

March 13-15, 1997

POETRY: Developing A Taste

A Third Grade Unit on Poetry Appreciation

Grade Level: 3 (This unit is written for an inclusion (special education) third grade classroom, but it can be used successfully in a regular third grade classroom as well. The activities included in the procedure, extension and evaluation sections of each lesson can be modified to meet the needs of all students.)

Presented by: Dee Ann Estlack and Anne Corman, Serna Elementary, San Antonio, Texas

Length of Unit: Ten lessons

I. ABSTRACT

The Core Knowledge Sequence states that poetry should be a source of delight for students in the third grade. The students will be exposed to a variety of poems. Included in this unit are ten lessons with many hands on activities that allow students to "taste" the excitement of poetry. Each lesson is specifically designed to allow the students to appreciate each poem and each poet in a variety of ways. A non-threatening environment will be created by the teacher and students in which all students will feel free to express their different opinions about the poems and poets.

The goal of the unit is to wet the students' appetite for poetry. Poetry is a wonderful and exciting way to communicate ideas, themes, and history. There are two main concepts presented in the unit.

The first concept stressed throughout this unit is that of poetry appreciation. The students must experience the oral presentation of poetry. By having students participate actively in the rhythm of the language, students will be able to develop a feel of the movement created by the poet's words. Poetry appreciation is a life long skill that will enable students to become culturally literate members of society. Some other components of poetry include stanza, line, rhyme, personification and couplet. By understanding the terminology, students will be able to discuss poetry, using the poetic terms accurately.

The students will conclude that each poem is a reflection of the poets' ideas and/or the time they lived. It is important that these factors be concretely related so that the students will have a deeper understanding of the main idea presented in each poem.

By continuous exposure to a variety of poetry, students will develop a sincere desire to discover poems they enjoy, and want to share with others. This will ensure that the students are taking the first steps towards achieving cultural literacy.

II. OVERVIEW

A. CORE KNOWLEDGE SEQUENCE

1. Ten poems from the Core Knowledge Sequence have been included in the unit.
 - a. "The Bee" by Isaac Watts
 - b. "America" by Samuel Francis Smith

- c. "The Crocodile" by Lewis Carroll
- d. "First Thanksgiving of All" by Nancy Byrd Turner
- e. "Catch a Little Rhyme" by Eve Merriam
- f. "By Myself" by Eloise Greenfield
- g. "Jimmy Jett and His TV Set" by Shel Silverstein
- h. "Knoxville, Tennessee" by Nikki Giovanni

The unit's poems can be found in the books listed below.

Favorite Poems Old and New

- b. The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America
- c. The Random House Book Of Mother Goose
- d. Honey, I Love and Other Poems
- e. Where the Sidewalk Ends
- f. Sing A Song of Popcorn

B. SKILLS

Many reading skills are integrated into this unit.

C. UNIT OUTLINE

1. Lesson 1 "For want of a nail, the shoe was lost..."

Lesson 2 "The Bee" and "The Crocodile"

3. Lesson 3 "America"

Lesson 4 "First Thanksgiving of All"

Lesson 5 "Trees"

Lesson 6 "Catch a Little Rhyme"

Lesson 7 "By Myself"

Lesson 8 "Jimmy Jet and His TV Set"

Lesson 9 "Knoxville, Tennessee"

Lesson 10 Celebrations!

D. ONGOING ACTIVITIES

1. "Poetree" is a way to visually display the poems and information on the poet. A large tree with many branches should be constructed by the teacher and hung in the classroom or hallway. The tree should be hung a week before the unit begins to heighten the students' curiosity. Before each lesson, hang the poem and information about the poet on a branch of the tree. At the end of the unit all of the branches will be full

of the poems and the poets found in this unit (SEE APPENDIX A).

Food for Thought will be the title of the student's journal. The journal cover and pages should be shaped like recipe cards (SEE APPENDIX B). After each lesson each student will be able to freely express feelings concerning the poem or the poet being studied in his/her journal.

