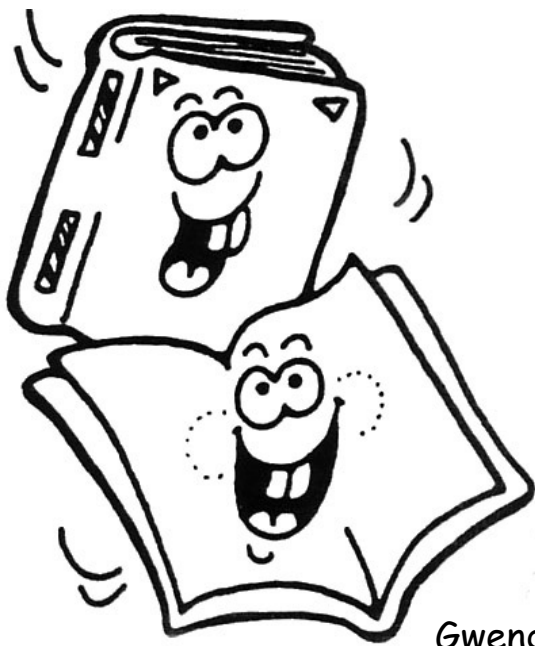


The Promise of Poetry to Boost Vulnerable Readers' Fluency and Comprehension



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Poetry + Powerful Reading Instruction = Success

Powerful reading instruction is comprised of the following components:

- Frequent read-aloud experiences
- Engaging conversations
- Playful phonemic awareness activities
- Explicit phonics instruction
- Robust vocabulary teaching
- Thoughtful comprehension lessons
- Meaningful fluency development activities
- Multilevel, flexible, small group instruction
- Ample time to read independently
- Effective writing instruction
- Integrated content area studies

Tips for Next Generation Shared Reading

Source: *Who's Doing the Work?* (Burkins & Yaris, 2016)

- Connect shared reading to read aloud and guided reading
- Provide students with multiple ways to access texts
- Stop at strategic points to engage students in process-oriented conversations
- Collaborate with students to work through challenging parts of text
- Invite reflection

Poetic Picture Books for Shared Reading: Teaching Decoding Strategies

- *Hello Hello* (Wenzel, 2018)
- *Some Bugs* (DiTerlizzi, 2014)

Why Use Poetry to Teach Vulnerable Readers?

- Poetry Is Short!
- Poetry Plays with Language
- Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words
- Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme
- Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary
- Poetry Is Perfect for Fluency Practice
- Poetry Boosts Comprehension
- Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic
- Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing

Source: Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching struggling readers with poetry: Engaging poems with mini-lessons that target and teach phonics, sight words, fluency, & more—laying the foundation for reading success.* Scholastic.

Look! Look!

by Jack Prelutsky



Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me,
a book all filled
with poetry,
a book that I
can read
and read.

A book!

Exactly
what I need.

Look! Look!

A book
to open wide,
and marvel
at the words inside,
to sit
and savor
quietly.

Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me.

Incorporate Poetry Into Your Daily Literacy Routines

A Few of My Favorite Song Picture Books

Footloose (Loggins, 2016)

Groovy Joe Ice Cream and Dinosaurs (Litwin, 2016)

Octopus's Garden (Starr, 2014)

Sing (Raposo & Lichtenheld, 2013)

Take Me Home Country Road (Denver, 2005)

There Was an Old Monster (Emberley, 2009)

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Look! Look!" by Jack Prelutsky

Create a Poetry Binder

Enlarge a copy of "Look! Look!" and chorally read and reread for enjoyment. This poem would be an ideal opening poem for students' "Poetry Binders."

How Shall We Read Our Poems Today?

1. Teacher Read Aloud
2. Fill-in-the-Blanks
3. Tag-Team Reading
4. Choral Reading
5. Turn Up the Volume or Turn Down the Volume
6. Speed It Up! or Slow It Down!
7. Clap the Beat
8. Readers Theater
9. As a Round
10. Sing to a Favorite Tune like "Twinkle, Twinkle"

Adapted from "10 Ways to Read a Poem" by Mary Bigler, Judson Literacy Conference 2010

More Teaching Ideas for "Look! Look!"

