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A Poetry Unit for Middle School Students

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A POETRY UNIT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Education

Reading Specialist

By

Dana Louise Longmire

July 2007

ABSTRACT

A POETRY UNIT FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

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The focus of this project was to review the available research on using poetry as a

method for teaching literary terms, enhancing comprehension, and developing creative

writing skills. The results of the research show that there is a need for poetry instruction

and that including this instruction in the middle school provides remarkable benefits for

students. Poetry is suitable for the varying levels of ability found within the classroom.

The project includes a guide providing teachers with activities to implement a poetry unit.

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Chapter One

Background of the Project

Introduction

Poetry has been a part of literacy for thousands of years. However, the instruction of poetry is occurring less and less in the classroom (Miguez, 2005). There are a number of reasons for this including time constraints and teachers' inhibitions regarding poetry (Parr & Campbell, 2006). Some teachers feel that there is a lack of time to teach poetry because of the pressures of preparing for standardized testing (Miguez, 2005). However, finding the time to incorporate poetry can help develop comprehension and writing skills thus better preparing students.

Poetry is rewarding for children and adolescents. It can be especially helpful for teaching middle school students self expression and to validate their feelings (Pittman, 1999). It is also very beneficial for struggling readers (Perfect, 1999). Unfortunately, students are often apprehensive about poetry. The classroom must be a safe environment in order for students to feel comfortable with poetry lessons. Instruction must also be fun and non-threatening from the start so that students are not overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety (Anderson, 1998).

Poetry is an important component of language arts. It helps students develop comprehension strategies, creative writing skills, and a sense of self. Studies have shown that it can intrigue even the most uninvolved adolescent, (Anderson, 1998) and improve vocabulary (Allen, 2002). A poetry unit should be included in all well rounded reading programs. The current reading curriculum in the Yakima School District is Houghton-Mifflin. It is highly structured, held to a strict pacing chart, and loaded with fiction.

Most themes contain very little, if any, poetry. There is little time allotted to creative writing, or the reading of creative literature such as poetry.

Incorporating poetry into the classroom reading instruction can help in developing and strengthening comprehension strategies due to increasing student awareness of literary terms. Students who do not recognize literary terms while reading are often identified as struggling readers (Parr & Campbell, 2006). Once students can identify when and where certain literary terms have been used, they will be more efficient at comprehending texts. For example, recognizing author's purpose helps students understand what they read more effectively (Jago, 2005). Literary terms appear frequently on standards-based assessments and students are asked questions on which they must apply knowledge of these terms. It is important for these literary terms to be understood for both reading and writing purposes. Facility with these terms can also improve students' writing abilities (Jago).

Because of the Washington State seventh grade writing assessments, instruction in writing is aimed at expository and persuasive writing techniques. Poetry allows time for much needed creative or personal writing. When students make personal connections in their writing they become better writers (Moran, 2004). Allowing time for creative writing has "the potential to improve student's attitudes toward and confidence in their writing" (Moran, 2004, p. 93). As students learn to express themselves through writing, they further develop their personal style, and their confidence level grows thus creating more powerful and convincing pieces of written work. The confidence gained transfers over to other areas of writing; supporting both the persuasive and expository styles which are assessed statewide in seventh grade (Anderson, 1998).

Students in middle school benefit from opportunities to express themselves through writing poetry (Pittman, 1999). Students are experiencing many developmental changes during the adolescent years and poetry is another way for them to deal with this rite of passage and further develop a sense of self. Many adolescents experience feelings of concern about themselves and their relationships with other students. Writing poetry about these issues can allow them to convey their anxieties without discussing them. Students may feel safer communicating feelings and emotions through writing than directly with other people (Pittman). They are becoming adults and are seeing the world through new eyes. Poetry is one way for middle school students to explore new perspectives and identify with the changes they are experiencing.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to create a poetry unit that would intrigue students while heightening understanding of literary terms, and providing opportunities for the creative writing and reading of poetry. The unit was designed to promote success and develop an appreciation for the genre of poetry. In addition, the purpose was to encourage students to read and enjoy poetry, discuss interpretations and share their own poetry with peers, and lastly create a final product to showcase their work. The provided activities and information are intended to strengthen student understanding and application of literacy terms in order to improve reading comprehension, and build vocabulary. The project focuses on increasing student writing abilities through creative and persuasive writing. Students will be exposed to a wide variety of middle school friendly poems and poets and participate in fun, meaningful poetry activities.

Significance of project

Poetry is beneficial in teaching literary terms, encouraging struggling readers, and developing writing. The author noticed that there is no structured curriculum for teaching the reading and writing of poetry to middle school students. In order to become efficient readers, it is important for students to know and understand literary terms such as personification, simile, and metaphor. These concepts can be taught through both the reading and writing of poetry. Many of the literary terms are tested on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). On the reading sections of the WASL students are asked to apply knowledge of a literary term in order to properly answer the question. A strong knowledge of these terms could also help students meet many of the General Learning Expectations (GLE's), and the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS).

Using poetry is a way to motivate struggling readers and increase their chances of taking part in the reading activity (Perfect, 1999). Students are more willing to read poems due to their shortened length (Perfect). There are many poems and poets whose "work may engage middle school students and capture attention" (Lesesne, 2002, p.62). Therefore, poetry can be used beneficially to reach more students in the classroom. Some students will excel at deciphering and discussing poems, while others will be intrigued with reading them. These skills are all important in developing comprehension needed for efficient life long reading.

Writing poetry also strengthens creative writing skills which have a positive effect on student ability to write in all modes of writing (Anderson, 1998). Students have more freedom in poetry writing than with prompted essays. When students have opportunities

to write creatively, rather than just expository and persuasive essays, they develop a deeper appreciation for writing. Students also become more connected with their personal writing styles through the use of creative writing (Anderson). Poems are typically shorter than essays and are therefore easier to draft, revise, and edit in a class period due to time constraints. Poems can therefore be written, edited, and shared within the same learning day. This is significant because more writing can be accomplished in a shorter amount of time. By writing, students become better writers.

Project limitations

The project has the following limitations:

1. This project is aimed at the middle school level, primarily at grades six and seven.

2. Most of the poetry activities have only been trial tested for a brief amount of time.

3. This project does not mean to suggest that it must be taught in any particular time frame or order. Some may wish to break up the activities and spread them throughout the year.

4. The suggested activities are meant only as guidelines. They are not meant to be presented as the most effective way of teaching the information. Teachers should adapt ideas as needed to fit their classroom.

5. Teachers will need to assess the poetry texts available in their classroom or school library. The project provides researched examples of poems and poets that most middle school students enjoy.

6. The literary terms included in this project are not an inclusive list of all terms. Teachers may want to add to, delete, or change terms depending on the needs of their classroom.

Definition of terms

EALR'S: The essential academic learning requirements as defined by OSPI. (www.k12.wa.us)

GLE'S: Grade Level Expectations. (www.k12.wa.us)

Middle School: A school usually for grades 5 or 6 through 8. (Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R.E., 1995, p. 154)

Poem: A metrical form of composition in which word images are selected and expressed to create powerful, often beautiful impressions in the listener or reader. (Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R.E., 1995, p. 189)

Poetry: The art of creating poems. (Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R.E., 1995, p. 189)

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of the published literature on the need for incorporating poetry instruction into the middle school classroom. The topics of discussion include the benefits of both reading and writing poetry. Also included is the importance of teaching literary terms and how to do so using poetry activities. Ideas are presented about getting started with the poetry unit and developing an appreciation for poetry.

Background information on poetry

Poetic writing is a type of "text in which the sounds of the writer's language, the writer's feelings, and the writer's ideas are patterned in a way that is pleasing to the writer and that likewise may be shared and enjoyed by the reader" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p.189), while poetry is "the art of creating poems" (Harris & Hodges, p. 189). Poetry has also been defined as "writing usually with a rhythm that repeats [and] writing chosen and arranged to create a certain emotional response through meaning, sound and rhythm" (Merrian-Webster, 1998, p. 578). Carl Sandburg described poetry as "a series of explanations of life, fading into horizons too swift for explanations" (Esar, 1968, p. 609).

Although the poetry definitions may seen inviting, students usually come into the classroom with a wide range of feelings toward poetry; mostly negative feelings. One suggestion is that they have been given poems that are far too advanced and asked to dissect these poems completely (Perry, 2006). Students fear they cannot rise to the challenge and give up. As students begin to write poems they may be already overwhelmed by the sophisticated poetry they have been given to read and dissect. Many students also "recall experiences with poetry that led them to dislike or dread it —

experiences that focused on dissecting, analyzing, and meaninglessly memorizing poetry to death" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 2). While some "dissecting and analyzing" is necessary for teaching literary terms, it should not be the sole focus. Incorporating fun activities and student friendly poems will help students to appreciate reading and writing poetry rather than dread it.

Poetry has often been pushed aside in the classroom. "Studies show that poetry is the most neglected component in the language arts curriculum" (Denman, 1988, p. 57). Due to standardized testing, classroom focus has shifted to areas needed to pass that testing. Much instructional time is centered on specific skills needed to meet the various standardized tests. Teachers no longer have the time to incorporate extensive poetry units into their curriculum. With structured, scripted reading programs and strict pacing charts, many teachers do not have time for poetry at all, especially at the middle school level. Teachers are spending less and less time reading and sharing poetry as students move up in grade level (Miguez, 2005). By the time the students reach middle school they have usually received very little instruction involving poetry.

Many teachers avoid teaching poetry because they do not feel comfortable with the subject. It is often a teacher's assumptions about poetry that make them feel they are not qualified to teach it. They are not sure what great poetry actually looks like. Many teachers "mistakenly assume that teaching children to write poetry is beyond their ability" (Linaberger, 2005, p. 366). Not all educators received adequate training themselves which may lead to their own insecurities. Many teachers feel that they must be able to correctly evaluate, examine, and interpret poems in order to properly teach methods of poetry (Perfect, 1999).

Linaberger (2005) goes on to explain that past experiences and perhaps even failures with poetry during one's own education attribute to insecurities about teaching the subject. Some offered suggestions were to take workshops, purchase guidebooks, and actually begin writing poetry. Linaberger (2005) states, "I headed back to my classroom, confident that I could teach kids to write poetry because I could actually write it myself" (p. 367). Educators practice for and plan lessons all the time. The same should be true when teaching lessons on poetry.

Teachers need to "provide instruction and examples from a wide range of experienced and inexperienced writers" (Perry, 2006, p. 111). This allows students to see authors with a truly developed, advanced style of writing as well as less intimidating examples of authors who are still developing. One idea is to invite past students to come and share some of their poetry with the current students. As students are provided with exposure to a wide variety of poems, poets, and styles, they will find something that captures their attention; especially if they do not have to worry about analyzing every small aspect of each poem. Once their interest is sparked, students will be more willing to participate in the unit. They will have found something with which they feel connected.

Need for instruction on reading poetry

Poetry is an essential component of the language arts. Poetry helps develop understanding of literary terms such as mood, tone, and emotion (Van Wyhe, 2006). Reading poetry strengthens knowledge of many literary terms necessary for higher level comprehension. Poetry lends itself to struggling readers and is readily available for all learners (Perfect, 1999). Poetry also assists middle school students in the journey to self discovery (Pittman, 1999).

Most students have had some experience with poetry upon entering school. This experience comes from childhood songs and nursery rhymes. Even musical lyrics and rap enjoyed be many students contain elements of rhyme and rhythm associated with poetry. Poetry may therefore appeal to students as it increases their knowledge of literary terms and provides and emotional outlet. Poetry instruction should be incorporated into all language arts classes as it may assist middle school students with the challenge of learning who they are. Perfect (1999) states,

> Poetry can be a rewarding and joyful experience. Poetry appeals to the near
>
> universal fondness children have for rhyme and rhythm. It nurtures a love and
>
> appreciation for the sound and power of language. Poetry can help us see
>
> differently, understand ourselves and others, and validate our human experience.
>
> (p. 728)

As middle school students develop, the validation of their feelings will help them understand the changes they are experiencing at this delicate time in their lives. Middle schools students experience many feelings of angst, depression, and anxiety typical of that age group. These feelings are often difficult to explain to parents, teachers, or even friends. Poetry can be a great outlet for their emotional struggles (Pittman, 1999).

Also, "poetry is a genre especially suited to the struggling or unmotivated reader" (Perfect, 1999, p. 728). Due to the commonly short length of poems, struggling readers may not feel so apprehensive when it is placed before them to read. They are more likely to participate in the activity. "Children who had been reluctant to read aloud willingly volunteer to read the shorter passages that typify most poetry" (Perfect, p. 730). As readers become more efficient, they have a greater desire to read. They become more involved in reading activities due to their new success. This increased confidence and the joy

discovered through their success can encourage students to become excited about reading

other genres of literature (Perfect). Therefore, success with reading poetry may lead

students to read more often. Through poetry, "nonreaders and nonachievers discover and

display interest" (Anderson, 1998, p. 28).

Reading poetry provides opportunities for students to explore various

interpretations without the fear of being wrong. It also allows time to read an entire piece

of literature and engage in good discussion about these interpretations within a class period.

"Poems of appropriate length and difficulty can be readily selected to suit diverse ability

and interest needs within a classroom, making it available and accessible to all learners"

(Perfect, 1999, p. 729). Often with scripted programs it takes two or more days to

complete the reading and discussion questions. Students tend to lose interest during this

time. Reading becomes more meaningful when the lesson can be covered at one time. As

students read poetry "they must search for their own meaning...there can be multiple

interpretations of a given poem because how children interpret something depends on their

prior experience and current perspectives" (Certo, 2004, p. 267). Reading poetry allows

students many opportunities to reflect on what the reading means to them based on their

own personal experiences. Students are allowed the freedom to make text to self

connections. "One's own understanding is a vital element in forging personal connections

to poetry and to making the reading of poetry an activity one seeks instead of dreads"

(Perfect, 1999, p. 732). It is these connections, experiences, and schema that educators are

constantly trying to draw out of their students. Students learn that comprehension and

understanding often depend upon the life and experience of the reader. This knowledge

helps them become better readers and can aid in comprehension.

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Need for instruction on writing poetry

Poetry strengthens writing skills (Anderson, 1998). Middle school students are generally overwhelmed by the idea of having to write poetry. This could be due, in part, to the fact that "many teachers, particularly elementary school teachers, do not approach the teaching of poetry writing at all" (Linaberger, 2004, p. 366). Students are typically read poetry out of anthologies when there is extra time. "However, reading poetry is simply not enough. What happens all too often when teachers choose to only read poems with students is that the students become confused by the complexity of the poetry" (Linaberger, p. 366). This accompanied with the lack of experience with writing poetry in elementary school explains the apprehensions felt by most middle school students. Yet there are so many benefits to writing poetry.

