In what ways do you honor or cherish it? How would you describe this item to a person who had never seen or used it before? Consider using a metaphor or simile from your introduction, or come up with new descriptors for this item.

OR

Write an ode that honors a person or lineage that is central to who you are as a person.

What similarities do you have with this person? What differences exist? What attributes of theirs can you choose to celebrate? Try to avoid obvious or cliché aspects of this person. In what ways can you honor them that others might not consider?



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Ode to Gossips

by Safia Elhilo

i was mothered by lonely women some
of them wives some of them with

plumes of smoke for husbands all lonely
smelling of onions & milk all mothers

some of them to children some to old names
phantom girls acting out a life only half

a life away instead copper kitchenware
bangles pushed up the arm fingernails rusted

with henna kneading raw meat with salt
with coriander sweating upper lip

in the steam weak tea hair unwound
against the nape my deities each one

sandal slapping against stone heel sandal-
wood & oud bright chiffon spun

about each head coffee in the dowry china
butter biscuits on a painted plate crumbs

suspended in eggshell demitasse & they
begin *i heard* *people are saying*

i saw it with my own eyes []'s daughter
a scandal *she was wearing* []

& *not wearing* [] *can you imagine*
a shame *a shame*

[Ode to Gossips by Safia Elhilo, The Poetry Foundation](#)