Once you've read "Look! Look!" for enjoyment, revisit the poem with students to highlight one or more of the following literacy skills:

Phonics: /-ook/ word family

Fluency: Using punctuation to make meaning

Vocabulary: Vivid verbs—marvel, savor

Writing Conventions: Exclamation mark (See Mini-Lesson in *M-by-M Writing*, p. 90)

- *Exclamation Mark* (Rosenthal, 2013)
- *Mine!* (Mack, 2017)

Good Books, Good Times!

Good books.

Good times.

Good stories.

Good rhymes.

Good beginnings.

Good ends.

Good people.

Good friends.

Good fiction.

Good facts.

Good adventures.

Good acts.

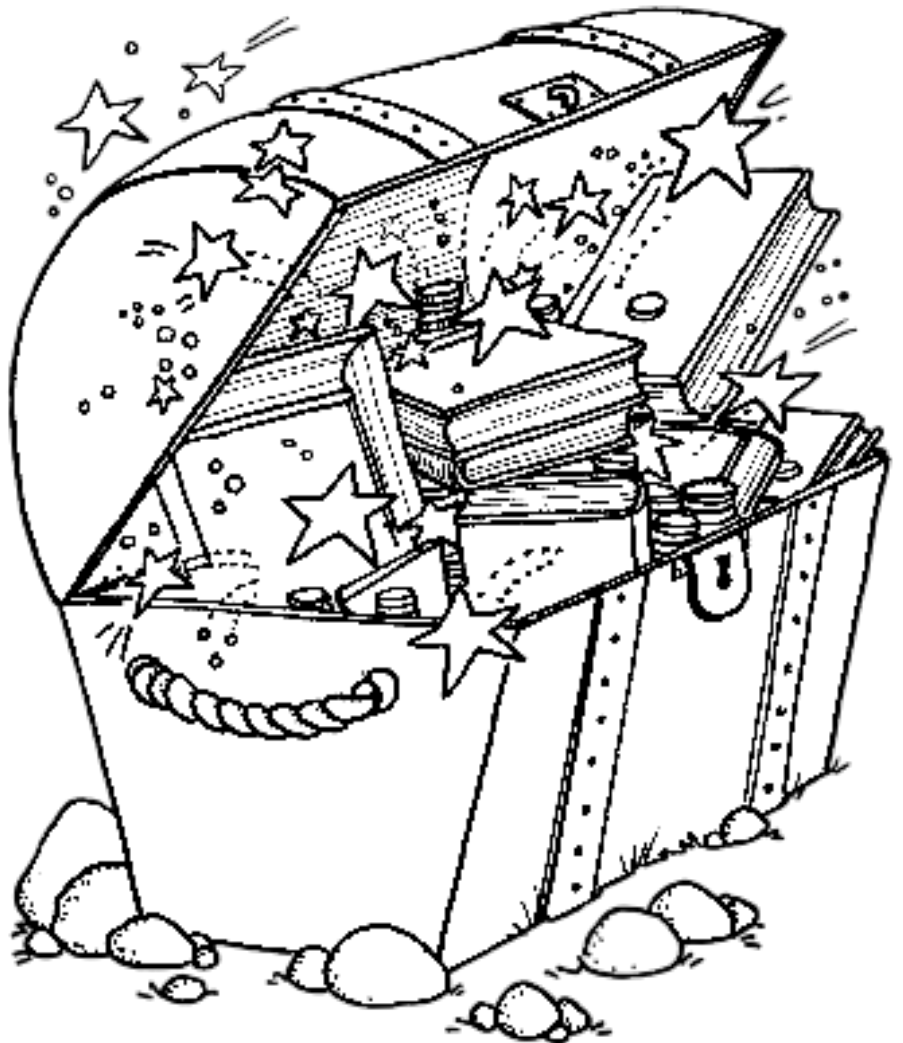
Good stories.

Good rhymes.

Good books

Good times.