Writing is tested on the seventh grade WASL. Students have to show mastery with forms of expository writing and persuasive writing. Expository writing consists of detailed explanations while the purpose of persuasive writing is to convince the reader of a particular point of view. Both of these styles of writing can be supported using poetry writing by developing voice and appropriate word choice. Writing poetry is "a powerful tool for teaching word choice, fluency, and the impact of conventions. It [offers] opportunities to investigate issues of speaker, and audience...and it [helps] students understand what mood and tone and emotion really mean when it comes to writing" (Van Wyhe, 2006, p. 16).

It is often difficult for students to comprehend author's purpose or tone. Poetry can assist them in this process. Poetry allows students the freedom to write about issues and experiences that are most important to them. When students feel connected to the topic it becomes easier to convey mood, write with emotion, and truly demonstrate their authentic

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tone (Van Wyhe, 2006). Tone is a hard concept to convey to students, yet is very important in writing because it helps readers get a sense of the feelings, beliefs, and perspectives of the author. Author's tone conveys the author's attitude and personal style in a piece of writing (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Tone is developed through the practice of creative writing (Bintz & Henning-Shannon, 2005). The writing skills gained through poetry writing begin to show up in other forms of student writing as well. Students discover their personal style and learn to write with a certain audience in mind while considering the appropriate tone for that audience. This strengthens their ability to write persuasively as well as in the other modes of writing. With persuasive writing, students are expected to convince a certain person whether their friends, parents, or the school principal. Students have to demonstrate which tone is appropriate for proving their point to the specific person.

In order for students to write well persuasively, they need to understand all sides of the issue in question. They also need to have confidence in their opinion and the support thereof. By writing poetry opinion papers, students can debate different aspects of a poem while learning to support their perspective (Willis, 1997). Students must respond to a poem and support or justify their response with evidence. The example provided by Willis was responding to a poem by agreeing or disagreeing with a certain character's actions. Student responses were based on their own interpretations and debated with examples from the poetry.

Another way for students to understand more than one side of an issue and strengthen writing skills is to practice a technique called writing a poem for two voices (Finney, 2003). There are many existing poems for two voices. They are written in a two-column format. Each column is to be read by a different reader with some lines being read

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together. The topic of the two columns often consists of contrasting viewpoints allowing students a richer understanding of any topic (Finney, 2003). Students can further this technique by creating their own poems for two voices. One student can complete this type of poem by writing each column, or two students can work together; each taking on a different perspective. Finney found that "writers had to make choices about which lines were common to both sides and which carried opposing views but should be spoken simultaneously...through revision, each writer came to appreciate the other's perspective" (p. 76) These writing activities teach students to support their opinions which help them become effective, persuasive writers. They also learn to appreciate other perspectives as well.

Teaching literary terms with poetry instruction

To properly define literary terms the words must first be broken into their individual parts. A literary activity is defined as "any engagement with a written literary work, as by reading, writing, or speaking it, or by listening to or watching its performance" (Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 143). Terms are then defined as "the technical words and expressions used in a special field" (Harris & Hodges, p. 254). In combining these two definitions it could be ascertained that literary terms are the words and expressions needed for proper engagement with literary work such as poetry. When students have mastery of literary terms, they then gain access to the tools necessary for communication. Students can then comprehend poetry and have any easier time reading and writing (Bass & Morrill, 1998).

Understanding literary terms help students become more efficient readers. "Awareness of rhyme, rhythm, and alliteration in addition to phonemic awareness are characteristics that often distinguish effective readers from [at risk] readers" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 39). Those literary terms, along with tone, figures of speech, imagery,

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mood, theme, metaphor and simile can be taught using poetry instruction. This instruction

will not only aid in comprehension but will also help to prepare students for standardized

testing like the WASL. "Every state in the union's English Language Arts standards refer

to the elements of literature. As a result, these literary terms appear frequently on

standards-based assessments" (Jago, 2005, p. 48). In order for students to truly grasp the

meaning of literary terms, they need to be repeatedly defined and practiced. It is not

enough for students to know what the terms mean. They must be able to apply knowledge

of the term. "Standardized test items rarely ask students to define a term. Most commonly,

students are expected to apply their knowledge of a particular literary element to a sample

text" (Jago, 2005, p. 48). In order to answer such questions, students need to understand

the meaning of the term in question. They must recognize that literary terms "convey or

reinforce a poem's meaning" (Rustici, 1997, p.17).

     Students need repeated exposure and practice with literary terms. Teachers should

take the opportunity to reiterate term definitions whenever they appear (Jago, 2005).

Students should be required to use the terms while discussing poetry with the class.

Teachers need to first model this as the class discusses a piece of literature or poetry.

Groups can then begin having discussions about poetry while incorporating particular

literary terms such as metaphor (Jago, 2005). A supporting idea is to have students look at

poems that make use of a particular term and discuss how the term adds to the poem. This

activity could be duplicated by focusing on a new literary term each time students read

poetry (Mitchell, Manke, Gorence & Kell, 1995).

     Another way to incorporate terms into the classroom is with the use of a word wall.

A word wall serves as a visual display of the terms, and reminds the class to use those

terms during discussions about poetry. Many students may understand the work being

done but shy away from participating because they do nott know how to correctly use the literary terms. "The solution shouldn't be to simplify the discourse but rather integrate the vocabulary of literacy analysis, and of testing, into classroom conversations. The visual presence of these terms on a word wall helps reinforce the learning" (Jago, p. 48). The word wall can be constantly pointed out throughout poetry reading. As the class comes across an example of a literary term, the teacher can identify and define it. Once students have a solid understanding of the literary terms and can use them properly during class and group activities, they can begin identifying examples of them on their own and participating in meaningful activities that enhance their understanding.

Literary terms taught with isolation are harder for students to remember and therefore soon forgotten (Mitchell, Manke, Gorence & Kell, 1995). The terms are more likely to be employed by students if taught in context. If literary terms are "introduced to students through activities that students participate in, they seem to make more sense to students. Thus the terms have a better chance of being remembered and used because they are part of an experience the student has had" (Mitchell, Manke, Gorence & Kell, p.64). All literary terms discussed in Chapter Four are therefore taught through activities.

Getting started

When beginning a poetry unit, all "activities must be fun and ease apprehension; they must support students in their exploration of poetry and help them to experience poetry beyond the rhyme and the formula" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 37). This must be done right from the start. Teachers need to be very encouraging and supportive throughout poetry writing. They need to value students' views. "When teachers take the time to listen to and value student poetry, students want to create and share their writing" (Perry, 2006, p. 112). In order for any good poetry lessons to take place, however, teachers must first

create a classroom atmosphere supportive of individuality and the unique qualities of each student.

Before expecting students to share their personal thoughts and opinions, there needs to be some classroom agreements established. "One critical prerequisite to sharing is that the norms for sharing must be already established. That could be through Community Agreements, Student Contracts, A Poet's Bill of Rights, or of course, the Writer's Rights" (Reyes, 2006, p. 14). The author researcher has used the Classroom Agreements technique in her own classroom. Agreements differ from rules in that they are established together with the students. This can be done at the beginning of a school year or at the beginning of a new unit like poetry. Students participate in a discussion about how they should behave while discussing or sharing poetry. The ideas need to be stated in a positive way so students are focused on how they will behave rather than how they will not behave. For example, instead of having the agreement state "Don't interrupt", it should state "We will wait until someone is done sharing before we raise our hand to share." The latter focuses on what behavior is expected. Because students take part in the creation of these agreements, they feel a sense of ownership in the classroom (Letts, 1994). Students are therefore more likely to respect and follow the agreements. This will allow students to feel comfortable when engaging in new poetry activities. Students need to feel this comfort level in order to enjoy and appreciate the poetry unit.

Once classroom agreements for the unit have been either established or reviewed it is time to start teaching poetry. To increase the comfort level in a fun way and introduce a short form of poetry students can begin with practicing tongue twisters. Having this kind of fun with language can increase motivation for the unit. "Readers of varying skills become literary equals when they trip over lines" (Perfect, 1999, p. 735) such as those

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found in tongue twisters. This helps create a good classroom atmosphere because mistakes are normal, acceptable, and expected while reading tongue twisters. Tongue twisters also help teach the term alliteration due to the repetition of sound. Students can apply their knowledge of alliteration by producing a classroom quilt. Each student picks or is assigned a letter and uses that letter to create a short tongue twister or example of alliteration. The author researcher has used this activity before with the subject of animals. Each student chooses an animal beginning with their letter sound as the topic for their example of alliteration. For example, the letter B could have the following alliteration: Bouncy Brown Bears eat Burgers for Breakfast. Each student is given a square piece of paper on which is written the letter and alliteration. The alliterations are also illustrated with a colored picture. The letters are then put up on the wall in alphabetical order to look somewhat like a patchwork quilt.

Another fun introductory activity is to have students practice saying the same line but in different moods. This activity gets students to speak in front of the class in an unthreatening environment. Anderson (1998) begins with the sentence "You can't do that here". Students draw from a hat a piece of paper with an emotion written on it. They then have to say the line while portraying that emotion through expression, changing volume and pitch, or by putting the emphasis on different words. Some examples of emotion words used include: "amused, angry, frightened, impatient, and surprised" (Anderson, p. 32). After a student reads their line, others try to guess the emotion being demonstrated.

Students also need to be exposed to many poems right from the start. A good way to expose students to a wide variety of poems is to begin each day of the unit with a word gathering entry task (Allen, 2002). During this activity students read from any of the poems or poetry books available in the classroom. They copy in their journals any words

of interest that they may want to use in their own poems. These words can then be shared with the class to create a word wall. Some suggested categories for language collection are: words/images that make me smile or laugh, smells, sights, sounds that bring tears to my eyes, words/phrases that paint a picture, words that make noise, forbidden words, and action words (Allen). Interesting words could also be placed all over the classroom for added poetic inspiration.

Students can also copy poem titles and the author's name to remember poems that they particularly like (Anderson, 1998). This fits well with an activity already used by the researcher to teach the concept of theme. Students choose a theme to use for a calendar. They then represent that theme using an appropriate picture and short poem for each month of the year. While students are reading and finding poems of interest during the suggested entry task, they can also be searching for poems that fit their chosen calendar theme. This activity allows students to apply their knowledge of theme in a fun way while exposing them to a wide variety of poetry and language.

Another idea used by the author researcher that might capture student interest is to take them on a short walk outdoors. The students find a quiet spot to sit. They are to write down sensory words. Taking about five minutes of quiet time, students record what they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel or touch. After returning to the classroom students share their ideas in pairs. The ideas are then shared aloud and recorded on the board. Students can see how others responded in comparison with their own ideas. This is a way of getting students to express their ideas using sensory words which are prevalent in poetry. They are simply practicing with language and experimenting with different ways to voice ideas. Also, the fact that they got to go outside motivates them and perhaps may excite them about the unit. These sensory phrases can be used to write a free verse poem. "Free verse

poems using the five senses are those in which the senses act as the framework for a poem that examines and engages the use of the senses…writing free verse poems using the five senses is a simple structure to begin with—one that students can easily relate to" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 40). Students take their sensory observations and turn them into longer phrases or statements. There are few restrictions so students need not worry about mistakes.

Another introductory activity to grasp student attention is incorporating their favorite photographs with a poem. Kiaune (1992) began this activity by inviting students to share some of their photographs and why they were important to them; most middle school students have them covering their binders. Invite students to bring in more photos for the following activity. Students are put in groups of three to share their photos. This requires students to "relive the event or scene" (Kiaune, p. 71). Through this concrete association, students re-connect with the actual experience and remember the thoughts and feelings they had at the time. Students then select one photo and do a word map of "phrases suggesting color, texture, smell, feelings, and mood" (Kiaune, p. 71). Using descriptive sensory words and phrases students work on creating imagery. They should not be concerned with the length of their poetic description, but with creating an accurate and vivid description. One example provided by Kiaune was a poem written about a summer beach photo. The student created the following poem…"Clouds like puffy cotton balls, White umbrellas covering us, Girls and guys in exploding colors. What a blast" (Kiaune, p. 71). Students then frame their photos with markers, clay, construction paper, etc. and write the descriptive poem next to the picture somewhere. Because this activity uses photos which students already care deeply about, they are more likely to be intrigued by the activity and will desire to do a good job. "Because their project was based on emotional

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ownership, [students] recreated the experience freely" (Kiaune, p.71). This activity

resulted in a poetry project about which students were enthusiastic.

Another interesting idea for beginning a unit combines visualization and art with a

poetry reading. The teacher passes out copies of a poem and students follow along while

the poem is read aloud. Students are then put in small groups to exchange ideas and

thoughts about the poem. This can include re-reading their favorite line or clarifying

something that confused them. Students then return to their own seats to draw any image

the poem created for them (Moore, 2003). After sharing their ideas and pictures with

others students will see how one another interpreted the poem. This opens the door to

discuss how people interpret things differently based on their own backgrounds. It is

important to do this at the beginning of the unit. Once students understand that it is okay to

have their own interpretations of poems, they will feel more confident sharing their

personal ideas with others. Students will be more willing to share as they begin to

recognize that they are sharing "their own interpretations of key passages based on their

personal experiences and prior knowledge" (Moore, p. 51).

To ease students into poetry writing, they need fun poems to start with. One

example is to have students develop a list of reasons why they cannot write a poem. This

would be similar to Shel Silverstein's poem published in 1972 and entitled "Sick". It is an

easy idea to start with as students are simply listing creative ideas of why they cannot write

a poem. At the top of the completed poem the students write the title, "I Can't Write a

Poem". Then they end with some statement suggesting how their creation actually is a

poem, and they did in fact write one (Parr & Campbell, 2006). This gives students a

chance to explore their negative feelings about poetry as well as their personal

apprehensions with writing poetry. They can then do something productive and poetic with those negative feelings.

Another way to ease students into writing poetry is by using found poems. One way to do this is to use a poem as a starting point for students to begin writing their own. Providing structure in the beginning, or even teaching formula based poems is beneficial with building confidence in students and introducing the unit (Parr & Campbell, 2006). After reading a poem together as a class, the teacher helps students think of a link in order to transition from the reading to writing their own poem. Using subject matter from the read poem, brainstorm ideas that connect to students' own world. "Links should be rich with choices and as open-ended as possible...if the link is too narrow, it may simply feel like a traditional writing prompt that hinders rather than encourages creativity and broad thinking" (Certo, 2004, p. 268). After brainstorming, agree on a subject for the assigned poem, or there could be choices of subjects. Leave the door open for those who wish to rhyme, while allowing those students who do not wish to rhyme to not do so.

Students may also want to experiment with the use of other patterns, repetitions, or literary terms demonstrated in the read poem within their own poem. "Found poetry often provides a scaffold to poetry writing that allows students to explore literary devices and vocabulary in a nonthreatening way...they need not rhyme or take any particular structure" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 7). It is the students' job to "discover what language can do, [and] what they can do with language" (Certo, p. 270). A fun found poem to do involves using the poem "This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams and published in 1962. Students enjoy the backhanded apology and creating their own. Certo (2004) was impressed with the poems her students created during this activity. Students tend to relate to poems concerning mistakes they may have made in their own lives.

