A poem about India
Secondary Lesson Plan

This lesson plan was developed by Curriculum Corporation.

Source

Learning area
English

Level
Middle secondary

Description
Students read and discuss the poem *Khwab* before writing poems of their own.

Purpose
To provide students with the opportunity to explore impressionistic poetry about place.

Duration
About 50 minutes

Possible outcomes
In relation to *English — a curriculum profile for Australian schools*, this lesson can contribute to the achievement of outcomes in all strands.

Materials required
A class set of the poem *Khwab*, Handout 1 (from below)

Procedure

1. **Introduction**
   Introduce the lesson by explaining that the class is going to read a poem by an Australian poet, Michael Hyde. The poem is *Khwab*, a Hindi word meaning 'dream'. Give students the handout and read the poem aloud or ask a student to do so. Without discussion, ask students to write a few sentences or phrases about their first impressions of the poem.
2. **Discussion**

Clarify unfamiliar words. For example:
- the *Ganges* is a major river of India, sacred to Hindus
- *Garuda* is the name of a mythical bird;
- *Madras* and *Calcutta* are cities in India
- *Rajasthan* is a state

Use students’ first impressions to begin a discussion of the poem. Possible areas of discussion include:
- the overall mood of the poem
- the point of view of the poet
- the contrast between ‘old’ and ‘new’ images of India
- the use of colour imagery
- the meaning of the final lines of the poem

3. **Writing task**

The poet has drawn on all five senses. Discuss particular parts of the poem that refer to each of the senses. Ask students to write (in poetry or prose) their own impressions of a place, drawing on all the senses. Share student work in the class.

**Extension activities**

Students imagine flying above a familiar city and write a poem in the style of *Khwab* that captures the ‘mirrored fragments’ of the city.

Students write a prose account of their impressions of India after reading the poem.

**Acknowledgements**

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**Related resources**

- *Access Asia: Secondary Teaching and Learning Units*
- *Into India*
Handout

Khwab

In a dream
I flew across the blue ink heavens,
Through the air
Passing Broome red underneath as
Garuda crossing the Indian Ocean
To India.
As the sun rose
And unsettled the grey mist on the Ganges
I sat in a boat
With rhythmic creaking oars
To the slap thud of washing clothes
On stony steps,
To the ringing bell of funeral pyres
Vultures flapping, rose petals following
In the wake of burning dead
And on into the fumed traffic
Crimson-saried women flying in the air
Scooter taxis with alto horns
Rushing through crowds and sacred cows.
Computers flashing
In canyons of glass and stone
White smoke curling, incense
Floating like the women bathing,
Combing jet black hair
While the Ganges ran down their shoulders
And in the dark of the fiery furnace
Men and women slept where they worked
Making black iron for bread.
Sweet smells of Madras
The rushing Calcutta streets
Moon shadows on flute tunes
In the temple
The four-clap beat and the hum of the drum
Dusty men sleeping on stone
And balancing women with baskets of rubble.
Rolling camels in Rajasthan
Two-humped shadows in the slipping sand
A thousand mirrored fragments
Held in the palm of my hand,
Like infinity
`And eternity in an hour'