Lee Bennett Hopkins



Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times*. (H. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins. (p. 17)

Books to the Ceiling

Books to the ceiling, books to the sky.

My piles of books are a mile high.

How I love them!

How I need them!

I'll have a long beard by the time I read them.

-Arnold Lobel



Why Use Poetry to Teach Vulnerable Readers?

Poetry Is Short!

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for “Good Books, Good Times!” by Lee Bennett Hopkins

Celebrate Books!

Share this poem at the beginning of the year to spark a conversation about students' favorite books. Return to “Good Books, Good Times!” again at the end of the year to ask students to make a class list of treasured tales.

Picture Book Pairings—Books That Feature Reluctant Readers

Miss Brooks Loves Books! (and I don't) (Bottner, 2010)

Miss Malarkey Leaves No Reader Behind (Finchler & O'Malley, 2006)

Read All About It! (Bush & Bush, 2008)

Poetry Plays with Language

Rhyming Words—*Roses Are Red Poems* (See M-by-M Writing p. 114)

Adjectives—“What I Told Mrs. Morris When She Asked How I Was Feeling Today” *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies* (Nesbitt, 2007, p. 24)

Prefixes—“The Zoo Was in An Uproar” *Something Big Has Been Here* (Prelutsky, 1990, pp. 62-63)

Haiku—

Guess Who, Haiku (Caswell, 2016)

Guyku: A Year of Haiku for Boys (Raczka, 2010)

Hi, Koo! A Year of Seasons (Muth, 2014)

Won Ton (Wardlaw, 2011); *Won Ton and Chopstick* (Wardlaw, 2015)

What I Told Mrs. Morris When She Asked How I Was Feeling Today

“Grumbly, grouchy,
groggy, grumpy,
sleepy, slouchy,
fussy, frumpy,
whiny, weary,
cranky, crazy,
dingy, dreary,
loopy, lazy,
dizzy, drowsy,
crusty, crummy,
loony, lousy,
scruffy, scummy,
bleary, batty,
shaky, shabby,
rusty, ratty,
cruddy, crabby.
That describes it,
Mrs. Morris.
Thank you for the
new thesaurus.”

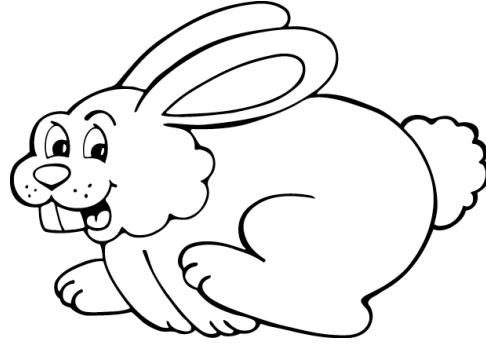


Ken Nesbitt

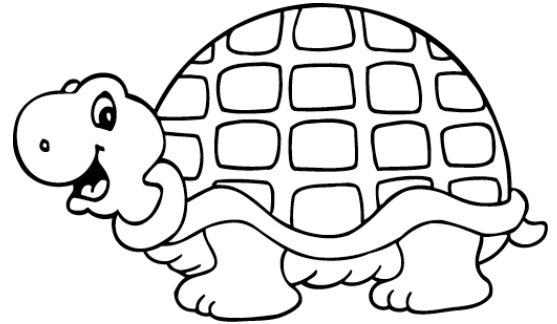
Source: Nesbitt, K. (2007). *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (p. 24)
Learning Target: Adjectives

The Zoo Was in an Uproar

The zoo was in an uproar,
the rabbits stamped their feet,
the pigs expressed displeasure,
the gnus refused to eat,
“Disgraceful!” gabbed the gibbons,
“Barbaric!” boomed the bear,
“Distressing!” wept a leopard,
the ferrets fumed, **“Unfair!”**



“Repellant!” puled a puma,
“BIZZARE!” a badger bawled,
the donkeys were disgusted,
the pandas were appalled,
the camels ran for cover,
the turtle fled her shell,
the seals stayed underwater,
a walrus felt unwell.