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There are many different types of poetry that students will enjoy writing. The teaching of literary terms can be incorporated into most. The teacher should show examples of poems that will be taught as well as model creating them. Bio-poems describe the life of the author, or can be written about a character from a poem or story being read in class. Students are prompted at the start of each line. In a bio-poem they write about things they love, feel, fear, would like to do, and so on. "When students find out that all they have to do is fill in lines, they are more willing to try it. The poem's structure is exact and easy to follow" (Hunt & Hunt, 2006, p. 102). This is a good poem to try towards the beginning of the unit because it is so easy to create.

Another poem students enjoy is called a cinquain. This poem consists of five lines. On the first line is the name of the subject. Line two consists of two adjectives describing line one. Line three is made up of three participles or verbs ending with –ing. Line four needs four words which create a simile or metaphor which is an important literary term. Lastly, line five needs to be a one word synonym for line one. This idea was adapted from Marjorie Frank (1987) and is included in chapter four activities.

Students also enjoy writing a poem called a diamante. This is a seven line poem shaped like a diamond. Opposing points of the diamond contain antonyms or words showing opposition. Lines one and seven one word opposites like night and day or young and old. Line two consists of two adjectives describing line one. Line 3 has three action verbs related to line one. Line four begins with two nouns related to line one and then ends with two nouns related to line seven. Line five is made up of three action verbs related to line seven. Line six consists of two adjectives describing line seven, and line seven is the one word antonym of line one. Students enjoy thinking of the best words to include. This

activity also provides an opportunity for students to use classroom thesauruses

(teams.lacoe.edu/documentation/classrooms/amy/algebra/5-6/activity/poetry/

diamante.html).

Because middle school can be a complicated time, students will enjoy writing a

poem called "I Don't Understand". The first stanza begins with "I don't understand" and

then lists statements that the student finds fitting. The next stanza begins with "But most of

all" and lists statements of things the student really doesn't understand at all. Lastly, the

third stanza begins with "What I understand most is", followed by lines of what the student

actually does understand. This poem provides a framework, but the rest is up to the

individual. This can be a serious or funny poem. There is no set number of lines required

and students should feel free to try rhyme or any literary terms they desire (www.msrogers.

com/English2/poetry).

A type of poem that allows students to think about the changes in their lives while

making comparisons about how they used to be and how they are now is called

"I Used To...But Now I..." Each line is comprised of the title with the blanks filled in.

Students can include any changes they wish. It may be simple things such as their height,

what food they like, their favorite color, movie, sport. However, some students may wish

to be more insightful. Once again, students should be free to choose the way they would

like to complete the poem (Frank, 1987). Another poem about students that they enjoy is

called an "I Am" poem. There are many versions of this, and one is included in the

activities in Chapter Four. There are many poems that students can write that will be

personal about their lives.

Students also enjoy acrostic poems. Acrostic poetry is written using the letters in a

topic word. The topic word letters are used as the beginning letters for phrases that tell

about the topic word. "The topic word is written vertically along the left side of the page, and words or phrases that describe the topic are written left to right using the letters in the base word" (http://www.readinga-z.com/poetry/lesson_plans/acrostic). Acrostic poems help students practice good descriptions as they must choose vivid words and adjectives to complete the poem. Students should start this activity using their own name and describing who they are. For additional challenges, students could attempt other nouns like "school", "friend", or "sunshine."

A more complex type of poem that students enjoy is called concrete or shape poetry. "Shape poetry is a picture painted with words and looks like the thing it represents" (Parr & Campbell, 2006, p. 6). For example, a poem about a raindrop would actually be shaped like a raindrop. Students get to experiment with the shape of the poem, the placement or size of words, and the format allowing them to include a visual image along with their poem (Parr & Campbell). Concrete poetry emphasizes the visual aspects of words. Students enjoy attempting to shape the poem into the form of the topic.

Haiku poems are traditional in the Japanese culture with the focus on nature. They are short poems consisting of three lines for a total of seventeen syllables. The first and third lines contain five syllables while the second line contains seven syllables (http://www.toyomasu.com/haiku/#whatishaiku). However, research shows that haiku is the most disliked form of poetry with middle school students (Abrahamson, 2002). One way to make haiku a more interesting form to write is by creating a 3-D haiku. This type of haiku is "a new multidimensional poetry genre created by Kolitsky, [and] provides a means for rewriting traditional two-dimensional haiku in a three-dimensional cube that can be viewed only in cyberspace" (Tweedie & Kolitsky, 2002, p. 84). This provides an

opportunity to incorporate technology with poetry. Teachers can check the website for 3-D

haiku to see how it works. (http://venus.atlantic.edu/kolitsky/ 3dpoetry.html).

Teachers can also add an exciting element to teaching haiku by incorporating art

and music. Students use long rectangular shaped slick white cardboard paper which should

be somewhat shiny in appearance. They must leave room at the bottom for their haiku

poem. Using watered down black paint and straws, students create the appearance of a

bush or tree trunk and stems. The teacher should drop some paint on the paper with a

dropper. The students then use the straw to blow upward, encouraging the paint to branch

out randomly. They may require extra blobs of black paint. When this is finished they take

small paintbrushes or nice black pens to write their haikus below the black outline. The

paintings will then need to dry for the day. Following this, students will dab bits of color

surrounding the created black stems. They can stick to one color or combine two or three

while letting the black stems show through. The final product will look like a Japanese tree

or bush with the haiku at the base of it. Students in the author researcher's classroom have

enjoyed this activity in the past. While working, it is a great experience for kids to listen to

some Japanese music in the background (www.kinderart.com).

In addition, the researcher suggests looking at the Giggle Poetry website for ideas to

incorporate other great poems into the unit. The website contains hilarious poems. There

is one about all the gross things the student would cook their teacher for lunch. Students

enjoy many of the types of poems found on the website. They are light-hearted, humorous,

and fun to create. While some students enjoy serious poems, others will relish a break

from them and truly enjoy the poems found at this website (www.gigglepoetry.com).

Teachers will want to browse this site to see what will fit their needs.

Middle school friendly poems, poets, and anthologies

In order to teach a well-rounded poetry unit there should be a wide range of poems, poets, and poetry anthologies available for students to read. "Children...deserve a diet of poetry that blends laughter with elements of insight, human experience and wonder so that they can make meaning of the world and their unique perspective" (Certo, 2004, p. 270). One study discussed by Abrahamson (2002) concluded with twenty – five most popular poems. The study was conducted with 375 teenagers in grades seventh, eighth, and ninth. They read 100 poems and came up with a list of the top 25. The final list is at the end of Chapter Four of the project.

Another important factor in teaching middle school students poetry is to find poets and poetry books or anthologies that they will enjoy. The following were found to be popular amongst middle school students: Arnold Adoff, Gary Soto, Kalli Dakos, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Mel Glenn, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Paul Janeczko (Lesesne, 2002). There are a number of poems and books written by these authors. Teachers will want to check their school libraries to see which titles are available. In addition to these worthwhile poems and poets there are a vast number of anthologies that should be included in the poetry unit. There are three separate lists created by Rosemary Chance (2001), Teri Lesesne (2002), and Kathy Perfect (1999). The three lists of anthologies are each in alphabetical order by author's last name at the end of Chapter Four, along with the list of the top twenty-five poems for middle school students to read. Along with this reading material there are many websites that teachers and students may be interested in. Some were discovered by the researcher; however, Linda Labbo (2004) created the following list: KidzPage, Giggle Poetry, Children's Haiku Garden, Kristine O'Connel George, The Poetry

Zone, and The Web Poetry Corner. Teachers simply need to type in the given key words to reach the required site.

Assessment

Assessment should not be based on ability but on effort. This will help ease tension and anxiety that students may feel about their abilities to write good poetry (Parr & Campbell, 2006). Teachers can assess the final product for effort as it should contain examples of work from the unit. Students will create their own personal anthologies including any or all of the poems written in class. Those students who were inspired and created a multiple of poems on their own could be allowed to include those as well. All poems are neatly written or typed and include a table of contents. Students should organize their contents in the way they feel is best. The anthology is then placed between two pieces of laminated construction paper. The cover has the student's name and words/pictures cut from a magazine that describe that student (see activity in Chapter Four). The back has a picture of the student and a brief description of them modeled like an author's page in a book. These are then bound with a spiral book binder available in most school libraries. This final product is graded based on the effort and neatness of the cover and content, and whether or not it includes examples of the poems taught in class. Students can take home an anthology of their own work of which they can be proud!

Summary

It is critical that students have opportunities to learn and explore poetry. It is an art currently being left out of the many structured reading curriculums found in today's school systems. Poetry allows for the development of writing skills and a chance for students to think creatively. Students get to apply knowledge of literary terms through the writing of poetry which aids in their success on exams. Poetry has been proven to strengthen writing

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skills which will help students become skilled writers and perform better on standardized assessments (Anderson, 1998).

Poetry encourages participation from readers of all ability levels and motivates many of the students who are struggling. It can be a much needed break from the humdrum of scripted reading programs. Students get to incorporate writing, group discussions, and art with their reading lessons. Helping students become familiar with and enjoy poetry may lead them to a lifetime of reading and writing poetry fulfillment. Poetry helps readers and writers gain insight about themselves and others. It will also give teachers a broader view of their students when students read and share personal writing. Poetry helps create a close and inviting atmosphere in the classroom which teachers and students will enjoy.

Chapter Three

Design of the Project

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to construct a poetry unit for middle school

students. The unit was designed for teachers to utilize while incorporating the reading

and writing of poetry into their classrooms. The unit is intended to provide teachers with

information about a variety of activities to use for instruction, as well as student handouts

and directions. Instructional activities include getting started and discussing poetry,

teaching literary terms, and writing activities.

Development of the Project

As a middle school language arts teacher, the author recognized the lack of poetry

exposure in the adopted curriculum. Also, there was little time allotted to creative

writing activities in comparison to the amount of time spent on teaching expository and

persuasive writing. The author also recognized a need for further instruction of literary

terms. These are all issues that could be addressed with an organized poetry unit. For the

sixth grade there is a structured curriculum held to a strict pacing chart which allows for

little flexibility. However, as a sixth and seventh grade looping teacher, the author has

the time and freedom to incorporate a poetry unit into the seventh grade classroom.

After reviewing published literature, the need for an increase in poetry instruction

became apparent, and the author became aware through research of the benefits of poetry

in areas of reading, writing, and knowledge of literary terms. The reviewed research

emphasizes the benefits of using poetry with struggling readers, enhancing writing

through developing creative writing skills, and the importance of understanding literary

terms. The author felt that teachers would be more willing to teach poetry if they were provided with an organized unit including information for the teacher and instructional ideas and handouts.

Procedures

It was hypothesized that poetry instruction would capture the attention of struggling readers, further develop comprehension strategies, and strengthen writing skills. Research was gathered and reviewed from many sources to explore the importance of poetry instruction and to aid in the development of the poetry unit. Searches were conducted via the Internet to obtain information regarding poetry instruction. These searches were accomplished using databases through the Central Washington University library. Databases used were Proquest and Wilson Web. All articles were found under Education Full Text and were peer-reviewed. The articles were printed and read. Other sources used include poetry resource books and poetry websites found on the Internet. Once information had been located it was read, evaluated, and sorted. The author continued to re-read all information while organizing it into the review of literature presented in Chapter Two. The literature review offers information on the benefits of poetry instruction for both reading comprehension and writing skills. The information was then used to create a poetry unit including information for teachers and organized plans for teaching literary terms, comprehension strategies, and creative writing skills using poetry instruction.

Chapter Four

The Project

A Poetry Unit for Middle School Students

by

Dana Louise Longmire

July 2007

POETRY

FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

A Guide for Implementation

By

Dana Longmire
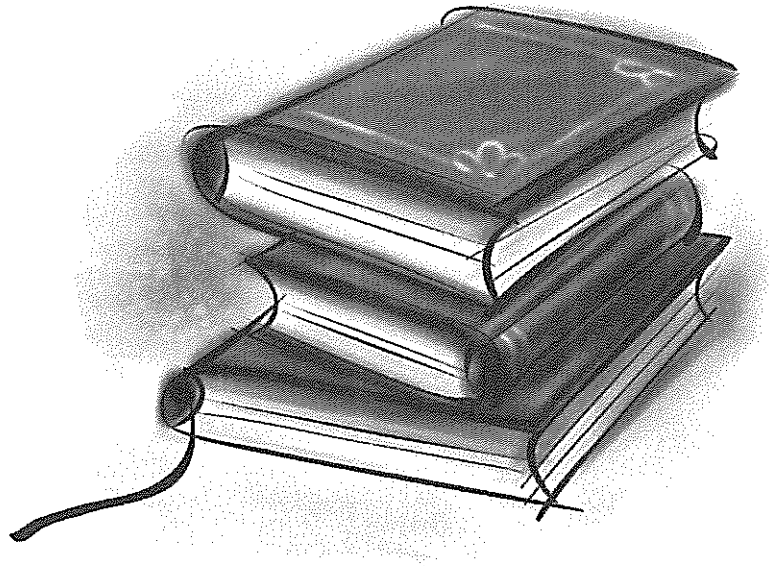Yakima School District

Table of Contents

THE RESEARCH

SECTION ONE

The following section contains a brief introduction of the unit. There is also research included for why poetry instruction should be incorporated into the middle school.

Introduction

Poetry has been a part of literacy for thousands of years. However, the instruction of poetry is occurring less and less in the classroom (Miguez, 2005). There are a number of reasons for this including time constraints due to the pressures of standardized testing, and teachers' inhibitions regarding poetry. Poetry is rewarding for children and enhances both reading and writing skills. It can be especially helpful for teaching middle school students self expression and to validate their feelings (Pittman, 1999). It is also very beneficial for struggling readers (Perfect, 1999). Unfortunately, students are often apprehensive about poetry. The classroom must be a safe environment in order for students to feel comfortable with poetry lessons. Instruction must also be fun and non-threatening from the start so that students are not overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety.

This project is designed to increase student interest in the genre of poetry. It includes activities for self expression through writing and the teaching of many poetry styles. Included in the project are examples of student friendly poetry anthologies, poets, and poems to help intrigue those in middle school. Students will begin to develop an appreciation for poetry throughout the unit. They will begin to feel more confident with their reading and writing abilities. There are several ideas to help strengthen student ability to write persuasively and creatively. Opportunities are provided to discuss their favorite poems and poets as well as their own poetry. The unit incorporates some art ideas and ends with a final product; one of which students can be proud.

This unit is designed for middle school teachers; primarily sixth and seventh grade. There are teacher instructions provided at the beginning of each activity followed by student handouts. In some cases there are several different handouts for teachers to choose from so they can use what will work best for their students.

