



## RISE UP! AN AMERICAN CURRICULUM

INSPIRED BY HAMILTON:  
AN AMERICAN MUSICAL



# PROTEST

#### THEME

Embodiment

#### LENGTH

40 min

#### GRADE LEVEL

9-12

#### SUBJECT

Theater /  
Performing Arts

By Jessa Brie Moreno

*Students read and reflect on Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poem, Protest, with special attention to how its rhythm can be embodied and the interplay with the poem's rhythm and content.*

Students are called to perform different spoken word poems, exploring rhythm, and to use creative writing and spoken word strategies to tell authentic, personal counter-narratives.

# LESSON OBJECTIVES

## CREATIVE INQUIRIES

*How can we more deeply engage students in telling authentic, personal counter-narratives using creative writing and spoken word strategies?*

*How can we create moments of critical reflection and analysis of American culture and society, in which students can articulate individual narratives as part of a larger American Story?*

*How can students understand and articulate the significance of belonging and cultural “otherness” through personal letter-writing?*

## EQUIPMENT

*Required for session...*

- Projector, laptop, wifi
- Speakers

## MATERIALS

*Resources and readings...*

- “Protest” poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, [read by Amanda Palmer](#)
- “Protest” poem: [Background, context, and poem text](#)

## OUTLINE

**Activity #1:** Listen & Explore the Rhythm of Protest Poem  
**Critical Reflection**

## HAMILTON HOOK

**Hamilton Mixtape:** [My Shot](#)



### DIVE DEEPER

In this Hamilton Mixtape performance, contemporary hip hop artists remix the original soundtrack through their own lens and artistry. Identify rhythms and forms used, as well as the disruptions and personalizations that make this work distinct from the original.

## SESSION 1 OF 1

# LISTEN & EXPLORE THE RHYTHM OF PROTEST POEM

## SESSION OVERVIEW

### LENGTH

40 min

### GRADE LEVEL

9-12

### SUBJECT

Theater /

Performing Arts

## INTRODUCTION

Students read and reflect on Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poem, *Protest*, with special attention to how its rhythm can be embodied and the interplay with the poem's rhythm and content. Students are also called to perform different spoken word poems, exploring rhythm.

## SESSION 1 OF 1

*Listen & Explore the  
Rhythm of Protest Poem*

## ACTIVITY #1 OF 1

### SET-UP

Listen to [Protest Poem](#) by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, read by Amanda Palmer.

### INTRO

From [Brainpickings](#): "Protest" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (November 5, 1850–October 30, 1919), from her 1914 book *Poems of Problems* (public domain public library), written at the peak of the Women's Suffrage movement and just as WWI was about to erupt. Background, context, and poem text.

### PROMPT

#### Heartbeat:

- 1) Invite students to hear the rhythm of the text by placing their hand on their chest and tapping out the words.

*The sound pattern is: Unstressed Syllable followed by a Stressed/Emphasised Syllable.*

### TASK

Try listening to the poem through the heartbeat as prompted above, with the whole class.

Note the lines which do not adhere to the rhythm and discuss:

- Why might the author have chosen to switch it up in these particular places?
- How might these lines be read?

### REMIX!

How would you rephrase this poem for today, using your own words and perspective... while keeping the 10-syllable-per-line rhythm?

# CRITICAL REFLECTION

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## Reflection Prompts

- What moved you?
- How did rhythm, form, and embodying language help you understand the meaning of the poem and the author's intent?
- How does this poem or the "remixed" work of your classmates relate to issues facing the U.S. today?