“How wicked!” whined a weasel,
“UNCALLED FOR!” cawed the crows,
the tigers lost their tempers,
a polecat held his nose,
“Unseemly!” screamed the eagles,
the lions roared with wrath,
that day the hippopotamus
forgot to take a bath.



Jack Prelutsky

Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. New York: Greenwillow. (pp. 62-63)
Learning Target: Prefixes

Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for “Cinderella’s Double Life” by Marilyn Singer

Readers Theater—Divide the class or guided reading group into half. Make a copy of one side of the poem for each group member. Provide time for students to practice and polish their performance. If they enjoy this poem, students can perform others from the book *Mirror Mirror* (Singer, 2010).

A Poetry Challenge—Challenge students to write a poem by following Marilyn’s Singer’s lead and using the same words forward and backwards.

Singer, M. (2013). *Follow, follow*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dial.

In Singer’s sequel to the book *Mirror Mirror* she creates another collection of “reverso” poems about fairy tales.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry; Different Perspectives

Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme

“My Sister is a Sissy” by Jack Prelutsky

Meaning Vocabulary—Synonyms

In this poem, Prelutsky uses the synonyms *afraid*, *terrified*, and *scared* to describe the way the sister feels. Build on these words by creating a word web of all the different ways writers can say *scared*. Post the web in your room for future reference. (*M-by-M Writing* p. 59)

Picture Book Pairing

Scaredy Squirrel (Watt, 2008)

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 41

Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary

Three Read Aloud Words

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 26

Poetry Is Perfect for Fluency Practice

Cooke, L. (2013). *A little book of sloth*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Join Lucy Cooke, founder of the Sloth Appreciation Society, and visit Slothville, a sanctuary in Costa Rica for orphaned and injured sloths, to learn more about sloth’s mellow ways.

Teaching Ideas: Create a multi-genre text set using: “Slow Sloth’s Slow Song” (p. 65) of Jack Prelutsky’s book *Something Big Has Been Here* (1990) and *Let’s Look at Sloths* (Piehl, 2011); Fluency Fun Lesson (*M-by-M Reading* p. 71) (For a text set about Rocks see *M-by-M Writing* p. 152)

Cinderella's Double Life

Isn't life unfair?

Stuck in a corner,

while they're waiting for a

chance

with the prince,

dancing waltz after waltz

at the ball,

I'll be shining

these shoes

till the clock strikes midnight.

Till the clock strikes midnight,

these shoes!

I'll be shining

at the ball,

dancing waltz after waltz

with the prince

while they're waiting for a

chance,

stuck in a corner.

Isn't life unfair?

*Source: Singer, M. (2010). *Mirror mirror*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dutton.*

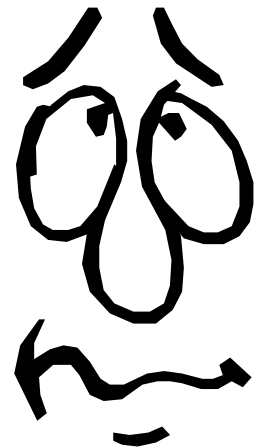


My Sister Is a Sissy

My sister is a sissy,
she's afraid of dogs and cats,
a toad can give her tantrums,
and she's terrified of rats,
she screams at things with stingers,
things that buzz, and things that crawl,
just the shadow of a spider
sends my sister up the wall.

A lizard makes her shiver,
and a turtle makes her squirm,
she positively cringes
at the prospect of a worm,
she's afraid of things with feathers,
she's afraid of things with fur,
she's scared of almost everything—
how come I'm scared of her?

Jack Prelutsky



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1984). *The new kid on the block*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 138).

Slow Sloth's Slow Song

I am a sloth
a sloth am I
I live in trees
But I can't fly
I do not run
I am so slow
But I am where
I want to go.

..... Jack Prelutsky



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 65)

Twaddletalk Tuck

by Jack Prelutsky



I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk
and I talk when I run and I talk when I walk
and I talk when I hop and I talk when I creep
and I talk when I wake and I talk when I sleep
and I talk when it's wet and I talk when it's dry
and I talk when I laugh and I talk when I cry
and I talk when I jump and I talk when I land
and I talk when I sit and I talk when I stand
and I talk and I talk into anyone's ear
and I talk and I talk when there's nobody near
and I talk when I'm hoarse and my voice is a squawk
for I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk.

Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 64)

Poetry Boosts Comprehension

Can You Infer What This Poem Is About?

Hungry monster, you grumble, wheeze, never seem full. You stop everywhere to graze and go off again in search of more for your keepers to shove between your greedy jaws. Do you digest when you rest?	Clues	My Schema
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"Garbage Truck" by Marci Ridlon

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (1987). *Click, rumble, roar: Poems about machines*. (A. H. Audette, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

Other Poems for Inferring

**These poems appear on reproducible pages in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

When Riddles Come Rumbling (Dotlich, 2001)

"Cat Kisses" by Bobbi Katz**

Source: Yolen, J. & Peters, A. F. (2007). *Here's a little poem: A very first book of poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. (p. 32)

"Crayons: A Rainbow Poem" by Jane Yolen**

Source: Paschen, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Poetry speaks to children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc. (p. 23)

"Groundhog" by Maria Fleming**

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (2005). *Days to celebrate: A full year of poetry, people, holidays, history, fascinating facts, and more*. (S. Alcorn, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 19)

Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic

Lewis, J. P. (2013). *Face bug*. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Welcome to the Face Bug Museum with close-up photographs and poems about 14 different bugs. Ends with "And Now a Word from our Bugs" that tells readers, in first person point-of-view, where each bug lives, how it grows, what it eats, and what eats it.

Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other science-related poetry titles see Poetry p. 107)

Singer, M. (2011). *Caterpillars*. Waynesville, NC: Earlylight.

In this poetic nonfiction book, Singer begins with a poem, then continues to use each line of the poem on a separate page to describe the lives and life cycles of caterpillars. In addition, she uses photographs, labels, and captions to enhance the information found in the running text.

Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other caterpillar poems see Poetry p. 94)

Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing Teach Students to Write Free Verse and List Poems

Sources: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, 2009)
Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Immerse Your Students in Poetry

Notice Poetic Devices

Alliteration

Mentor Texts:

A My Name is Alice (Bayer, 1984)

"Batty" found in *Laugh-eteria* (Florian, 1999)

Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke (Edwards, 1995)

Onomatopoeia

Mentor Texts:

Poems Go Clang (Gliori, 1997) *Out of print

Clang! Clang! Beep! Beep! Listen to the City (Burleigh, 2009) Picture book written with rhyming couplets

"Clatter" found in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* p. 73

Rhythm—Repetition of Words, Phrases, or Lines

Mentor Text:

I Love Our Earth (Martin & Sampson, 2006)

Shape—Concrete Poems

Mentor Texts:

Come to My Party and Other Shape Poems (Roemer, 2004)

Ode to A Commode (Cleary, 2015)

Rhyme

Mentor Text:

Billy & Milly: Short & Silly (Feldman, 2009)

Sensory Images

Mentor Text:

The Black Book of Colors (Cottin 2006/2008)

Teacher Resource: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* pp. 139-140

Comparison

Creative Conventions

"Coprolite" found in *Can You Dig It? and Other Poems* (Weinstock, 2010)

Once I Ate a Pie (MacLachlan & MacLachlan Charest, 2006)

Teacher Resource: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* pp. 140-141

Chart Your Findings

Kid-Friendly Definition of Genre: A poem is a special way to write about a topic using a small amount of powerful words. The ideas for poetry come from your life or from your imagination.

Characteristics of Genre:

- Plays with the sounds of words and rhythmic language patterns
- Uses vivid language to create sensory images
- Condenses ideas into a shorter format than prose
- Presented in various shapes, sizes, and forms

<i>Falling Down the Page: A Book of List Poems</i> (Heard, 2009)	This treasure trove of poems about life inside and outside school includes perfect poems for introducing various science topics, such as "Things to Do If You Are the Sun" by Bobbi Katz, or "Tree Song" by George Ella Lyon.
<i>Underneath My Bed: List Poems</i> (Cleary, 2017)	This book is part of the <i>Poetry Adventures</i> series. It begins with the definition of a list poem, and then continues with examples of list poems.