Reasons for Including Poetry at the Middle School Level

"Children…deserve a diet of poetry that blends laughter with elements of insight, human experience, and wonder so that they can make meaning of the world and their unique perspective" (Certo, 2004, p. 270).

- Poetry will interest "nonreaders and nonachievers" and middle school students will experience success (Anderson, 1998).

- Students' creative writing skills are strengthened by increasing their exposure to poetry. They become more willing to incorporate literary devices or terms in their own writing (Anderson, 1998).

- Effective readers are aware of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and other literary terms while those unaware are often considered to be at risk (Parr & Campbell, 2006).

- Poetry builds success with students almost immediately and allows them to experience joy and fun with writing (Parr & Campbell, 2006).

- As students begin to share their poetry they will learn that they may have more in common with each other than they realized which will increase their understanding of one another and themselves (Pittman, 1999).

- Through poetry students will share with us what we need to know to make connections with them. This will help educators understand their students better and teach them better (Perry, 2006).

- Poetry helps students understand literary terms such as mood, tone, and emotion. As they begin using these in their writing, they adapt their writing styles thus making them better writers (Van Wyhe, 2006).

- Poetry "is a genre especially suited to the struggling or unmotivated reader" (Perfect, 1999).

- Students will feel success through the poetry unit which will make them excited about reading other genres of literature as well as poetry (Perfect, 1999).

- Poetry teaches students a love of language and words. "Word lovers create poetry" (Allen, 2002).

GETTING STARTED
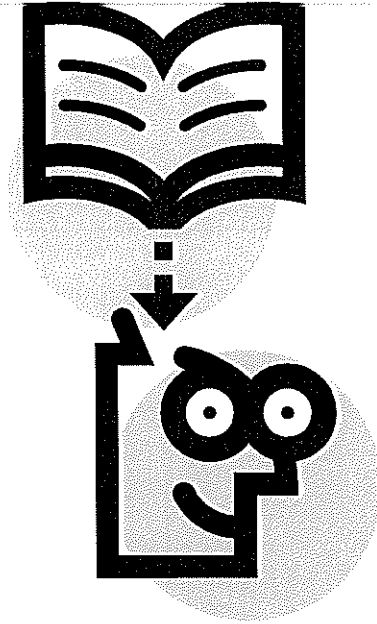
SECTION TWO

This section has many introductory activities to get middle school students ready and excited to learn about poetry. All activities begin with a teacher information page and are followed by any necessary student handout(s) or informational pages. Teachers should have a wide variety of poems and poetry anthologies available in the classroom at the start of the unit.

Establishing Community Agreements

Teacher Instructions

1. Allow students three to five minutes to brainstorm certain agreements they think are necessary in order for them to feel comfortable sharing their ideas and their own poetry.

2. With a partner, students each share their list of agreements. Then, the two of them devise a list of common agreements and/or agreements they both feel are the most crucial from their two lists.

3. Ask partners to then share with the class their most important agreement. Record their ideas on the white board, document camera, etc. so all students can see them. Continue with sharing aloud and recording the second most important agreement from each pair.

4. After all agreements have been listed, the class will notice that some can be combined or are in essence that same agreement. The class should narrow ideas down to the top 10 agreements. There should be class and group discussions to get to this point.

5. Have students copy the top ten agreements on the provided worksheet. The sheet should be signed and dated to ensure that all students understand that they will be held accountable for the community agreements.

Modified from: Reyes, G.T., (2006). Finding the Poetic High: Building a Spoken Word Poetry Community and Culture of Creative, Caring, and Critical Intellectuals. *Multicultural Education*, *14*, 10-16.

Community Agreements

During the poetry unit we will be expected to share and discuss poetry. When we feel comfortable in our classroom, we are more willing to share. Brainstorm necessary agreements that will help you to feel comfortable.

Now that you have listed your own ideas, share them with a partner. Work together to create a list of the agreements you both feel are the most important. Be ready to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

NAME_____

OUR COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

During our poetry unit, we will abide by these agreements and hold each other accountable for them.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

(8)

(9)

(10)

_____   _____
Signature   *Date*

Gathering Language and Favorite Poems

Teacher Information

Students should be exposed to as much poetry and various authors as possible during the unit. As a daily entry task throughout the unit students spend the first fifteen minutes reading poetry books. As they come across words that seem interesting to them, or words they would like to use or remember, they can write them down on one of the following handouts. When students encounter a poem they particularly enjoy, they should keep track of it by recording the title, author, and anthology in which it was found. Eventually students could create their own anthology of favorite poems, or poems which represent a certain theme.

- The first three handouts are for students to use to gather words that intrigue or inspire them. Teachers should decide which will work best for their class.

- Words can also be put on a word wall which can be added to periodically throughout the unit.

- The following page is one way for students to keep track of favorite poetry they are exposed to during the unit.

- These pages should be kept in a special folder used for the unit and kept in the classroom so the information is always available for students.

Name: _____

GATHERING LANGUAGE
Words that inspire me!

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	VERBS	ADVERBS
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Words and phrases that...

make me laugh and smile	bring tears to my eyes
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

paint a picture

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

make noise	sound forbidding
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Modified from: Allen, J. (2002). Painting word pictures: The language of poetry. *Voices From the Middle, 10*, 52-53.

Name:_____

INSPIRING WORDS THAT START WITH THE LETTER...

A B C D E

F G H I J

K L M N O

P Q R S T

U V W X Y

Z

11

Name: _____

My Favorite Poems

Directions: Keep track of your favorite poems read throughout the unit. Write the title of the poem, the author's name, and the book title & page number if it's from an anthology.

Title	Author	Book	Page

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

15 _____

Fun with Tongue Twisters

Teacher Information

Tongue twisters are a great way to ease the tension of reading poetry aloud. Mistakes are highly expected while reading tongue twisters so students may feel less apprehensive. This activity is an ice breaker for the unit and also introduces students to alliteration (Perfect, 1999) After modeling the reading of several tongue twisters, have students try to read them with partners or in groups of three. This is one way to have fun with language and create motivation for the unit. Following is a list of possible tongue twister websites.

http://members.aol.com/SdShowBob7/twisters.html

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html

After reviewing websites and/or tongue twister books, the instructor should choose those that will fit best with their current group of students. Model saying them and then allow students to work with them in groups of two or three. The groups should practice with any tongue twisters they have. Lastly, have students try to create their own tongue twisters. This could be done with the same group or individually.

Fun With Tongue Twisters
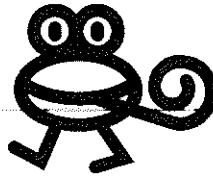
A FROG FINDS FLICKING FLIES FUN!

Directions: Work alone or with your partner(s) to create tongue twisters. Try to be tricky and see if you can tongue tie a member of another group.

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

Share with your teacher a tongue twister that was tricky for you today...

_____

_____

_____

Poem Interpretation

Teacher Instructions

This activity is a good way to discuss how poems can have multiple meanings depending upon the reader's interpretation. This becomes a safety net as students become aware that their interpretation isn't necessarily wrong, just different. Students will be more willing to share their thoughts about poems once they understand that there is more than one right answer. Students get to construct meaning from text by connecting it to their own schema and practice visualization.

This activity combines visualization and art with the read aloud of a poem. It can be done with virtually any poem that the teacher finds interesting. One recommendation is to use "The Road Not Taken", by Robert Frost. The following is an example of how the lesson should take place.

1. The poem is read aloud to students without comments or questions at this time.

2. Students share with their neighbor(s) any images the poem created in their mind.

3. A copy of the poem is passed out to each student.

4. Students reread the poem and discuss their favorite lines, clarify confusing lines or stanzas, exchange thoughts, and share what the poem means to them personally.

5. Each student illustrates a chosen aspect of the poem. They should have access to white paper and colored pencils.

6. Students share their interpretive pictures in groups or with the whole class. To incorporate writing, they could include a written paragraph explaining their depiction.

LITERARY TERMS
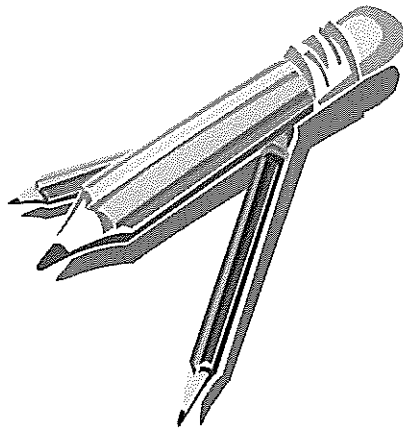
SECTION THREE

This section contains a list of the most common literacy terms and their definitions. It includes ideas on how to teach these terms through poems and activities. There is a teacher information page followed by student handouts for each activity. There are also poems included which make use of different literacy terms to use as examples for students.

Literary Terms and Definitions

Teacher Information

All terms to be taught should be visible to students on a word wall and repeatedly pointed out and defined throughout the unit. The following is a list of common terms used in poetry and their definitions. There are also several types of poems defined.

Definition of terms

Alliteration: The repetition of the initial sounds in neighboring words or stressed syllables, as "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew/ The furrow followed free" (Samuel Taylor Coolridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner").

Cinquain: A stanza of five lines; specifically, one that has successive lines of two, four, six, eight, and two syllables.

Concrete Poetry: Poetry in which the physical arrangements of words are used to help suggest the author's meaning or theme, as in some poetry of Dylan Thomas and e.e. cummings.

Figurative language: Language enriched by word images and figures of speech.

Figure of speech: The expressive, nonliteral use of language for special effects, usually through images, as in metaphor and personification.

Free verse: Verse with an irregular metrical pattern and line length that originated in 19th-century France as a movement to free poetry from the strict metrical rules of that time; *vers libre*.

Haiku: A major type of Japanese poetry; specifically, a form of verse written in seventeen syllables with three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively, to express a single thought and intended to call forth a specific response.

Hyperbole: An intentionally exaggerated figure of speech, as *I have told you a million times*.

Imagery: 1. The process or result of forming mental images while reading or listening to a story, perceiving, etc. 2. The use of language to create sensory impressions, as the imagery of the phrase *such sweet sorrow*. 3. Collectively, the figurative language at work. 4. The study of image patters in literature for clues to the author's deeper meaning.

Metaphor: A figure of speech in which a comparison is implied by analogy but is not stated, as *"death is slumber"*.

Mood: The emotional state of mind expressed by an author or artist in his or her work, or the emotional atmosphere produced by an artistic work.

Narrative: A poem that tells a story, often at some length.

Onomatopoeia: The use of words the sound of which suggests their meaning, as *buzz* and *purr*.

Personification: A metaphorical figure of speech in which animals, ideas, things, etc., are represented as having human qualities.

Rhyme: Identical or very similar recurring final sounds in words within or, more often, at the ends of lines of verse.

Rhythm: The pattern of recurring strong and weak syllabic stress in speech, a recurring emphasis in the flow of spoken or written speech.

Simile: A comparison of two things that are unlike, usually using the words *like* or *as, as "O my love is like a red, red rose"* (Robert Burns, "A Red, Red Rose").

Theme: A major idea or proposition broad enough to cover the entire scope of a literary or other work of art.

Tone: A particular style in writing or speaking.

All definitions from: Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R.E., (1995). *The Literacy Dictionary*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

NAME_____

LITERARY TERMS

Write the definition for each term.

Alliteration:_____

Figurative language:_____

Figure of speech:_____

Free verse:_____

Hyperbole:_____

Imagery:_____

Metaphor:_____

Mood:_____

Onomatopoeia:_____

Personification:_____

Simile:_____

Theme:_____

Tone:_____

Voice:_____

NAME_____

LITERARY TERMS

Directions: Look for the use of these terms in poems that you read during the unit. Write the example you found and the name of the poem in which you found it.

<u>Term</u>   <u>Example</u>   <u>Poem</u>

Alliteration:_____

Figurative language:_____

Figure of speech:_____

Free verse:_____

Hyperbole:_____

Imagery:_____

Metaphor:_____

Mood:_____

Onomatopoeia:_____

Personification:_____

Simile:_____

Theme:_____

Tone:_____

Voice:_____

ALLITERATION QUILT

Teacher Information

This is a class activity to reinforce alliteration. The quilt should be centered on one common theme such as animals, or any theme idea to capture student interest. Students will need white construction or computer paper pre-cut into squares, colored pencils, black fine tip pens, and yarn.

Directions:

Divide students so that all 26 letters of the alphabet are accounted for. If you have more than one block of students doing the unit, then take that into consideration.

Have each student or group draw a letter from a hat, and pick up the student worksheet. Review the definition of alliteration.

Students should decide on an animal that begins with their assigned letter. Next, they need to think about other verbs, adjectives, and nouns that begin with that letter using the student worksheet. They will then begin to create alliteration sentences using their ideas. Students should then decide on their favorite sentence and identify it on their worksheet.

On the square paper students write their assigned letter written largely. The square must also include their alliteration sentence. Students then depict the sentence with an illustration. This should all be done creatively and neatly with the use of colored pencils. Fine tip black pens work well for writing the alliteration sentence and outlining the letter so it stands out.

After putting the letters in alphabetical order students use a three hole punch to place three holes on the necessary sides. They can then use the yarn to tie their letter to the next letter in the alphabet. Wait to punch holes until you've decided on how you will put the quilt together. This can be done in many ways. There can be alternating rows of 6-4-6-4-6, or you can do 5 rows of 5 with the "Z" alliteration on its own row. Once the pattern has been decided, punch holes where necessary and tie the "patches" together carefully with yarn.

Hang the quilt and enjoy!

ALLITERATION QUILT

STUDENT DIRECTIONS

Directions: Create an alliteration patch to be placed on the classroom
alliteration quilt! You will need one square piece of white paper, a black felt
pen, and colored pencils. You may want a regular pencil as well for sketching.

1. Draw one letter out of the hat and pick up the worksheets.
2. Use the alliteration quilt worksheet to brainstorm animals, adjectives,
    verbs, and other nouns beginning with your letter sound.
3. Begin using those words to create sentences about your animal and
    what it does using your words from the worksheet. BE CREATIVE!

    *Remember – it is okay to use small additional words that do not begin
    with your letter sound so that you can create good sentences.

4. Decide on the sentence you and/or your group would like to use and
    identify it by putting a star by it or some other appropriate symbol.

Now, you need to plan out your alliteration patch. Use the rough draft
worksheet to practice first. Make sure your final patch has no errors
and looks perfect. The patch must include...
  • Your letter written largely, neatly, and creatively
  • The alliteration sentence written neatly with the black pen
  • An illustration of the sentence drawn neatly with colored
    pencils

Create your final draft and then wait for further instructions regarding how
the patches will be put together to create the classroom alliteration quilt!

ALLITERATION QUILT

BRAINSTORMING #1

Directions: Under each headline, brainstorm corresponding words that begin with your letter sound. BE CREATIVE! Brainstorm as many as you can.