3. Poet's Corner will provide a means for the students to read and record their favorite poems. A supply of poetry books will be placed in an area easily accessible to the students. The students will be able to browse through the books and discover new poets and poems that they appreciate.

What's Cookin' Cookbook will allow the students opportunities to create their own poetry. Each student will be provided with a What's Cookin' Cookbook (APPENDIX C). The cookbook will stay at this center. Students will be able to visit the center when they want to create a poem. A variety of writing supplies (colored pencils, markers, pencils, etc.) will be available to the students while they are at the center.

5. The Poetry Notebook will become a collection of other poems written by the poets included in this unit. A three ring notebook can be used to store the poems. Poems can be added to the notebook at any time. The poems can be supplied by the students, teacher or school librarian. At the end of the unit, time needs to be set aside to share the poems that have accumulated in the notebook.

A **Timeline** will be created for the poet's lives. The information can be displayed using a flower shape for each poet. This will enable the students to see when these poets lived.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

It appears that the use of poetry began in prehistoric times. Poetry evolved as a way to enable cultures to recall the knowledge of their traditions so that information could be preserved by future generations. Poetry provides a means to a deeper understanding of a culture's historical pasts. There are a variety of ways in which poetry was used during these times. Some of these ways included storytelling, magical spells, prayers, songs and sagas. Many families educated their children through the use of poetry. Poetry provided a means of easy recall for the ones that were learning the information. Poetry also served as a source of delight and pleasure.

As written language developed, poetry was written down to ensure its survival through time. Written poetry was also used as a means of delight, pleasure and education.

The oldest surviving forms of written poetry include the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. They were written by the Greek poet Homer somewhere around 700 BC. These poems served as a model for the poem, *The Aeneid*. *The Aeneid* was written by a Roman poet named Virgil. Another Roman poet named Lucretius wrote the scientific knowledge known at that time in verse.

During those same early times, there were some very famous women poets. This was unusual during these times. One famous woman poet was Sappho, who was Greek. A style of poetry commonly used today was named in her honor. The style of Sapphics consists of a four line stanza.

As written language continued to evolve, many different types of poetry were introduced, and today still more forms continue to unfold.

To enhance this unit the students need to be introduced to these vocabulary words.

couplet--two lines that rhyme together and are about the same length

line-- a row of words in a poem

personification--giving human qualities to something that does not have human characteristics

rhyme--a repetitive pattern

rhythm--having a particular beat

stanza--part of a poem that is made up of lines that are put together in a particular pattern of meter and rhyme

IV. RESOURCES

A. Carpenter, Humphrey and Richard, Mari. (1984). The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN# 0-19-211582-0

B. Montreville, Doris. (1983). Fifth Book of Junior Authors. New York: The Wilson Company. ISBN# 0-8242-0694-0

De Montreville, Doris. (1972). Third Book of Junior Authors. New York: The Wilson Company. ISBN# 0-8242-0408-5

Ferris, Helen. (1957). Favorite Poems Old and New. Garden City, NY: Delacorte Press. ISBN# 0-385-07696-7

Fowler, Virginia C. (1992). Nikki Giovanni. New York: Twayne. ISBN# 0-8057-39831

Giovanni, Nikki. (1974). She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl. New York: Scott-Foresman. ISBN# 0-673-80122-5

Giovanni, Nikki. (1972). My House Poems. NY: William Morrow and Company. ISBN# 0688-00025-5

Greenfield, Eloise. (1978). Honey, I Love and Other Poems. NY: Crowell. ISBN# 0-694-00579-7

Greene, Carol. (1992). Lewis Carroll: Author of Alice in Wonderland. Chicago: Childrens Press. ISBN# 0-516-04227-0

Hall, Donald. (1985). The Oxford Book of Children's Verse in America. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN# 0-19-503539-9

Hart, James D. (1995). The Oxford Companion to American Literature Sixth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN# 0-19-506548-4

Hazen, E.P. (1993). The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press. ISBN# 0-231-08408-0

Huck, Charlotte S. (1979). Children's Literature in the Elementary School. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. ISBN# 0-03-046086-7

Janeczko, Paul B. (1983). Poetspeak: In Their Work, about Their Work. Scarsdale, NY: Bradbury Press. ISBN# 0-02-74770-3

Kilmer, Joyce. (1941). Trees and Other Poems. London: Duckworth.

