

Lesson Plan

The Big Smoke

By Adrian Matejka

Battle Royal Lesson Plan

By Maria Judd M.A.T.

Materials needed:

“Battle Royal” by Adrian Matejka and the passage “Battle Royal” from *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison



Part 1

- Students read the poem, [Battle Royal by Adrian Matejka](#) aloud. Have several students read it aloud in class. Ask them to try not to pause at the end of a line unless there is a form of punctuation there.
- Then, play the video of the author reading the poem. [Adrian Matejka reading \(the first is Battle Royal\)](#)
- Show slides, [Battle Royal: a poem to introduce The Big Smoke](#) and explain how Jack Johnson’s favorite author was Shakespeare. During Shakespeare’s time, a popular pastime was Bear Baiting.
- The teacher will ask students to take notes, share answers from slide questions, show the evidence they found in the poem and how they apply to the poem.



Part 2

- Students will read silently the prose version of *Battle Royal* by Ralph Ellison. [Ralph Ellison's Battle Royal scene](#)
- Have a discussion of how a “Battle” like this would happen in the south and everyone condoned such awful behavior, including figure heads such as Mayors and Superintendents. Then, the men ironically gave one student a scholarship after this scene.
- Ask students to list images of both texts on a T-chart to help students pinpoint details of each text. Then they can incorporate examples into the writing for part 3 of the lesson.

Part 3

- Discuss how prose can be changed to poetry to emphasize different ideas and topics in ways prose may not. How can both be effective? What are different reactions for readers?
- Students will look at both texts and complete the [Battle Royal Writing Assignment](#) to demonstrate their knowledge and interpretations of the texts.