ANIMALS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

VERBS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

ADJECTIVES
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

ADVERBS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

OTHER NOUNS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

ALLITERATION QUILT

BRAINSTORMING #2

Directions: Use your words from the first brainstorming page to create sentences. You may use some small words that do not start with your letter. Do as many examples as you can then decide on your favorite.

1._____

_____

_____

2._____

_____

_____

3._____

_____

_____

4._____

_____

_____

5._____

_____

_____

ALLITERATION QUILT

ROUGH DRAFT
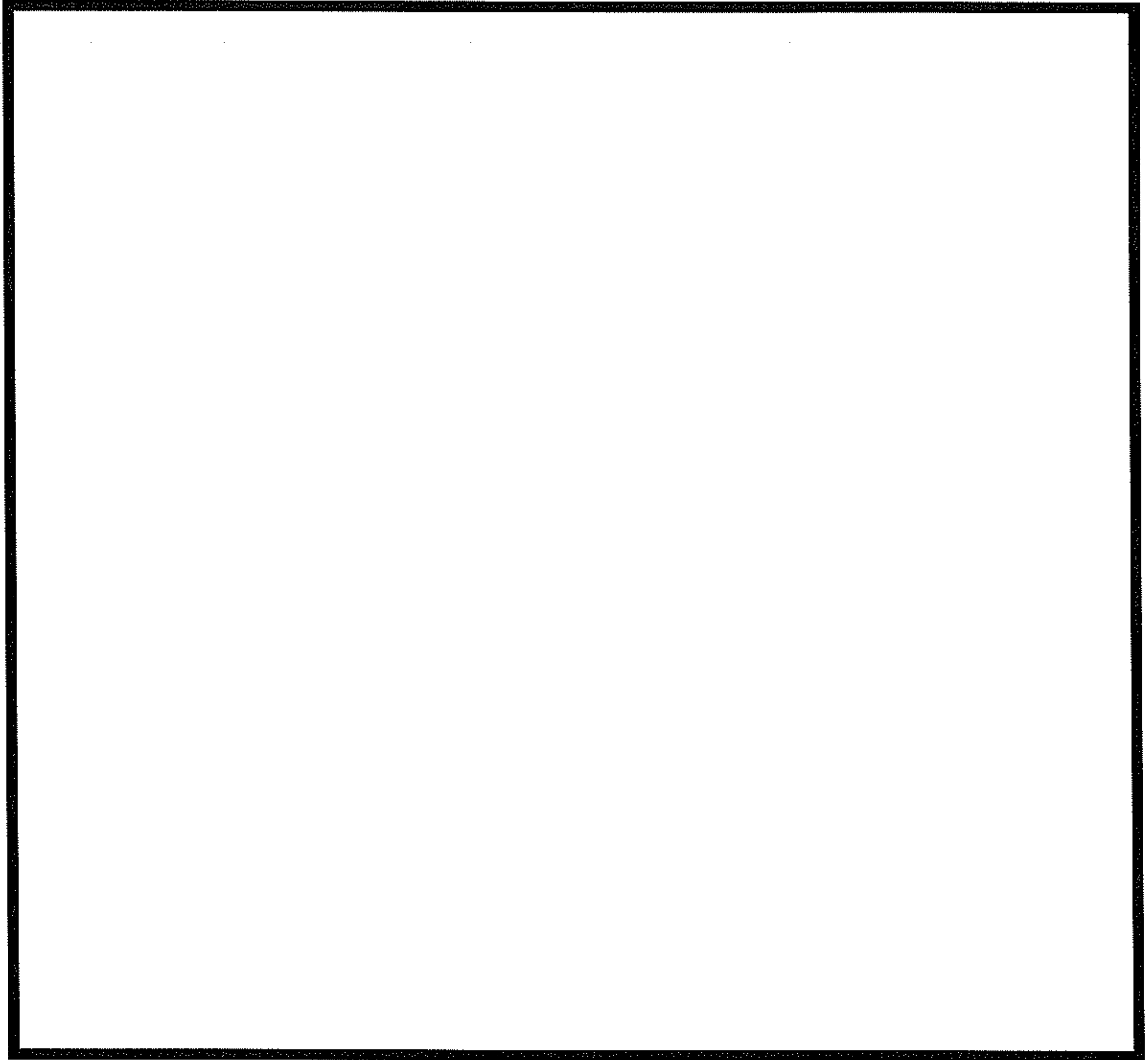
HYPERBOLE

Teacher Information

A hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration. Poetry is a good source for finding hyperboles.

To introduce this topic, provide the definition and have students copy it onto their definition worksheet. Then, allow students time to look through poems and anthologies available in the classroom for examples of hyperboles. Students should then share the example with the class. The following are examples of hyperboles.

- I am so hungry I could eat a horse.

- The neighbors play their music loud enough to wake the dead.

- She has a million things to do today.

- He is so fast he could out run a train.

After discussing and sharing hyperboles, allow students time to create their own. Model creating the following hyperbole with the entire class prior to having the students work independently. This is similar to the hyperboles they will create on their own.

IDEA: A girl shoe shopping.
POSSIBLE TOPICS: How much money she spends, how tired she is when done, how long it takes her, how much fun she has, how many shoes she tries on or buys.

Work with students to pick out a topic and use the idea and topic to create the hyperbole. The following worksheet provides a chance for students to write down a hyperbole found in the classroom poetry materials. It then prompts them to create their own hyperboles using the provided ideas. Students may need additional support during this time.

NAME_____

HYPERBOLES

Directions: Using the poetry sources in the classroom, find an example of hyperbole and write it on the lines below. Make sure to cite your source.

_____

_____

_____

Source: _____

Now use the following ideas to create your own hyperboles.

1. Buying a new car.
   Possible Topics: How expensive, frustrating, or exciting it was.

_____

_____

_____

2. The first day of school.
   Possible Topics: How boring, long, or exciting it was.
                    How nervous, happy, or annoyed you felt.

_____

_____

_____

3. The food in the cafeteria.
   Possible Topics: How disgusting, smelly, or delicious it is.

_____

_____

_____

4. How good looking you think the new girl or boy in school is.

_____

_____

_____

METAPHOR

Teacher Information

A metaphor compares two unlike things without using *like* or *as*. In a metaphor one thing is said to be another thing. Explain this to students and then ask them to think of examples of metaphors they might have heard. Allow time for students to share their ideas and discuss the metaphors that have been mentioned. Ask students if their parents have ever said the following metaphors to them...

- Your room is a pigsty.

- This place is a dump.

- You kids are wild monkeys today.

- This car is a wreck waiting to happen.

CREATE A COLOR POEM WITH METAPHORS

Once students have a good grasp of the concept of metaphor, create color poems using metaphors. Students will first need to decide upon a color. You will need white construction paper, black felt tip pens, colored pencils, scissors, and glue.

1. Students use various shades of their chosen color to cover the white construction paper with a design, not a picture. They may add small amounts of other color for contrast, but the design must dominantly be of their color.

2. Students fill out the brainstorm page. They then use the ideas from the brainstorm page to create their color poem on the provided "color poem outline" page. Some students may choose not to use the outline and create the poem on their own. The outline is simply a guided model for those students who need additional support.

3. Students edit and recopy their poem on a blank piece of construction paper. They should use the black felt pens. They then cut around their poem and glue it to the previously created colored paper. Student work should then be proudly displayed!

COLOR POEM
Using Metaphors

STUDENT DIRECTIONS

Directions: Create a color poem with metaphors by completing the following steps.

1. Select a color. You can only pick one.

2. Using a white piece of construction paper and colored pencils, create a design using various shades of your chosen color. The design should not be a picture; just a design. You may use other colors just slightly for emphasis and contrast. Put your name on the back.

3. Think about what you associate with that color and fill out the brainstorm worksheet.

4. Using your ideas from the brainstorm, create your poem with the provided outline, OR you may choose to create your own poem without using the outline. Make sure you DO NOT use the words *like* or *as* because those words go with similes. Edit your poem and write it neatly with black felt pens on a piece of white construction paper.

5. Cut out your color poem in any shape you wish using scissors. You may use straight scissors or those with a decorative edge.

6. Arrange your poem onto your color design created in step 2. Glue your poem onto the background design, and you are done!

COLOR POEM
BRAINSTORM WORKSHEET

Directions: Think about your color and complete the following lists. These ideas will help you with your poem. Use words and phrases. Fill in the broken blank line with your color.

1. Things that LOOK _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

_____   _____   _____   _____

2. Things that SOUND _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

_____   _____   _____   _____

3. Things that SMELL _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

_____   _____   _____   _____

4. Things that FEEL _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

_____   _____   _____   _____

5. What makes YOU feel _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _?

_____   _____   _____   _____

6. What TASTES _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _?

_____   _____   _____   _____

7. What EXPERIENCES or IDEAS seem _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _?

_____   _____   _____   _____

8. PLACES that seem _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

_____   _____   _____   _____

METAPHORICAL COLOR POEM

Directions: Complete the following poem by filling in the blanks with words
from the specified list. Remember- you may bypass this step and create
your poem entirely on your own. Give your poem a title, and then edit it.
Where there is a blank made of broken line, put in the name of your color.

_____
(title)

_ _ _ _ _ _ is _____ and _____ (list 1)

and _____. (list 4)

_ _ _ _ _ _ is the taste of _____. (list 6)

_____ and _____ smell _ _ _ _ _ _. (list 3)

_____ makes me feel _ _ _ _ _ _. (list 5)

_ _ _ _ _ _ is the sound of _____ and _____. (list 2)

_ _ _ _ _ _ is _____ , _____ , and

_____. (list 8)

_____ is _ _ _ _ _ _. (list 7)

_____ is also _ _ _ _ _ _. (list 7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ is _____. (use any list)

Add in lines if you wish. Feel free to also rearrange or change any ideas.

This is YOUR creation. When you have revised and edited, you may begin

your final draft. Use another sheet of white construction paper and a black

felt tip pen.

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MOOD AND TONE

Teacher Information

This activity is a fun way to introduce the idea of mood and tone. Teach or review the definitions of these two literary terms and allow students time to copy the definitions onto their own literary term worksheet. Explain that mood is the emotional tone that the author is trying to communicate. During the activity, students will need to adjust their tone of voice to help create the desired mood.

PREPARATION

1. Remind students of the community agreements and to remain positive.

2. On separate pieces of paper write down the following emotion words...

   Amused, Angry, Frightened, Impatient, Surprised, Sad (add more as desired)

3. Place these words in a hat to be drawn by students.

4. Write one of the following phrases on the board, or choose your own...

   Get out of here, You can't do that here, I never said that

5. Students draw an emotion word and perform the line expressing the selected emotion.

6. The others should try to guess the emotion being demonstrated.

7. Give as many opportunities as seem necessary or as desired by students.

8. Have students think about and demonstrate how they would convey mood in their writing using the following handout. They will need some guidance.

NAME_____

MOOD AND TONE

Directions: Think of phrases you could use when writing a poem to convey the suggested mood. Write two to three (or more) sentences to show mood. Remember- you are the author here. How would you create the given mood?

1. AMUSED/HAPPY-

_____

_____

_____

2. ANGRY-

_____

_____

_____

3. FRIGHTENED/SCARED-

_____

_____

_____

4. IMPATIENT-

_____

_____

_____

5. SURPRISED-

_____

_____

_____

PERSONIFICATION

Teacher Information

Begin the lesson by reading "Fog" by Carl Sandburg (1916). Discuss/review the definition of personification and have students write it on their literary definition page. Explain how "Fog" personifies the fog described in the poem by giving it life like characteristics. Have students point out examples of the human characteristics from the poem.

Allow students time to find examples of personification in the classroom poetry books and materials. They can then share their examples with the class.

Model personifying an object (any noun) by writing a human action next to it. Then create a complete sentence by using the noun, action, and adding a phrase that answers either who, what, where, when, why, or how. For example, take the noun SUN and add an action like SMILED.

Sun smiled – now add a phrase to answer who, what, where, when, why, or how.

The sun smiled upon the shore. (answering where)
The sun smiled all afternoon. (answering when)
The sun smiled with glee. (answering how)

Model the process for the students with this example, or one of your own.

Use the board, and have students use their worksheet to brainstorm words that name something in nature. Next, brainstorm words that name human actions. The students will then use one word from each list and combine it with a creative phrase that completes the sentence. Remind students to think about answering the questions who, what, where, when, why, or how, if they are struggling. There is another practice page if students need addition practice.

Finally students will be ready to write a personification weather poem. It is modeled after Carl Sandburg's poem. Students can use their brainstorms for ideas and will also have a worksheet to guide them through the process. These poems are short in length and will be fairly small.

To "publish" their poem students could draw/paint a scene depicting their poem on white construction paper. Another idea is to find pictures in magazines or elsewhere of the weather they are describing and create a collage. The final draft of the weather poem can then be written in black felt pen on the collage/picture or on another piece of white paper and added to the collage/picture.

Activities modified from the following sources:
www.mrsrogers.com/English2/poetry
Bass, H.R. & Morrill, D. (1998). *Toolbox for Prose and Poetry*. Portland , Maine: J. Weston Walch.

PERSONIFICATION
Personification gives human like qualities to non-human things.

Find an example of personification and write it on the lines below.

_____

_____

_____

Cite your source:_____

Brainstorm Lists...

List One – words about nature   List Two- human actions
1.   1.
2.   2.
3.   3.
4.   4.
5.   5.
6.   6.
7.   7.
8.   8.
9.   9.
10.   10.

Create personification sentences by choosing one word from each list and adding a phrase to complete the sentence. Your phrase can address the who, what, where, when, why, or how of the noun and action word.

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

PERSONIFICATION
More Practice!

Directions: Read the following situations and create a sentence about the situations using personification.

1. You are walking through your favorite store and see an item that begs you to buy it. What is it? What did it do?

_____

_____

_____

2. A young child is tired and sore after his first day of snowboarding/skiing. Write a sentence with personification that tells what the bed does to make the child feel better.

_____

_____

_____

3. You are outside playing on a beautiful sunny day when all the sudden thunder, lightening, and/or rain start coming. Use personification to describe what happens.

_____

_____

_____

PERSONIFICATION

Weather Poem

List types of weather and then choose your weather topic from the list.

1.   6.
2.   7.
3.   8.
4.   9.
5.   10.

Complete the following weather poem by following the instructions.
Remember to use adjectives that describe humans and human actions.
Your title is the form of weather you chose from your above list. You will
also need to choose an animal to help you describe or personify the weather.

_____Title_____

Line #1: Title + how the weather arrives or begins as the animal would.
Line #2: Tell what it does
Line #3: Tell how it does it.
Line #4: Tell where it is.
Line #5: Tell how it leaves as the animal would leave.

NOW WRITE YOUR POEM

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SIMILE

Teacher Information

A simile is a comparison between two things using the word *like* or *as.*

Provide students with the definition and have them write it on their literary terms definition handout. Ask for possible student examples of simile and then allow time for them to explore the poetry available in the classroom for an example of simile. Allow students time to share these examples and to add them to their literary term example list. Then, complete the following examples together as a class. They are also on the following student handout. Students may want to use their own ideas.