Lobel, Arnold. (1986). The Random House Book Of Mother Goose. New York: Random House. ISBN# 0-394-96799-2

Magill, Frank N. (1982). Critical Survey of Poetry English Language Series. NJ: Salem Press. ISBN# 0-89356-341-2

Merriam, Eve. (1994). Higgle Piggle: Happy Rhymes. New York: Mulberry Paperback Book. ISBN# 0-688-14547-7

Merriam, Eve. (1988). You Be Good and I'll Be Night. New York: Mulberry Paperback Book. ISBN# 0-688-13984-1

Merriam-Webster. (1995). Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc. ISBN# 0-87779-743-9

Schenk de Regniers, Beatrice. (1988). Sing A Song of Popcorn. New York: Scholastic, Inc. ISBN# 0-590-40645-0

Silverstein, Shel. (1974). Where the Sidewalk Ends. New York: Harper & Row Publishers. ISBN# 06-025667-2

Tiger, Harriet, Senior Editor. (1976). Who Was Who in America Volume VI 1974-1976. Chicago: Marquis Who's Who, Inc. ISBN# 0-8379-0207-X

Ward, Martha. (1990). Authors of Books for Young People. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press. ISBN# 0-8108-2293-8

V. LESSONS

A. Lesson One: "For Want of a Nail, The Shoe Was Lost..."

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

- 1) The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.
- 2) The student will appreciate poetry and search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

- 1) The student will identify common nouns.
- 2) The student will locate lines in poetry.
- 3) The student will read with expression.
- 4) The student will perceive relationships and outcomes in poetry.

2. Materials

a copy of "For want of a nail..."

"For want of a nail..." displayed on large chart

five copies of four short poems

3. Background Information

Traditional poems are a type of literature that has been passed down through many generations.

Traditional poems were first passed down orally. Each culture has its own traditional literature. In early times traditional literature, including poetry, was used as a means of educating students. Some of the literary patterns used today were based on traditional literature. Such examples of literary patterns include mythology, Aesop's fables, and Bible stories. There are many names for traditional literature, such as folklore, folk literature, and mythology. Some of the figures of speech (sour grapes and boy who cried wolf) and words (cereal, siren, narcissistic) that we use today also come from traditional poetry.

b. The traditional literature that remains with us today is literature that has been appreciated over many generations. Students who are exposed to traditional literature will have another means of expanding their vocabulary.

4. Procedures

Discuss the definition of a traditional poem (a poem that has been passed down through the generations and the exact poet is not known). Then extend "traditional" to Norse and Roman mythology.

b. Define the word line (a row of words in a poem) as it relates to poetry. Create a poetic vocabulary chart that will be posted in the classroom during the unit. As new poetic vocabulary is encountered during the unit, the words/definitions will be added to the chart. Students can use the chart as a reference for the poetic terminology introduced and discussed in the unit. Add the terms "line" and "traditional poem" to the poetic vocabulary chart. Be sure to include the definitions too!

Using the large chart of "For want of a nail...", count the number of lines in the poem with the students. Then read the poem to the students. Now call on individual students to read different lines from the poem.

Next the teacher will pass out other short poems randomly to the students. The students will number the lines of the poem they receive. Invite some students to share their poem and how many lines it contained.

Discuss the time period, using the vocabulary (kingdom, horse, battle, horseshoe nail) as a reference. Then read the poem to the students.

While discussing "For want of a nail..." with the students, use various questioning techniques (What was the result of wanting a nail?) to help the students see the relationships presented in the poem. The format (how one concept builds upon the other, repetition, etc.) needs to be discussed. Have the students create more lines to be placed within the poem. Have each team share the new lines they created.

