

# Comparing Poetic Voices

This handout is designed to help students understand and compare different poetic voices and styles. Through examples and exercises, students will explore how poets use voice to convey emotion, perspective, and unique style.

## Examples of Poetic Voices:

1. **Walt Whitman**: Known for his free verse and expansive, inclusive voice, Whitman's poetry often embraces a democratic, everyman perspective.

- Example: "I Hear America Singing"

2. **Emily Dickinson**: In contrast, Dickinson's voice is introspective, concise, and often explores themes of death and immortality with a unique, personal perspective.

- Example: "Because I Could Not Stop for Death"

## Questions to Prompt Comparison:

- How does the voice in Whitman's poetry differ from that in Dickinson's?
- What emotions or themes are emphasized through the voice of each poet?
- How does the structure of the poem contribute to the poet's voice?

## Exercises:

1. **Compare and Contrast**: Choose two poems by different poets. Write a short essay comparing their voices. Consider how each poet's style, word choice, and structure contribute to their unique voice.

2. **Mimic a Voice**: Select a poet whose voice you admire. Write a poem in their style, attempting to mimic their voice. Reflect on the process: What was challenging? What did you learn about the poet's voice?

3. **Create Your Own Voice**: Write a poem that reflects your own voice. Consider how you can use structure, word choice, and style to convey your perspective and emotions.

By examining different poetic voices, students can gain a deeper understanding of how poets use language to express their unique views of the world.