

# Making a Poem Video

by Taylor Johnson

**Education level:** Junior high and/or high school

**Genre:** Poetry, Hybrid

**Time frame:** Multiple class periods

**Objective:** To synthesize an oral and visual representation of a poem into a digital video format.

**Prior knowledge and skills:** Students should have already written and edited a piece of poetry and recorded it using audio recording software.

**Required materials:** Video-making software, such as iMovie or WeVideo, mp3 file of an audio recording of the original poem, and a digital copy of the poem text for reference. (Note: the instructions in this lesson will focus on how to work within iMovie specifically, so if you're using another software such as WeVideo, you will need to make slight adjustments to the steps in accordance with the mechanics/requirements of your chosen software type.)

**Literary model:** No

## Sequence of Activities:

1. Open the video software program (e.g. iMovie) on a computer and title the project. (In iMovie, you can do this by clicking on "Projects" in the upper left corner and then typing the name of the poem in the box that arises.)
2. Import media (under the "My Media" tab) by clicking on the downward pointing arrow. Locate your poetry recording where it is saved in your downloads or desktop, select it, and then click "import all."
3. Once the media is imported, you'll be able to drag and drop the audio clip into the sequence builder.
4. Next, in iMovie, click on the "Titles" tab and choose the "Reveal" style of title slide. Click and drag your first title box down onto the sequence builder. You'll need to add multiple title slides for the text visuals of this project. Choose the first slide for the title of the poem and the second slide for the author's name.
5. To edit a slide in iMovie, double click on it in the builder sequence below and then view the slide text in the preview display to the right. Then, replace "Title Text Here" with the text you want your slide to have (in the case of the first two slides, the poem name and author name). You can also change size and font style, but keep in mind that simpler is better.
6. Drag the audio a little to the right so that it starts immediately after the author and title slides.
7. Next comes the main work: create a sequence of visual slides breaking the poem into short phrases which you synchronize to your audio track. Hit the play button to listen to the audio (in iMovie, click on the right-pointing triangle in the preview screen). Given the limited space on each slide, don't add more than four to five words per slide. As you add each new slide to your

sequence, cross-check the preview to ensure each slide with its short phrase from the poem lines up with the corresponding spoken words of the audio. Ideally, the words of the audio will synchronize exactly with the appearance of words on the slide. Adjust the size (or number of seconds) of each slide to match the audio speed/pace of words spoken in the corresponding audio. To resize a slide, click on its left edge and drag it to the left to shorten it, or drag to the right to lengthen it. Note: You may be able to copy and paste the words for each slide from a digital copy of your poem into the slide text for efficiency, but you may have to type the words directly on each slide. Carefully cross-reference the digital copy of the poem with the audio to ensure there's a match as you work.

8. After you have added all the word slides for the poem and synchronized each slide to the corresponding audio, you're ready to add music (totally optional!). If you know how to make original music in GarageBand, import your finished music track to iMovie by uploading it to your project under the "My Media" tab. If using music from another published source, ensure you have permission to include it. Choose music that does not interfere with the words of your poem—instrumental only is best.

9. Adjust the audio levels of your two tracks so that your poetry audio track isn't drowned out by the music audio track. In iMovie, there's a line that runs straight through each audio track, and if you click and drag it down or up, it'll change the percentage in volume of the track. Set the poem audio track to 200% or louder; set the music track at no more than 10% to 50%. But you'll need to listen to your own recording mix and adjust accordingly.

10. Make the credits slides. Click the "Titles" tab and find the scrolling credits option, or use any other option of slide style, taking into consideration an appropriate length of text per slide.

11. Watch your finished video through at least once from the preview screen to make sure that you like the way everything looks and sounds. When it is complete and free of errors, in iMovie, go to "File" tab, choose "Share", and then from the drop-down choose "File" again. Change the resolution quality and compression options if you want (defaults work well: resolution - 720p 60, quality - high, compression - faster). Then, click "Next." If you forgot to name your movie earlier, name it here, and then choose where you want to save the video (to your desktop or another folder). Then click "Save" to start processing.

12. When the export is finished processing, you'll see a notification, or check back at the save location later.

13. Upload the finished movie file to your favorite cloud folder (e.g. Google Drive) so you'll have access to it from any location. Then, you can email friends and family a shareable link from your cloud folder. Or, you can upload your poem video to YouTube and/or share widely on your social media!