In a class discussion, review and define common nouns. Have the students locate six common nouns used in the poem. Have the students write six common nouns, and draw a picture beside the corresponding common noun

While reading "For want of a nail..." aloud to the students, again model the correct reading of punctuation marks. Now have the students recite the poem as a class observing punctuation marks.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Have students locate other traditional poems to share with the class. They can be stored in the Poetry Notebook.

Compose an original poem using the same format as "For want of a nail..."

6. Evaluations

a. The student will demonstrate an understanding of common nouns through the noun cube activity.

The student will number the lines of a specific poem.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

Using questioning techniques the teacher will observe student comprehension of the relationships and outcomes as presented in the poem.

7. Standardized Test Connections

Reading: relationships and outcomes

b. Language Arts: parts of speech, punctuation marks

Reading, summarize: compare and contrast

B. Lesson Two: "America"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that they will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

The student will understand the main idea of freedom as expressed in "America."

The student will read with expression.

2 Materials

"America" displayed on large chart

cassette recording of "America"

watercolors/watercolor paper

maps of the United States (1776,1832, present)

3. Background Information

Samuel Francis Smith (1808-1895) was born in Boston, Massachusetts. Smith wrote poetry, prose, mythology and songs. He also wrote travelogues. Another one of Smith's occupations included being a pastor. Samuel Francis Smith also taught at many colleges.

Smith is most remembered and famous for being the author of the patriotic song, "America," which was written in honor of George Washington's birthday. His song, "America," was first performed by a group of school children in Boston, Massachusetts on July 4, 1832.

4. Procedures

Show the students three maps of the United States. One map will show the United States in the year 1832, another will show the United States in the year 1776, and the last will show the United States as it looks

today. The teacher will lead the students to discover the changes in the appearance of the United States since this poem was written. Even though the United States has changed in size, the strong patriotic idea behind the poem written by Smith still rings loud today.

Read the poem, "America" to the students. Ask them if they recognize the words, and where they have heard it. Then introduce these vocabulary words ('tis, thee, liberty and fathers) to the students.

c. Play a recording of the song "America." Ask the students to listen to the sound effects found in the music while the song is being played. Then using a large chart of "America", have the students sing the first stanza of the poem with the tape recording. They can sing the other stanzas if they wish. Discuss the life of Samuel Francis Smith.

Using watercolors, have the students express the main idea (freedom) as depicted in the song. While the students are working on their project, the song can be playing softly in the background.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem in Food for Thought (poetry journal). Have the students write what freedom means to them.

5. Extensions

Students will find other patriotic poems from the United States and share them with the class in a way that they choose.

Compose and present a patriotic song that would be appropriate for today's world.

Locate other poems or songs by Samuel Francis Smith.

6. Evaluations

The teacher will observe the students' understanding of the main idea of "America" as expressed in their artwork.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

7. Standardized Test Connection

Reading: main idea, summarize

C. Lesson Three: "The Bee" And "The Crocodile"

1. Objective

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

1) The student will identify adjectives and stanzas in poetry.

The student will summarize, compare and contrast "The Bee" and "The Crocodile."

2. Materials

"The Bee" and "The Crocodile" displayed on chart

post-it notes

Lewis Carroll: Author of Alice in Wonderland

cassette tape, "The Flight of the Bumblebee"

a flower pattern (with petals)

3. Background Information

Isaac Watts (1674-1748) was born in Southampton, England. Watts was frequently ill and led a secluded life. While he was a tutor he learned how children think. Watts later became a minister and was considered to be one of the greatest preachers of his time. He wrote over 700 hymns and psalms, which are still respected today.

b. The poetic structure that Watts used was very simple. Many of the poems he wrote were intended to teach morals to children. "The Bee" is sometimes called "Against Idleness and Mischief."

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) is most famous for Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass What Alice Found There. Dodgson worked under the pen name of Lewis Carroll, which was derived from the Latin translation of his first two names, Carolus Lodovicus. Lewis Carroll was born in Daresbury and lived all of his life in England. Carroll began writing poems as a child. At the age of 14, he started a series of magazines which included humorous verses and limericks to entertain his brothers and sisters.