Poets Use Sound Patterns: Alliteration

"Batty"

by Douglas Florian

The pitcher pitched a pitcher.
The batter batted a bat.
The shortstop stopped short to see
The catcher catch a cat.

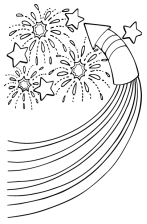
Source: Florian, D. (1999). *Laugh-eteria*. San Diego: Harcourt. (p.50)

Use alliteration to write a poem or a few tongue twisters!

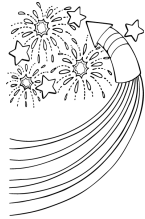
Poets Use Sound Words: Onomatopoeia

"The Fourth"

by Shel Silverstein



Oh
CRASH!
my
BASH!
it's
BANG
the
ZANG!
Fourth
WHOOSH!
of
BAROOOM!
July
WHEW!



Source: Silverstein, S. (1974). *Where the sidewalk ends*. New York: HarperCollins. (p. 15)

"Feet Talk"

by Constance Levy

Listen as your feet
tell you where they walk:
gravel crackles,
grass squeaks,
sneaker slaps
on hard concrete.

Tune in to
friendly chitchat
of feet meeting feet:
hurried shuffles, clacks, thumps
crossing busy streets.
Hear your feet talk
street talk.



Source: Katz, B. (2004). *Pocket poems*. (M. Hafner, Illus.). New York: Puffin.

Onomatopoeia Collection

©Walther & Phillips, 2009, Revised 4/4/15

Poets Use Sound Words: Onomatopoeia

"Windshield Wipers"

by Rebecca Kai Dotlich

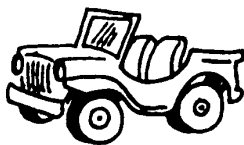
*Squishy, squish,
squeegy-squish,
tossing rain
side to side;
squish, squish,
squeegy-squish,
flap
flap,
puddle glide.
Slosh, slosh,
sloshing wash,
plish, plish
tidal toss.
Squeegy-squish,
squish, squish, sway . . .*

a perfect windshield
wiper day.

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (2005). *Days to celebrate: A full year of poetry, people, holidays, history, fascinating facts, and more.* (S. Alcorn, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 96).

"Ears Hear"

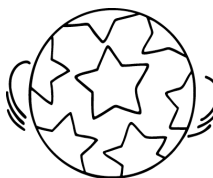
by Lucia and James L. Hymes, Jr.



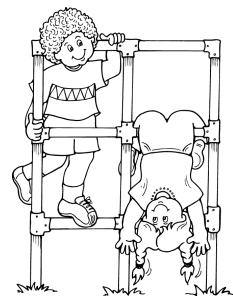
Flies buzz,
Motors roar.
Kettles hiss,
People snore.
Dogs bark,
Birds cheep.
Autos honk: *Beep! Beep!*



Winds sigh,
Shoes squeak.
Trucks honk,
Floors creak.
Whistles toot,
Bells clang.
Doors slam: *Bang! Bang!*



Kids shout,
Clocks ding.
Babies cry,
Phones ring.
Balls bounce,
Spoons drop.
People scream: *Stop! Stop!*



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1986). *Read-aloud rhymes for the very young.* (M. Brown, Illus.). New York: Knopf. (p. 84).

Onomatopoeia Collection

Shout! by Brod Bagert

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.

Clap your hands! Stomp your feet!
Feel the rhythm! Feel the beat!

Chunky words all chopped in chips!
Silky sounds upon your lips.

Tell a story—happy, sad;
Silly, sorry; good or bad.

Leap a leap, hop a hop.
See the ocean in one drop.

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.

Bagert, B. (2007). *Shout! Little Poems that Roar*. (S. Yoshikawa, Illus.). New York: Dial.



Inquiry Experience: Play with Words

(Source: *Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards* (Walther, 2015))

TARGET

I can use what I've learned from listening to and reading poetry to write my own poems.

