



Teacher/Guidance Notes

Warm Up

1.

- Individually or in pairs, students make a list under the heading: *What it is to be Human*
- Class shares ideas and these are written for viewing.
- ditto first exercise, under the new heading: *What it is NOT to be Human*
- Class share for viewing. Compare the two columns, discuss

2. Acrostic using the word HUMAN [see PDF]

Huge or *[working on opposites]*
Undersized,
Mean or
Affectionate:
Normal

Humorous *[simple vocabulary exercise: positive words]*
Undefeated *[interesting letter to have to use!]*
Magnificent
Adventurous
Necessary *[not that easy either!]*

Explanation

National Poetry Day in 2005 was all about choosing a poem to send to the *Future*, the theme for writing that year. Of the poems nominated by The Poetry Society, Adrian Mitchell's 'Human Being' was selected.

Read this poem aloud – perhaps discuss its 'message', and refer to Press Release for more details [see PDF]

Exercise

Students write their own 'Poem for the Future'. It is best to provide a structure, so it could be based on Adrian Mitchell's poem and students substitute their own lines to either replace or add to any of his, or a very effective but simple idea is a list poem. For this one, students can use alternating lines [see PDF for following three examples]:

To be human is....
Not to be human is....
To be human is....
Not to be human is....

This will provide support for their writing but also allow them to focus back on the first warm-up exercise.

Demonstrate how contrasts/juxtapositions can provide powerful effects:

To be human is to plant a tree
Not to be human is to destroy a rain forest
To be human is to love someone else
Not to be human is to just love yourself

Also, stress the powerful effect of being metaphoric:

To be human is to talk like a flower
Not to be human is to smile in black
To be human is to exhale clouds
Not to be human is to only speak words

Rules: avoid rhyming at all costs! If students must use rhyme, give them limits, for example, only one rhyming couplet per five pairs of unrhymed couplets (this in itself could provide a useful structure/framework).

Next Stage

As an optional (but hopefully amusing exercise) students can e-mail their poems to a given e-mail address in outer space (!). They have a two-week period from the end of the lesson/presentation to complete this independently. Dates will need to be given.

You can set up an 'out of office or vacation' email, for example in gmail

<https://support.google.com/mail/answer/25922?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

Your automated message can be set simply as

Received

or more expansively

We are away from our world visiting other galaxies and will get back to you as soon as possible. It can take aeons. Can you wait that long?

and similar, or

We are not human like you, but we find you interesting. We will be visiting – IN PEACE – and look forward to meeting you and other human beings.

[maybe you have to be careful about age/age group when promising a visit...!]

or an acrostic return, like

Humans are still
Evolving and we would
Like to visit when nothing but
Love is the complete circle of your
Orbital

or one of your own making.