

POET LIFE

Lesson Plan

It's important to teach youth about the dangers of tobacco, but it's also important to inform them about the ways that the tobacco industry targets kids and communities to fuel addiction and sustain their deadly business. This lesson plan aims to remind kids about the dangers of tobacco, inform them about the tobacco industry's nefarious actions, and inspire them to use their voice to call for change. After developing their poems in class, we encourage you to celebrate the students' accomplishments by hosting either an open mic where the students can recite what they wrote or a poetry slam where they can compete in a friendly competition. [The Poet Life](#) will then select 10-15 students amongst the participating schools in your city to be featured in a city-wide showcase.

Learning Objectives

By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Learn about the harms of tobacco products and why it's important to stay tobacco-free.
- Understand how the tobacco industry deliberately targets kids and communities to sustain its business.
- Middle school students will learn how to identify and write an acrostic poem.
- High school students will learn how to write a spoken word poem.
- Use their knowledge and artistry to make the change they want to see in the world.

Length

- 1-2 hours (one or two class sessions)

Materials

- [The Facts About Tobacco PDF](#)
- Writing materials or computers
- Television or Smart Board to play YouTube videos
- Pens or pencils
- Paper or notebooks
- Art Supplies (optional)



Big Tobacco Lesson Plan

- Prior to the start of the class, listen to the audio of the [Teacher's Introduction of Big Tobacco](#) as a reference.
- Begin the lesson by asking students to share what they know about tobacco use.
- Ask students to read the [Facts About Tobacco PDF](#). Then have them share surprising or new things that they learned.
- Prompt deeper thought with questions that encourage students to reflect on:
 - What are the impacts of tobacco use (health, finance, relationships, secondhand smoke exposure, environmental effect, etc.)
 - Why are there misconceptions about tobacco products? Where do these misconceptions come from?
 - Why does the tobacco industry want to target kids at a young age?
 - Why do they think people start using tobacco in the first place? Encourage them to understand that in addition to personal choices and circumstances, the tobacco industry plays a large role in hooking kids on addictive, deadly products.
 - What do they think should be done to stop Big Tobacco from targeting kids?
 - What other industries operate similarly to Big Tobacco? Can any lessons be learned from those movements?
 - What role do young people play in demanding action from elected officials and industries like Big Tobacco?

Poem Activity Options

Ask your students to reflect on how this discussion makes them feel. Then have them work on conveying these thoughts in poetic form. Whether it's a rap, haiku, free verse, sonnet, etc., remind them that poetry is an excellent way to reflect, make new connections, and share knowledge with others.

Middle School - Acrostic Poem Idea

If students need a structure to get started, an acrostic poem is a great way to get started. Acrostic poetry uses each letter in a word to begin a new sentence about the topic. Have students start with a tobacco-related word and use the letters to write sentences about what they learned and how they feel. To make this activity more interactive, watch the YouTube video, ["Learning Acrostic Poems with Darian"](#).

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Acrostic Poem Example

- **S**moking is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. — more than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.
- **M**enthol cigarettes have been deliberately marketed toward Black Americans for decades.
- **O**nce you are addicted to nicotine, it is very hard to quit.
- **K**ids are a huge part of the tobacco industry's business.
- **I** commit to a tobacco-free life!
- **N**o tobacco product — cigarettes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, etc. — is safe.
- **G**lobally, the burden of tobacco use is greatest in low- and middle-income countries.

High School – Spoken Word Poem Idea

- A. As a class, watch a YouTube video about [“How To Write Spoken Word Poetry”](#) taught by Cynthia Amoah. In this brief video, Cynthia explains how to write spoken word poetry. She discusses the concept of an idea and how to grow it into a poem by telling a story. Give the class some time to discuss their thoughts and ideas after watching the video.
- B. Then, as a class, watch a YouTube video of the Spoken Word poem, [“How Long Will You Target Me”](#) by Ryon Everidge. It is a spoken word piece about how the tobacco industry uses flavored tobacco to target the Black Community and other communities of color.

Plan An Open Mic or A Poetry Slam

- Refer to [Poetry Event Guide](#).

