

End mandatory poetry recitation

A recurring theme in these past couple weeks has been the recitation of poetry in most English classes. When this happens, students always ask the same question: “Do we really need to learn poetry, and if so, when will we use this skill in the outside world?” Teachers continue to assign poetry to students year after year, but the fact of the matter is that students will not use poetry memorization in the outside world.

When students speak of their doubt of reciting poetry, teachers speak of how it helps you with other memorization skills. This argument, however, does not make sense. What is the point of memorizing a poem that you don’t understand, when you have to memorize different things in different classes? Should you spend time in class learning how to recite poetry the correct way, or learn how to write emails instead? In my opinion, emails will help you in the long run. The reason is because in life, you will most likely not be in a situation where you have to recite a poem, but there are many situations where you will have to write emails or other documents.

Another argument for not reciting poetry is based on how the teachers grade it. Teachers expect that the student will recite the poem with appropriate body language and poise. Students are also expected to project their voice and have rhythm, proper pronunciation, and tone for the poem. Students who are expected to do this are not taking a speech class or a drama class, but rather are enrolled in English. Students may memorize the poem perfectly, but still will be counted off because their presentation is lacking by the teacher’s standards.

The final argument is that this skill is useless because everything can be provided to you through technology. Technology is the way of the future and it is growing day by day. This is why you should not have to learn to memorize any kind of poetry or useless information because you can look it up in a matter of seconds. Students in the upcoming years should not have to recite or memorize any useless information because, in the real world, they will be able to find it on the internet.



Recently, Prep students have had to suffer through the agony that is poetry recitation for a grade.

Photo courtesy of Poetry Out Loud