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# Imprint: Writing Lessons

## Old Gold: Leonard Cohen

### Duration:

8 minutes (approx.)

### Program Description:

Writer Barbara Gowdy interviews the legendary Canadian poet/songwriter Leonard Cohen in this segment from 1993.

This segment would be appropriate to use in a unit on Poetry.

### Background Information:

BPN: 883433

"Literary gold from the Imprint archives"

*Writing Lessons* is a magazine-style archival series with links to creative writing and Canadian literature curricula. Based on TVO's long-running books and writers series *Imprint*, *Writing Lessons* features a lively mix of interviews, literary panels, mini-documentaries, author profiles, and on-the-street features that will engage students and enhance their study of creative writing or English literature.

For more on Imprint's Writing Lessons, please visit [www.tvo.org/imprint](http://www.tvo.org/imprint)

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Lisa Fernandes at [lfernandes@tvontario.org](mailto:lfernandes@tvontario.org)

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**Curriculum Connections:**

**ENGLISH**

**EWC 4U0 The Writer's Craft**

**Investigating the Writer's Craft**

**Analyzing Models of Writing**

- assess the relationships among the ideas in a passage, its purpose and audience, and the writer's choices of techniques, diction, voice, and style

**Understanding the Writer's Craft**

- analyze interviews with and articles by a variety of writers about the craft and practice of writing to increase knowledge of the techniques, skills, and processes of writing

- analyze selected works and articles by writers from around the world to assess their practices and beliefs about writing

**Practising the Writer's Craft**

**Producing Effective Writing**

- write frequently to develop and practice writing skills, including incorporating vivid words and phrases, expressing ideas precisely, and experimenting with diction, syntax, sentence patterns, imagery, voice, and style, and maintain a portfolio containing their writing experiments throughout the course

- organize information and ideas effectively to suit the form, purpose for writing, and intended audience

- select appropriate techniques, diction, voice, and style and use them effectively to communicate ideas and experiences

- revise drafts to produce effective written work by refining form, technique, diction, voice, and style

**Assessing Their Own and Others' Written Work**

- assess the creative choices made in producing their written work

- assess the content, organization, style, and impact of drafts and final versions of informational and literary written work produced by peers,

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providing objective and constructive suggestions

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### Viewing Questions:

1. What observations does Cohen make about the value of rhyme and rhythm in poetry?
2. Why does Cohen write?
3. What ideas does Cohen focus on in his work?

### Post-Viewing

#### Activity:

Watch the 1967 National Film Board animated short of Cohen's "A Kite is a Victim" (or select a favourite Cohen poem) and examine how it does (or does not) reflect the views about writing Cohen expresses in the interview.

### Assessment

#### Writing Exercise:

***NB.** For this activity, the teacher must select a variety of images from magazines, art books, postcards, calendars, etc. Try to choose images, which are connected by one or more threads/ideas/influences. Then have students complete the following process.*

- View a series of images.
- In response to these selections, brainstorm as many vivid images as you can. Focus on specific and concrete details as well as general impressions.
- Cut apart your brainstorming page so that you have only one image on each slip of paper.
- Rearrange these images in a sequence, shuffling the slips of paper until you have a sequence, which appeals to you.
- Write around these images – tying them together with some kind of narrative, inner monologue, or stream of consciousness – to form the initial draft of a free verse poem.

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- Share your initial draft with your workshop group and/or with the class.
- Based on this peer feedback, polish your poem for inclusion in the class anthology.

### Related Resources

“The Leonard Cohen Files”

<http://www.leonardcohenfiles.com>

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