1. The thunder crashed as loudly as _____.

2. The hyenas at the zoo laughed like _____.

3. The mountain air smelled as fresh as _____.

4. The fresh baked apple pie smelled like _____.

Next, have students complete the student handout. They will be writing their own similes to compare provided pairs of words. Allow time for sharing these aloud with the class. When students are ready they will create a simile poem. The idea is to create similes using the colors of the rainbow. For example,

"Rainbow"
Red as a burning flame
Orange like a basketball
Yellow like the morning sun
Green as a newly planted pine tree
Blue as the winter sky
Purple like tasty grape popsicles

Poem idea modified from: Parr, M., & Campbell, T. (2006). Poets in practice. *The Reading Teacher, 60,* 36-46.

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NAME_____

SIMILE

Find an example of a simile and write it below. Cite your source.

_____

_____

_____

Source: _____

We will complete the following similes as a class. You may use provided ideas or create your own.

1. The thunder crashed as loudly as _____.

2. The hyenas at the zoo laughed like _____.

3. The mountain air smelled as fresh as _____.

4. The fresh baked apple pie smelled like _____.

Now write your own sentences using similes to compare the pairs of words.

1. old car, turtle _____

_____

2. stars, diamonds_____

_____

3. rose bud, baby _____

_____

NOW YOU ARE READY TO CREATE A SIMILE POEM!

SIMILE

Directions: Create a simile poem. All lines need to contain a simile so they must make a comparison using either *like* or *as*. The subject of the poem is a rainbow. The beginning of each line will be the color. You will then use similes to compare the color to something that color reminds you of. When you are done editing, you may try another simile poem of your choice.

RAINBOW

Red _____

Orange _____

Yellow _____

Green _____

Blue _____

Purple _____

THEME

Teacher Information

For this activity, students will be designing a theme based calendar. This can be done in groups or individually as determined by the teacher. Teachers may want to bring in some theme based calendars to show as examples. The following is a list of things to get ready prior to the activity.

- Copies of the provided calendar pages as needed for class size. The calendar pages are just blank grids and the month pages have the name of the month. January has both as it is the first page. (see directions for putting it all together)
- Computer paper in various colors for students to use as the outside cover.
- Many magazines to cut out pictures from or printed pages of a wide variety of clip art for students to use.

Possible required elements for the activity. These are listed on the student direction page. Feel free to add, remove, adapt, or change the requirements to fit your needs.

- Each page will have a picture to represent the theme.
- Each picture needs a sentence or two justifying how or why it represents the chosen theme.
- Each calendar page must have the month written, days numbered, and major holidays filled in.
- The cover will have a colored picture representing the theme and a quote or description explaining what that theme means from the student's perspective.

Other Options

- Students could add a quote that represents the theme, picture, and/or month to the calendar page.
- Students could create a simile about the month and write it on the calendar page.
- Students may want to individualize the calendar by drawing little pictures on the holiday squares or marking their own personal special dates like birthdays.
-

Teacher Information

Putting together the calendar pages...

With the exception of January, all other pages have either the month written at the top or a calendar at the bottom (calendar page). All pages with the month will be rotated 180 degrees and then turned over. The pages need to be in the following order.

1. The January page.
2. February – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you.
3. Calendar page
4. March – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
5. Calendar page
6. April – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
7. Calendar page
8. May – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
9. Calendar page
10. June – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
11. Calendar page
12. July – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
13. Calendar page
14. August – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
15. Calendar page
16. September – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
17. Calendar page
18. October – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
19. Calendar page
20. November – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
21. Calendar page
22. December – Turn upside down and backwards so the word is facing away from you
23. Calendar page

After the pages are in order, run them through the copy machine one-sided to two-sided. This will be the students' calendar packet. They will then choose one piece of colored printer paper as the outside cover. It can be glued onto the packet.

Pages to follow...

JANUARY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

_____

_____

_____

_____

APRIL

_____

_____

_____

_____

<u>MAY</u>

_____

_____

_____

_____

JUNE

_____

_____

_____

_____

JULY

_____
_____
_____
_____

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

_____

_____

_____

_____

NOVEMBER

_____

_____

_____

_____

DECEMBER

Calendar Page

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

THEME
Student instruction sheet

Directions: Create a calendar based on a theme of your choice.
You will need...
- one calendar packet
- one piece of colored computer paper
- magazines or clip art
- colored pencils and a felt tip pen
- one glue stick
- scissors

Glue the colored computer paper to the last page of your calendar packet. This will be the cover of your calendar. Crease calendar by folding it in half.

Preview the clip art and/or magazines to get an idea of the theme you would like to choose. Your theme can be anything appropriate that you want. Remember to stick to one main idea.

Once you have chosen your theme, begin to pick out the pictures you will use. You need 13 pictures; one for each month, and one for the cover. Decide on the order of your pictures and then glue one picture under each name of the month, and one on the front cover. On the lines below the picture write how/why the picture represents the theme. One the front cover, neatly write what the chosen theme means to you.

On the back cover put the name of the author(s). You may also add a brief description of each author.

Other possible additions...

- Add a quote to represent the theme, picture, and/or month to each calendar page.
- Create a simile about the month and write it on the calendar page.
- Individualize the calendar by drawing little pictures on the holiday squares or marking your own personal special dates like birthdays.

POEMS THAT INSPIRE

&

DEVELOP A SENSE OF SELF
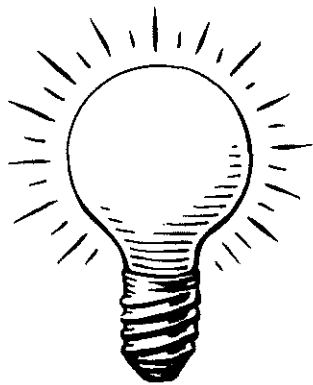
The following section includes types of poems that students will write about themselves. These poems help to promote self-awareness and self esteem. Students will enjoy writing poems which will further develop their sense of self. Each type of poem includes teacher instructions and student handouts.

ACROSTIC NAME POEM

Teacher Information

To do an acrostic name poem, students write their name vertically down the left side of the page. Each letter becomes the beginning of a new line. Students begin each line using the corresponding letter. The lines can be composed of vivid words or phrases that describe the student.

This lesson can be modified to challenge students or simplified if necessary. To keep it simple students simply need to begin each line with a word that describes them and begins with the starting letter on that line. Possible challenges are as follows...

- Try to fill it out using one part of speech i.e. all verbs or all adjectives, etc.

- Use longer phrases

- Complete the poem with one complete sentence

- Have students try nouns other than their name like "ice-cream, baseball, summer, sunshine, student, etc.

Acrostic poems may be hard to type. Students could use white paper and nice pens to "publish" their acrostic poems. Students could add illustrations depicting their written descriptions or even a photograph. The final products would look great displayed in the classroom.

ACROSTIC NAME POEM

Teacher Information

Example of Acrostic Poem – This example used verbs for each letter.

TEACHES

ENCOURAGES

ANSWERS QUESTIONS

COMFORTS

HELPS

ENTERTAINS

REASSURES

Bio-Poem

Teacher Information

Bio-Poems, or sometimes called auto-bio poems, are poems about a person's life. The beginning of each line is given so that students need only to fill in the rest of the sentence. To fill in the sentence they may use a list of items, or one item stated in a complete thought. Students should be allowed freedom to choose what will best suit their needs. Line numbers are provided for directions, but should be left out of the final draft.

Students will focus on social and descriptive features of themselves. The poem's structure is very easy to follow so it is a good poem to use as students first begin writing poetry. Students will be willing to participate because they just need to complete the sentences.

Modified from: Hunt, T.J., & Hunt, B. (2006).. Writing Poetry to Connect to Literature. *English Journal, 96*, 101-104.

AUTOBIO-POEM

Directions: Use the following pattern to create a poem about YOU!
Complete each line with a list of items, phrase, or complete thought. After
you have edited your poem, recopy it on notebook paper or white paper with
a black felt tip pen. Do not write the line numbers.

Line 1: First name

Line 2: List 4 traits/adjectives that describe your character

Line 3: Relative(s) of (brother of, daughter of, etc.) ....

Line 4: Lover of ....

Line 5: Who feels...

Line 6: Who needs...

Line 7: Who fears..

Line 8: Who gives..

Line 9: Who would like to..

Line 10: Resident of...

Line 11: Last name or nickname
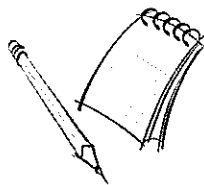
I Don't Understand Poem

Teacher Information

This poem is made up of three stanzas. Each stanza begins with a given phrase. Students begin by stating what they <u>don't understand</u> about themselves, others, their life, or the world. The second stanza is made up of statements that they <u>really don't</u> understand. These should be bigger, broader ideas about life or the world. Finally, students end with statements of what they <u>do</u> understand. There is a student brainstorming page included for this activity.

Each stanza should have three or four phrases to complete the beginning phrase. However, for the middle stanza, students may choose to just use one statement for emphasis. The outline would look as follows...

I don't understand

_____

_____

_____

But most of all

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I understand most is

_____

_____

_____

_____

NAME_____

I Don't Understand...

DIRECTIONS: Brainstorm all the things you don't understand on the top half of the page. On the bottom half of the page, brainstorm the things you feel you do understand. You can include things about yourself, life in general, the world, your family, friends, and/or enemies, etc.

Things I don't understand...

Things I do understand...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

Using your brainstorm, complete the following poem. The beginning of each stanza is written for you. Use completing phrases for each line. You do not need to fill in all the lines.

I don't understand

_____

_____

_____

_____

But most of all

_____

_____

_____

What I understand most is

_____

_____

_____

_____

I USED TO...BUT NOW I...

Teacher Information

Students complete this poem by contrasting the person they used to be with the person they are now. They will be focusing on the changes within themselves as they have gotten older. Lines alternate continuously beginning with "I used to..." and then "But now I". Students can include ideas such as past/present activities, fears, beliefs, thoughts, wishes, feelings, etc.

Get Started

Have students bring in old photographs of themselves to inspire past memories. They can also look at recent photos or in a mirror. Allow students time to discuss what they used to be like, how they are now, and stories about their childhoods.

Writing

Students fill out the brainstorming page considering the ideas they have discussed. After deciding what order they would like their statements to be in they start their rough drafts. Students should edit and then type or neatly write their final drafts. Students should include a unique title.

Extra Ideas

Students may want to back their poem on a piece of colored or white construction paper. The construction paper can include their name written decoratively, words that describe them written or cut from a magazine, or pictures of them growing up.

I USED TO...BUT NOW I...

Directions: Brainstorm ideas about how you used to be in the left column. Include statements about how you looked, what you did with your time, what you liked or didn't like, what you were afraid of, what you thought, believed, or wished for, what you got in trouble for, and what you couldn't do but now can. Then in the right column, use these ideas to make statements about your present self.

The way I used to be	The way I am now

I USED TO...BUT NOW I...

Directions: Now, use your brainstorm to create your poem. You will need to go through your ideas and put them in the order you want them to appear in your poem. Then begin your first draft below. If you need more lines you may add them on the back or another sheet of paper. Edit this rough draft with a friend when you are finished.

_____

(title)

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

I used to _____,

but now I _____.

Someday Poem
Teacher Information

The poem begins and ends with the word someday on its own line. Each line in between should state the student's wishes, hopes, and dreams. Students should start with the present and slowly move toward the future. The first few lines would then include things they wish for currently then move on to what they see in their futures as they get older. They can also begin with their personal everyday wishes and slowly move away from the self to the world in general.

There is no limit as to how many lines should be included. Students should be encouraged to use rhyme or rhythm if they choose. They should also have the freedom to incorporate any literary terms that they wish to use.

Modified from www.msrogers.com/English2/poetry

SOMEDAY

Directions: This poem begins and ends with the one word line "Someday". All other lines should be filled with your hopes, dreams, thoughts, goals, and wishes. There are two options you can choose from to complete this poem.

Option 1: Begin with statements about the present year and slowly move to making statements about your future as you get older and older.

Option 2: Begin with statements about your hopes, dreams, thoughts, goals, and wishes for yourself. Slowly move away from yourself to make bigger, broader statements. For example, you could go from self to family, friends, school, community, city, state, country, and finally the world. You do not need to fill in all the lines. You may add lines if you wish.

SOMEDAY...

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SOMEDAY.

FUN POEMS
THAT STUDENTS
ENJOY
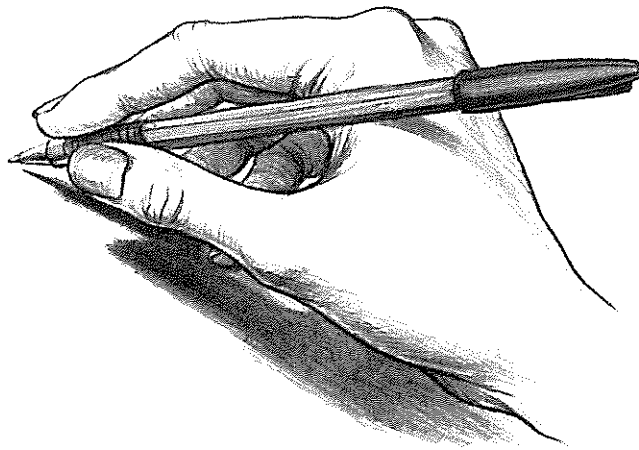
SECTION FIVE

This section contains lessons on a variety of different
styles of poems. Middle school students especially enjoy
narrative and free verse poems. They will get to explore
different patterns and styles with which they can use to create
many unique poems on their own.

CINQUAIN

Teacher Information

A cinquain is a five line poem. The first line states a noun. The second line provides two adjectives describing the noun. The third line consists of three participles (verbs ending with –ing) that relate to the noun. The fourth line is a simile describing the noun, typically four words long. The fifth line renames the noun with a synonym.

To entice students, bring in some freshly popped popcorn. Allow time for them to smell, taste, and enjoy the snack. Then, have students write down adjectives, participles, similes, and synonyms for popcorn. Model creating a cinquain using ideas from the class. You may want to create more than one.

Students can pick from a myriad of choices to complete this poem. Some may even wish to write one about them. Line five could then consist of a nickname. Students will need to brainstorm ideas, pick a topic, and write their rough draft. As always, they should edit the rough draft and create a final copy using black felt tip pens.

PUBLISHING IDEAS TO SHARE WITH STUDENTS:

- Border the poem with pictures or examples of the topic. For example, if the poem was about feathers the student could glue feathers around the outside of the poem.

- Write the final draft over the top of a picture or photograph of the topic.

- Write the poem about an imaginary creature. Then, fold a piece of construction paper in half. With the folded edge on the left, start a drawing from the left to create half of a silly shape, and return to the left before lifting the pencil. Cut it out to reveal a strange, unique symmetrical creature. Write the cinquain on the creature and decorate it as desired.