Lewis Carroll taught math at a Christian school. He authored many math books under his real name, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson. Because he loved and felt comfortable with children, he wrote many books and poems for children. Carroll had trouble hearing and a problem with stuttering. Children did not make fun of these problems. Besides being a great writer, he was also a great photographer. He took many pictures of a little girl named Alice, who became the character Alice in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

e. Carroll wrote nonsense and silly poems. Children often wrote to Carroll to find out the meanings of his nonsense poems. He replied simply stating that the poems were just nonsense, and that they did not have any meaning at all. Lewis Carroll had a great sense of humor and was a child at heart.

4. Procedures

a. While listening to "The Flight of the Bumblebee," composed by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, read "The Bee" to the students. Using the large chart of "The Bee" discuss the vocabulary used in the poem to help the students see that the words used by Watts were used in everyday conversation during his lifetime.

Introduce the poetic term, stanza (part of a poem made up of lines that are put together in a particular pattern of beat and rhyme). Add the word and definition to the poetic vocabulary chart established in Lesson One. Then have the students identify the four stanzas of the poem.

Using the background information provided, discuss the life of Isaac Watts.

Have the students locate all adjectives and the nouns they describe in the "The Bee." The students will then share their findings with the class. Then have the students choose one noun from the poem and write it in the center of the flower shape. After they write the noun, the students will write adjectives on the petals of the flower that describe the noun they selected.

Have the students recite "The Bee" to a partner. Those that want to share with the class may.

Read Lewis Carroll: Author of Alice in Wonderland. Discuss the fact that Carroll modeled his poem, "The Crocodile" after "The Bee" written by Isaac Watts. Ask the students how they think the two poems will be alike. Then have them write their response on a post-it note and stick it on the board. Read some of the responses to the class. Group the responses into categories, and add labels to the groups.

Read "The Crocodile" to the students. Discuss the main idea (What are the poems mostly about?) of both poems. In a small group, have the students read the poem chorally and list at least three ways the poems are alike (animals, meter, characters up to mischief) and at least three ways they are different (name, poet, subject). Have them independently complete a Venn-diagram comparing "The Bee" and "The Crocodile."

Replay the music, "The Flight of the Bumblebee," have the students interpret the poem through movement to the music.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poems in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Research Isaac Watts and Lewis Carroll using an on-line computer service to compare and contrast the poets' lives or writing styles.

Locate other poems that focus on animals.

Locate other poems by either Watts or Carroll.

6. Evaluations

Check for student understanding of the concept of adjectives by evaluating APPENDIX E.

Evaluate the Venn-diagram for the skill of comparing and contrasting.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

D. Lesson Four : "First Thanksgiving of All"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

2) The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

The student will demonstrate through dramatization an understanding of the main idea of "First Thanksgiving of All."

2) The student will read with expression.

The student will identify supporting ideas in a specific poem.

2. Materials

a copy of "First Thanksgiving of All"

few red apples

"First Thanksgiving of All" displayed on a large chart

four name tags (Patience, Peace, Mercy, and Jonathan)

bread bowl of broth

3. Background Information

Nancy Byrd Turner (1880-1971) was born in Boydton, Virginia. Turner lived to be 91 years old. Turner was a descendent of both Thomas Jefferson and Pocohantas. Through her father's family she was related to Jefferson, and through her mother's side her ancestry was traced to Pocohantas.

b. As a young child, Nancy Byrd Turner began her writing career by writing verse. During her life she contributed to many magazines in both the United States and England. Nancy Byrd Turner was both editor and poet for magazines published in England and the United States.

4. Procedures

Before the lesson, set up part of the classroom as a dining table. On the table place some bread, a bowl of broth (or water), and red apples. As an introduction to the lesson, choose four students to come up to the table. Assign each student a name tag to wear (Peace, Mercy, Jonathan, Patience). Instruct the four students to act out the poem as the teacher reads it. Have the rest of the students watch the action as it is being read.