PREPARATION

- Gather a variety of poetry books for immersion.
- Prepare 3- x 8-inch strips for use in the pocket chart or on an interactive whiteboard document to record nouns, verbs, and adjectives.
- Strategically pair learners with a poetry pal.
- Prepare a small zippered plastic bag with about 25 11/2- x 5-inch paper strips for each pair.

Picture Books about Poetry

All the World a Poem (Tibo, 2016)

Daniel Finds a Poem (Archer, 2016)

Stanza (Esbaum, 2009)

Will You Read to Me? (Cazet, 2007)

EXPLANATION

Although the standards for narrative writing don't specifically call for poetry writing, I believe it is essential for students to write poetry in order to better analyze the craft and structure of poetry. This belief is echoed by poet, educator, and writer Sara Holbrook, who shared the following reasons to read and write poetry with students (Judson's Literacy in Motion Conference, 2014). Poetry:

- Helps children make connections through shared experiences
- Engages students because they like poetry and it's fun to read and write
- Serves as vehicle for literacy and learning across all content areas
- Creates authentic teaching opportunities because every poem is a mini-lesson
- Provides children with a chance to write about events that have touched their hearts
- Encourages writers to practice being precise and concise

This learning experience can be repeated throughout the year. Start early in the year by creating shared poems. Later, release the responsibility to students, showing them how to use poetry as a way to summarize new learning about a science or social studies topic, respond to a text, or record a shared experience such as a field trip.

EXPERIENCE

Immersion in the Genre

- Immerse students in the genre of poetry by reading and discussing a variety of poems.
- Create a shared definition of poetry.
- Notice and chart the characteristics of engaging poems.

Prewriting

- Select a specific topic that you and your students have studied.
- Invite learners to share nouns, verbs, or adjectives about that topic, and record each response on a separate 3- x 8-inch strip for use in the pocket chart or on an interactive whiteboard document.
- Collaborate with your learners to move the words around and add other words, as needed, to create a poem.
- Mix up the words and repeat the process, highlighting how a poet is constantly revising or playing with words.
- Continue with this demonstration until you feel that students are ready to try it on their own.

Poetry Pals Playing With Words

Strategically pair learners with a poetry pal. Give each pair a small zippered bag with about 25 11/2- x 5-inch paper strips. Invite children to record a noun, verb, or adjective about a topic of their choice on each strip. Then, as you demonstrated to the whole class, have pairs play with the words until they've made a poem, adding additional words as needed.

Polish and Present

- Once students have had ample time to play with their poetry strips, give students poetry paper to record their favorite poems and create accompanying illustrations.
- After students write their own poems, use the shared definition and characteristics as a guide for self-assessment.
- Provide opportunities for students to share their poems with their peers, cross-age buddies, or by recording a podcast to view at a later time.

Adapted from *Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom* (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

A Few Poetry Resources for Teachers

Kids' Poems (Routman, 2000) (1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd/4th Grade)

Literature Is Back! (Fuhler & Walther, 2007)

Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction (Walther & Phillips, 2009)

Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem (Prelutsky, 2008)

The Ramped-Up Read Aloud (Walther, 2019)

Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme (Prelutsky, 2005)

Teaching Struggling Readers with Poetry (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

Transforming Literacy Teaching in the Era of Higher Standards (Walther, 2015)

Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry (Koch, 2000)

Poetry Anthologies Mentioned in the Presentation

Bagert, B. (2007). *Shout! Little poems that roar.*

Florian, D. (1999). *Laugh-eteria.*

Hopkins, L. B. (2005). *Days to celebrate: A full year of poetry, people, holidays, history, fascinating facts, and more.*

Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times.*

Katz, B. (2004). *Pocket poems.*

Nesbitt, K. (2007). *Revenge of the lunch ladies.*

Prelutsky, J. (2008). *My dog may be a genius.*

Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something big has been here.*

Prelutsky, J. (1986). *Read-aloud rhymes for the very young.*

Silverstein, S. (1974). *Where the sidewalk ends.*