CINQUAIN
Brainstorm ideas

What would you like your cinquain to be about?

It can be a something real, or something imaginary like a strange creature. Brainstorm some possible nouns for your topic. Next, brainstorm adjectives and participles that clearly and creatively describe your topic. Then, think of a four word simile sentence to make a comparison of your topic. Finally, find synonyms to rename your topic. Use friends and dictionaries for additional help and ideas!

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PARTICIPLES
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

SIMILES

_____

_____

_____

_____

SYNONYMS

_____ _____ _____ _____

CINQUAIN

Directions: Use your brainstorm to create a cinquain poem. Edit your poem when you are done.

Line 1: Write your topic word.

Line 2: Choose two adjectives. Write them next to each other with a comma between them.

Line 3: Write three participles next to each other with commas in between.

Line 4: Choose one simile and write it.

Line 5: Write one of the synonyms.

_____

_____ / _____

_____ / _____ / _____

_____

_____

CONCRETE POEMS

Teacher Information

Concrete, or shape poems, use words to create a picture. The way in which words are positioned, or the outline of the poem helps to create meaning. For example, a poem might be about a raindrop and the entire poem is actually shaped like a raindrop, a poem about love might be in the shape of a heart. Begin by sharing examples with students.

There is a student handout to practice the idea of using words to create pictures. Students write the word in a way that represents what the word means. They can even experiment with words they come up with on their own. For example, the word "down" could be written – D

    O
     W
      N.

To write the poem students must first decide on a topic in order to determine the shape of their poem. They should then write a rough draft to experiment with the shape. Students should be encouraged to experiment with rhyme, rhythm, free verse, or any literary devices they have learned. After editing the rough draft, they can begin the final draft.

For the final draft, students may want to lightly sketch the outline of the shape of their poem. They could use white or colored construction paper depending on their topic. The final draft should be written neatly with a black fine tip felt pen.

Modified from: Parr, M., & Campbell, T. (2006). Poets in practice. *The Reading Teacher, 60*, 36-46.

NAME_____

CONCRETE POEM

Practice Page

Directions: Choose four words from the list and write them in such a way that you illustrate the words meaning. You may also use your own words.

Fear	Windy	Hop	Run
Love	Curl	Dance	Twirl
Scary	Up	Music	Rain
Melt	puzzle	Sing	Sad

CONCRETE POEM

Directions: Decide what you want your poem to be about. This will help you to determine the shape of your poem. You may want to look back through your word lists for ideas. You can experiment with rhyme, rhythm, free verse, or any literary term you have learned.

Write a rough draft below. Then use a piece of white computer paper to draw an outline sketch of the picture your poem will create. You can write your poem inside of the sketch, or another option is to use the words of the poem as the outline of the object. Next, erase the outline so there are no lines showing.

Edit your poem so there are no mistakes. When you are ready, begin your final draft on a colored or white piece of construction paper. You will want to sketch your outline VERY lightly so that it can later be erased.

_____

_____

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_____

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_____

_____

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DIAMANTE POEMS

Teacher Information

A diamante is a seven line poem, shaped like a diamond. On half of the diamond describes the first line of the poem while the other half describes the exact opposite and the last line of the poem. It follows a very specific pattern and is therefore fun and easy for students to create. The pattern of the poem and an example of a diamante are on the following page.

Begin the lesson by creating a list of opposites with the students. Write ideas on the board for students to see. After there are many ideas to choose from, students pick their favorite pair of opposites.

Model how to create the poem with a pair of opposites not on the board, or one that students will probably not choose. Work with the class to brainstorm adjectives, verbs, and nouns related to each of the two opposites. Then demonstrate how to make the poem.

Explain to students that they will follow this same process to create their own diamante. Their final edited draft should resemble a diamond. The diamond could then be cut out and glued onto a decorative background. A neat idea for the background is to use a piece of white construction paper and divide it in half. Set the paper in front of you horizontally and divide it by drawing a diagonal line from the upper right hand corner to the bottom left hand corner. The left side of the paper will have a picture that represents the word on line one of the poem. The right side should represent the opposite word which is the last line of the poem. The cut out diamond diamante poem would then be glued in the very center of the page.

DIAMANTE POEMS

Teacher Information

The formula for a diamante, and an example

The first thing you must do is decide upon a pair of words which are opposites, like morning and day. Then you need adjectives, verbs, and nouns that relate to each of the chosen opposite words. Formula...

Line 1: (one word) One of the opposites

Line 2: (two words) Two adjectives describing line 1.

Line 3: (three words) Three action verbs relating to line 1.

Line 4: (four words) The first two are nouns which relate to line 1, the second two are nouns which relate to line seven. (the other opposite)

Line 5: (three words) Three action verbs relating to line 7.

Line 6: (two words) Two adjectives describing line 7.

Line 7: (one word) The other opposite word

EXAMPLE

Morning

Clear, Bright

Waking, Warming, Wondering

Sunrise, Dawn, Evening, Sunset

Drifting, Cooling, Relaxing

Dark, Fuzzy

Night

DIAMANTE

Directions: Create a diamante poem and an illustration to go with it.

Line 1: Choose two words that are opposites. Write them on the lines below.
The left side is list (A) and the right side is list (B).

A_____   B_____

Line 2 & 6: List adjectives below each opposite word that describe the word.
A_____   B_____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Line 3&7: List action verbs below each opposite that you relate to that word.
A_____   B_____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Line 4: List nouns below each opposite that relate to that opposite.
A_____   B_____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

NOW: Create a diamante on the next worksheet using the guide below. The
words with (A) after them come from the left column. Words with (B) after
them come from the right column.

<div align="center">

Opposite (A)
Adjective(A), Adjective(A)
Verb (A), Verb (A) , Verb (A)
Noun (A), Noun (A), Noun (B), Noun (B)
Verb (B), Verb (B), Verb (B)
Adjective(B), Adjective(B)
Opposite (B)

</div>

DIAMANTE

Directions: Write your diamante with the words and directions from the previous information sheet. Give it a title and edit it when you are done.

_____
(TITLE)

_____

_____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____

_____

FINAL DRAFT DIRECTIONS

After editing your rough draft, rewrite it neatly with pen on the final draft paper. Then, get a piece of white computer paper, a ruler, and colored pencils. Set the paper in front of you horizontally. Using a pencil and your ruler, lightly draw a straight line from the upper right hand corner to the lower left hand corner. On the upper left side use your colored pencils to illustrate the opposite on line one. On the lower right, illustrate the opposite on line seven. Neatly cut out your final draft and glue it to the center of your illustrated picture. Put your name on the back!

NAME_____

<u>DIAMANTE</u>

Directions: Write your final draft below with no errors. Carefully cut it out and then glue it to your illustration. Use the periods at the top and bottom as a cutting guide.

.

_____

_____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____ , _____

_____ , _____

_____

.

FOUND POEMS

Teacher Information

The idea behind "found poems" is that you use a published poem to generate ideas for your own poem. Often, a found poem actually follows the same rhyme pattern, rhythm, or general idea of the published poem. Found poems provide students with a framework from which to create their own poetry. Found poems can be created after reading almost any poem. After reading a poem, a link is made which then is a starting point for students to write their own poem.

Creating Links

A link is a connection or writing idea originating from another poem's subject matter. Creating a link connects the poem to the student's own world.

Find a great poem that you would like to share with the students. After reading it aloud, allow students time to read it again. Then, brainstorm any possible connections brought forth by the poem's content. These connections, or links, will be what students use eventually to create their own poems. They need to be broad and not too limiting. The links will be generated by the class so they will be writing about ideas they came up with on their own. You may want to narrow the ideas down to one specific link, or allow students to choose from a wide variety of listed links.

For example, if the class read the poem *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost, they may decide to write about a time that they had to make a tough choice, or wished they could have been in two places at once.

Found Poem Idea – Apology Poem

The following found poem models itself after "This is Just to Say", by William Carlos Williams. After reading the poem, have students discuss a time when they apologized for doing something for which they weren't really sorry. They could also think of instances where they might apologize for something and not mean it. They should then decide on an idea they'd like to use for their topic.

Students should edit their poems and rewrite them with black felt tip pen or type them.

Adapted from:

Certo, J. L. (2004). Cold plums and the old men in the water: Let children read and write "great" poetry. *The Reading Teacher, 58,* 266-271.

Frank, M. (1987). *Complete Wrting Lessons for the Middle Grades.* Nashville, Tennessee: Incentive Publications.

NAME_____

APOLOGY POEM

Directions: Think of a time where you apologized for something you weren't really sorry for and use that example to make your poem.

_____
(TITLE)

Tell what you did _____

_____

Tell why someone _____

is likely to be _____

unhappy about it _____

_____

Give your apology _____

or request forgiveness _____

_____

Tell why you did it _____

and why you're not _____

really sorry. _____

Edit and type or rewrite neatly with black felt tip pen.

FREE VERSE

Teacher Information

There are two typed of free verse poems included. The first is explained on this page under the title of "phoetry". The second is explained on a student worksheet on the following page. Students will need to follow prompts to write short phrases. Then, they mix up all their phrases and put their words in a different order. The outcome is called a nonsense poem that always turns out fun. Read through the student handout, and practice creating your own nonsense poem before teaching that lesson.

"PHOETRY"

This lesson is a free verse poem created by using phrases connected to student photographs.

1. Have students bring in photos depicting different events, situations, or scenes from their lives.

2. Allow students time to share their photographs with other members of the class. Discussing the pictures will help students to rediscover their experiences and to remember their thoughts and feelings during that time.

3. Next, students write phrases to describe the picture and the setting. Phrases should suggest the color, smell, sound, feelings, and mood. They are to basically brainstorm ideas about their photograph.

4. Students then take those ideas and combine/manipulate them to create phrases and poetic descriptions. They will turn these poetic descriptions into their poem.

5. As a final product, students can cut a hole (slightly smaller than their picture) in a piece of colored construction paper. They glue the picture behind the hole so the picture looks framed. Then, students cut around the edges of the construction paper with decorative edged art scissors. Students then glue different colored piece of construction paper behind the other piece so that it borders the first piece. They then write their poem somewhere next to their picture.

Following is another free verse poem called a "nonsense poem" that students can do.

Created by: Kianue, J.A. (1992). "Phoetry" in the Middle School. *English Journal, 81*, 70-72.

NONSENSE POEM
FREE VERSE
Directions: Follow the steps to create a nonsense poem.

Step 1: Write a dream you had recently or one that you remember.

_____

_____

_____

Step 2: Write down your earliest memory.

_____

_____

_____

Step 3: Write a feeling sentence. Include a feeling word and what makes you feel that way or why you feel that way.

_____

_____

_____

Step 4: Write a sentence describing the best or worst day of your life.

_____

_____

_____

Now is the hard part. Take all your words/phrases from above and mix them all up to create your poem. Do not leave any sentence together. The more you mix, the better your poem will be. You do not need to use all the words from the above steps and you may add words if necessary. Write a rough draft and edit it. Write your final draft with black felt tip pen or type it. You can even try creating more than one nonsense poem and see how different they are from each other.

HAIKU

Teacher Information

Haiku is a Japanese form of poetry and is typically about nature. The entire poem has seventeen syllables. Lines one and three each have five syllables; line two has seven. An art project is incorporated to make the activity more fun. First, begin by explaining a haiku and then read several examples to students. Practice counting syllables with students to reinforce the concept. You may want to create a haiku together as a class.

Have students decide on a topic and write a haiku. Some may choose to write several. Students will need to choose one haiku poem with which to complete the activity. Students should check each other's work for the correct syllables and spelling. They will then need to copy a final draft with no mistakes so it is ready to be copied onto their artwork.

The following art activity takes more than one day so plan accordingly. Students will be blowing black paint with a straw to create "stems", and then adding color to them so the final product looks like a Japanese tree or bush.

You will need...
White poster board with a "slick" side cut into rectangles (about 12" x 7")
Black paint (may need to be watered down or thinned)
Paint in a variety of other colors
Paint brushes of various sizes
Plenty of old newspaper (to protect desks)
Permanent fine tip black pens
Pie plates (for paint)
Ink dropper
Small straws

HAIKU

Teacher Information

Creating the artwork for the haiku

The Process

DAY 1 –

1. Practice blowing the black paint to make sure it is runny enough for the students.
2. Cover all desks with newspaper.
3. Demonstrate blowing the black paint drop into "stems" with a straw. Allow students to practice on newspaper before they use their poster board.
   > Tips: Students need to have the tip of the straw directly at the bottom of the drop of paint and slowly blow upwards. As the paint begins rolling along they should direct it with the straw to create what will look like stems.
4. Pass out the poster board when students have perfected the art of blowing with the straw. Have them put their name on the non-slick side.
5. Place a small/medium size drop of paint about ¼ way up the slick side of poster board; it should be vertical. There should be enough room below the drop for students to later write their Haiku.
6. Students will need additional small drops of black paint to complete the process.
7. Place paintings somewhere safe to dry.

DAY 2-

1. Put desks together so that they are more like tables and cover with newspaper.
2. On each group of desks one or two pie plates with paint in them, a small cup of water, and various sizes of brushes. You will not need large brushes.
3. Pass out student art work and have them pick their accent color. They will go to the table that has the color of paint they want. One color looks best; two is pushing it.
4. Demonstrate how to gently tap on a little color around the stems. LESS IS MORE!
5. Students choose the size of brush they want and dab color around the stems allowing the stems to still show through. You want to be able to see the black stems.
6. Allow paintings to dry in a safe spot.

DAY 3-

Students will use the black permanent pens to carefully and neatly write their haikus below the paintings.

WRITING

IN RESPONSE TO POETRY

SECTION SIX

The following section contains ideas for writing persuasively and from different perspectives. Students will have the opportunity to voice their opinion and discuss/write various poem interpretations while supporting their opinions. Students will gain insight from exposure to others' points of view.

Writing in Response to Poetry
Persuasive/Opinion Papers
Teacher Information (1)

Students write persuasive/opinion essays after reading poetry. The papers must discuss and support their opinions. They will then discuss their papers with others who have a different opinion. This task accomplishes several things...

→ Students read and discuss poetry

→ They develop an opinion and support

→ Students support opinions with text based examples/evidence

→ They must consider author's purpose and message

→ Students learn to choose one side of an issue

This can be done with nearly any poem, but the activity lends itself nicely to narrative poetry. Students can debate and write about a character's actions or an ethical issue brought forth by the reading. Another option is to debate the true theme or meaning.

EXAMPLES

"My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke- Students write about whether the relationship between the boy and his father is abusive or loving. They need to consider what the author intended and support their reasoning with examples from the poem.

"Traveling Through the Dark" by William Stafford- Students write an opinion paper agreeing or disagreeing with the character's actions. It becomes an ethical debate as to whether or not an unborn fawn should be left to die. Students in agreement should support their choice using knowledge of the character, setting, and plot. Students who disagree need to explain how the character could have acted differently and why.

After writing their papers students debate their ideas in groups of four; two with the same opinion and two with opposing. Students have the opportunity to discuss opinions and interpretations without the fear of being wrong.

Created by: Willis, K. (1997). Poetry opinion papers: Combining poetry and writing with middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 40,* 393.

Poems for Two Voices

Teacher Information (2)

Students write one poem from two different perspectives. This can be done with a partner; each taking on an opposing viewpoint. It can also be written individually in such that one student addresses two sides of an issue. These issues may be serious or fun.

Begin by reading work by Paul Fleischman. Two suggestions are Joyful Noise: Poems for two Voices and I am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices. These poems were written to be read by two people at once. One person reads down the left column while the other reads down the right. They typically go back and forth with alternating lines, however, sometimes they read the same line simultaneously. First, model reading one of the poems with a students while others follow along on a copy. Then, allow students time to read through several examples of this format of poetry.

Brainstorm with the class the different ideas that they could use to write from two different perspectives. Decide on if it works best as a partner or individual activity for your students. Have students decide on their topic and begin creating the poem. They will need to decide which type of statement goes with which point of view. They will also need some lines that can be spoken simultaneously.

Suggested Topics

Debate the pros and cons of a season - one loves winter, the other does not.

Vegetables- love them or leave them

Doing chores or getting allowance – mom's perspective vs. student perspective

Pets – dogs vs. cats- which is better

Once students have written and revised their poem they should perform it for the group. If they worked alone they will need a partner to read the poem with them. Allow students opportunities to practice before performing their poem for the class.

Modified from Bintz, W.P, & Henning-Shannon, T. (2005). Using Poems for Two Voices to Teach Creative Writing. *English Journal, 94*, 33-40.

Finney, M.J., (2003). A bumper sticker, Columbus, and poem for two voices. *The Reading Teacher, 57*, 74-77.

FINAL PROJECT
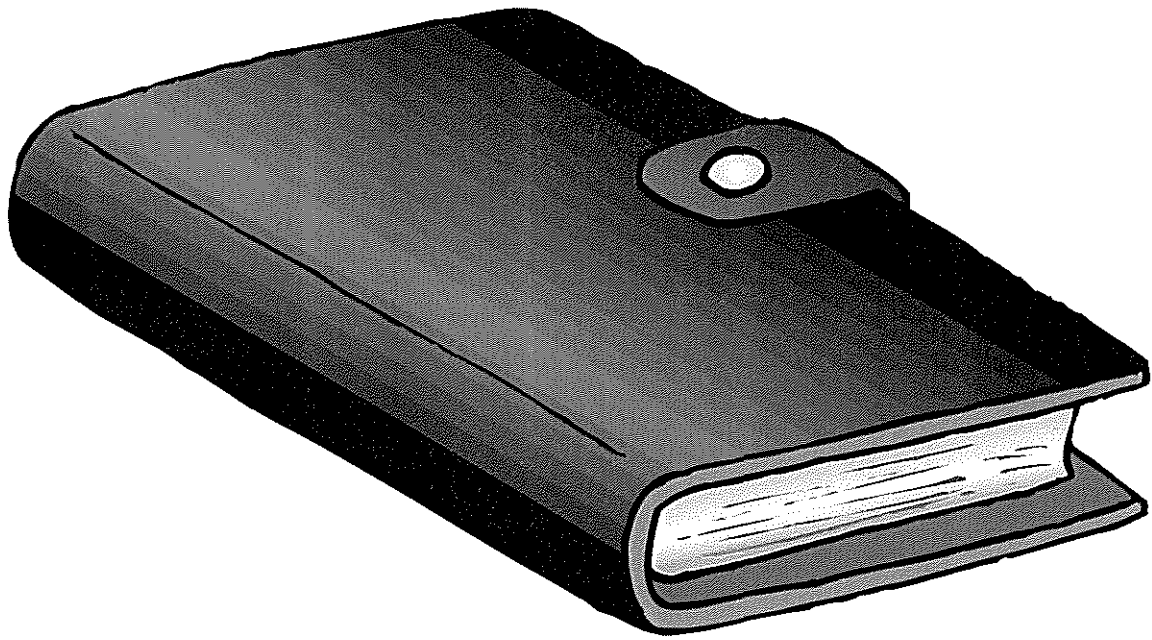
SECTION SEVEN

The following contains two ideas for finalizing the unit.

Students will be left with a published book of their poems

including a unique cover page and an author's page. Their book of

poems is created by them, made to last, and will be cherished.

Poetry Book Cover Page and Author's Page

Teacher Information

Students create a cover page for their poetry book that is all about them.

They also create an author's page with their picture and a brief bio.

Needed Materials For the Cover Page

- Construction paper in a variety of colors
- Newspapers and Magazines
- Student photos (optional)
- Scissors
- Glue Sticks

Students first need to find letters to spell their name. These should be glued somewhere on the construction paper. If most poems were typed onto vertical paper, then make sure the cover page is also vertical as students begin adding to it. After they place their name they will find words, phrases, and pictures that describe who they are to the world. They may want to include real photographs as well. Their final product will be a collage which represents them.

To complete the author's page students need to bring a picture and write an "about the author" paragraph. Teachers may want to take a picture of each student with the digital camera and print them off their computer. Students will need to look at a variety of books to read examples of author's paragraphs. Some ideas to include are their age, grade, and interests. The final draft of the paragraph should be written below the picture which is to be glued to a piece of colored construction paper; preferably the same color as the cover page. Both the cover page and author's page should be laminated as it will be the front and back of the poetry book. All other poems should be placed in between with a table of contents typed by the students. All poems should be on construction paper so that all pages are the same size. Bind the books with a spiral book binder available in most school libraries.

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Twenty-Five Popular Poems for Middle School in order of Preference

Title	Author
Sick	Shel Silverstein
Oh, Teddy Bear	Jack Prelutsky
Mother Doesn't Want a Dog	Judith Viorst
Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast	John Ciardi
The Unicorn	Shel Silverstein
Why Nobody Pet the Lion at the Zoo	John Ciardi
Homework	Jane Yolen
Dreams	Langston Hughes
Questions	Marci Ridlon
Willie Ate a Worm Today	Jack Prelutsky
The Ruckus	Dr. Seuss
There Once Was an Old Kangaroo	Edward Mullins
The Young Lady of Niger	Unknown
Peter Piper	Unknown
Eletelephony	Laura Richards
Little Miss Muffet	Paul Dehn
There Was an Old Man of Blackheath	Unknown
Betty Botter	Unknown
Billy Batter	Dennis Lee
Wanting	Unknown
Toot! Toot!	Unknown
Brothers	Bruce Guernsey
Adventures of Isabel	Ogden Nash
We Read Cool	Gwendolyn Brooks
The Cremation of Sam McGee	Robert W. Service

Abrahamson, R.F. (2002). Poetry preference research: What young adults tell us they enjoy. *Voices from the Middle, 10*, 20-22.

Recommended Poetry Volumes for Middle School Students: List One

Title	Author
Tornado! poems	A. Adoff
Eats	A. Adoff
I am the darker brother: An anthology of modern poems by African – Americans	A. Adoff
Love letters	A. Adoff
Doodle soup	J. Ciardi
Beastly boys and ghastly girls	W. Cole
In just – spring	e.e. cummings
If you're not here, please raise your hand: Poems about school	K. Dakos
Sing a song of popcorn: Every child's book of poems	B.S. Regniers, et al.
Reflections on a gift of watermelon pickle...and other modern verse	S. Dunning, et al.
Ego – tripping	N. Giovanni
Inner chimes: Poems on poetry	B.S. Goldstein
Night on neighborhood street	E. Greenfield
I never said I wasn't difficult	S. Holbrook
Extra innings: Baseball poems	L.B. Hopkins
Been to yesterdays: Poems of a life	L.B. Hopkins
Small talk: A book of short poems	L.B. Hopkins
Opening days: Sports poems	L.B. Hopkins
This delicious day	P. Janeczko
The place my words are looking for	P. Janeczko
Mice are nice	N. Larrick
I never told and other poems	M.C. Livingston
You and me: Poems of friendship	S. Mavor
A word or two with you	E. Merriam
Chortles: New and selected wordplay poems	E. Merriam
At the crack of the bat	L. Morrison
Glorious angels	W.D. Myers

Harlem	W.D. Myers
This same sky: A collection of poems from around the world	N.S. Nye
I feel a little jumpy around you: A book of her poems and his poems presented in pairs	N.S Nye & P. Janeczko
Fingers are always bringing me news	M. O'Neill
Something rich and strange: A treasury of Shakespeare's verse	G. Polinger
The Random House book of poetry for children	J. Prelutsky
The new kid on the block	J. Prelutsky
Poems of A. Nonny Mouse	J. Prelutsky
A. Nonny Mouse writes again!	J. Prelutsky
Food fight	M.J. Rosen
The invisible ladder: An anthology of contemporary American poems for young readers	L. Rosenberg
Waiting to waltz	C. Rylant
Soda jerk	C. Rylant
How now, brown cow?	A. Schertle
Poetry for young people: Robert Frost	G.D. Schmidt
A twister of twists, a tangler of tongues	A. Schwartz
And the green grass grew all around: Folk poetry from everyone	A. Schwartz
Lunch money and other poems about school	C.D. Shields
Heartland	D. Siebert
Where the sidewalk ends	S. Silverstein
A light in the attic	S. Silverstein
The covered bridge house and other poems	K. Starbird
Brown honey in broomwheat tea	J.C. Thomas
If I were in charge of the world and other worries	J. Viorst
Sad underwear and other complications	J. Viorst
Spirit walker	N. Wood

Perfect, K. A. (1999). Rhyme and reason: Poetry for the heart and head. *The Reading Teacher, 52,* 728-737.

Recommended Poetry Volumes for Middle School Students: List Two

Title	Author
Slow dance heartbreak blues	Arnold Adoff
Soul looks back in wonder	Maya Angelou
Cool Salsa: Bilingual poems on growing up Latino in the United States	Lori Calrson
I, too, sing America: Three centuries of African – American poetry	Catherine Clinton
Things I have to tell you: Poems and writing by teenage girls	Betsy Franco
You hear me? Poems and writing by teenage boys	Betsy Franco
Split Image: A story in poems	Mel Glenn
Pierced by a ray of sun: Poems about the times we feel alone	Ruth Gordon
The block	Langston Hughes
Movin': Teen poets take voice	Dave Johnson
My own true name	Pat Mora
What have you lost?	Naomi Shihab Nye
Earth always endures: Native American poems	Neil Phillip
Words with wings: A treasury of Afican- American poetry and art	Belinda Rochelle
Light-gathering poem	Liz Rosenberg
A lion's hunger: Poems of first love	Ann Turner
Step lightly: Poems for the jouney	Nancy Willard

Chance, R. (2001). Beyond Silverstein: Poetry for middle schoolers. *Voices From the Middle, 9*, 88.

Recommended Poetry Volumes for Middle School Students: List Three

Title	Author
Revolting rhymes	Roald Dahl
I wouldn't thank you for a valentine	Carol Ann Duffy
Joyful Noise: Poems for two voices	Paul Fleischman
Doodle dandies	J. Patrick Lewis
Stop pretending: What happened when by big sister went crazy	Sonya Sones

Lesesne, T. S. (2002). The poetry of language and the language of poetry. *Voices From the Middle, 10*, 62

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of the project was to create a unit for teachers to use in their

implementation of poetry instruction. The goal of the provided guide is to help teachers

engage their students with reading and writing poetry in a way that will increase the

students' understanding and appreciation for the genre. It is a resource to be used by

teachers to supplement their reading and writing instruction.

Poetry is an important component of language arts and yet is being neglected

(Denman, 1988). The hope for this project is that teachers will become more willing to

teach poetry. The students choose reading material during their daily exposure to poetry.

They read it independently, record their favorite poems and words, and discuss materials

with peers. Students learn how to read and understand the use of literary terms. They

have opportunities to incorporate knowledge of the terms in their own creative poetry.

Students are exposed to a wide variety of poetic styles during both the reading and

writing of poetry. They deepen their understanding of writing persuasively with opinion

papers. Students discuss and defend their poem interpretations with examples from the

text.

Poetry is helpful for middle school students. It allows them opportunities to

express the myriad of emotions experienced during the adolescent years (Pittman, 1999).

Students will benefit from opportunities to express these emotions in their writing.

Middle school is also a time when struggling readers tend to give up. Incorporating

poetry may help to engage such middle school students by developing a desire to read

poetry (Lesesne, 2002).

Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on an examination of literature and a belief

that poetry instruction is a beneficial tool in helping students with comprehension,

literary terms, group discussions, and writing techniques.

- Using poetry challenges grade level readers while gaining interest of those who typically do not read and tend to struggle allowing opportunities for all middle school students to feel successful (Anderson, 1998).

- Poetry teaches and strengthens knowledge of literary terms and students become more willing to incorporate them into their own writing thus increasing creative writing skills (Anderson, 1998).

- Poetry builds success with students almost immediately. They experience the joys of writing (Parr & Campbell, 2006).

- Effective readers are those who are aware of literary terms while those unaware are often considered to be at risk. (Parr & Campbell, 2006).

- Poetry is suited well for struggling and unmotivated readers. It helps them to feel successful and will make them excited to read other genres of literature as well (Perfect, 1999).

- Through poetry, students will share with educators what they need to know in order to make connections with them. Educators then have an improved understanding of their students and know better how to teach them (Perry, 2006).

Recommendations

The author recommends that teachers review the poetry lessons prior to

instructing as the activities may need to be tried and refined. It is recommended to

continue finding and adding more materials and methods for using poetry. Teachers

should create their own example of each type of poem to share with the students and use

for demonstration. It is easier to teach something if one has first attempted the process, and students will enjoy reading poems created by the teacher.

Teachers also will need to browse their school library for good poetry anthologies. They may want biographies on famous poets as well. The wider variety of poetry resources made available in the classroom, the better exposure students will have. It is recommended to incorporate as many types and styles of poetry as possible. Consider the cultures, interests, and passions of the class when deciding upon material. It is also important to have poems and authors that interest both males and females.

The unit calls for many time-consuming artistic elements that teachers will want to practice prior to instruction. There are also many required supplies needed for the unit. The artistic features are important in increasing the excitement for the unit. Students may need time in the computer lab as well. Teachers will need to plan accordingly.

The unit will take time. Teachers must be willing to provide time for the instruction to take place. The researcher teaches the unit after the seventh grade WASL has ended. However, it can also be broken up and taught in pieces. It is recommended that no matter how the unit is taught, there is time allotted for the suggested entry task. This is the time when students get to read poetry using the materials in the class for a period of time each day. After reviewing the unit, teachers should decide how they will divide it up and teach it, or if they wish to teach it at one time. Teachers may also want to add activities to the literary terms section so that there are several activities available to teach each term.

Trying something new may be risky, but the benefits of poetry are worth it!

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