Provide the students with background knowledge about the poet, Nancy Byrd Turner. This will help the students understand the vocabulary used in the poem, and the strong feelings expressed throughout the poem.

Divide the class into small groups. Have each small group act out the poem. Have the narrator in each group read "First Thanksgiving of All" from a large chart. Video the presentations. Show the video at a parent/teacher organization meeting. (You may also want to show the video during the Colonial American unit.)

As a review of "First Thanksgiving of All," discuss what happened first, second, and last in the poem with the students. Each student will design either a mobile or a diorama depicting their Thanksgiving. These projects can be displayed in the library and during the classroom colonial feast.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem and things they are thankful for in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Locate other children's names used during colonial times. Share one they would have liked to have been named.

b. Give the students a world map and allow them to choose the route their ship would have sailed from England to the new land.

Locate other poems with a Thanksgiving theme.

Locate other poems by Nancy Byrd Turner.

6. Evaluations

Observe the student's understanding of the poem through their cooperative presentation of "First Thanksgiving of All."

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

Using questioning techniques, the teacher will observe student's ability to correctly sequence the events in the poem.

7. Standardized Test Connection

Reading: main idea, sequencing

E. Lesson Five: "Trees"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

The student will recognize point of view and explain his/her point of view using first person.

2) The student will demonstrate his/her understanding of personification.

The student will read with expression.

2. Materials

a copy of "Trees"

T-shirts and T-shirt paint

"Trees" displayed on a large chart

leaves

items needed to plant a tree

3. Background Information

Alfred Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918) was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Kilmer was a teacher as well as a writer. He moved to New York City to develop his writing career. He had a variety of jobs during his lifetime. At the age of 31 his life was cut short because he was tragically killed in World War I.

b. Kilmer is most remembered for the poem, "Trees." The poem first appeared on the pages of Poetry Magazine in 1913 and was published in a collection of poems titled Trees and Other Poems in 1914. This is said to be the most quoted American poem of all time and is still being reprinted today.

Kilmer used sentiment and similes in his poetry. The words selected by Kilmer for his poetry created a crystal clear rhythm and a singing quality. He also mixed metaphors to create wonderful poetry. The themes found throughout Kilmer's poetry include love, friendship, war and the country scene.

4. Procedures

a. Brainstorm what makes trees special, and what they do for humans. Post all ideas on the board. Now divide the class into two groups. Each group will design a counting book to ten. The main idea behind this book will be why trees are special. Have each group pick ten reasons a tree is special to them. Each team will write each of the ten reasons on a separate leaf. The leaves will be designed by the group. Each page of the book will add one reason (leaf) stating why a tree is special. At the end of the book the tree will have ten leaves. Then compile the pages of the book with a stapler into a counting book titled, Lovely as a Tree. Allow the students time to create the text for the book. Share the book with younger children.

Read "Trees" to the students. Discuss how the poet, Joyce Kilmer, feels trees are special. Discuss the life of Joyce Kilmer. Focus on the point that this poem is the most quoted poem in American History.

While planting a tree outside, the students will chorally recite "Trees." Students will take care of the tree daily. Students will observe and document the changes the tree goes through on a class chart.

Define and discuss point of view using a large chart of "Trees." Relate to the students that this poem uses "I" to express the poet's feelings. Have the students use "I" to express their point of view on notebook paper about the destruction of trees.

Define personification (giving human qualities to something that does not have human characteristics). Add personification to the poetry vocabulary chart. Discuss the use of personification in "Trees."

Have the students illustrate their personification of a tree. At the bottom of the drawing the students need to write the definition of personification. Then they can also write a short paragraph describing their artwork.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem and what items are special to them in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Ask the students to bring in T-shirts and leaves. Then have them design a T-shirt using leaf prints. Students will make the prints of the leaves using seasonal colors of their choice.

Research John Muir. Share findings in an outlined form.

Locate other poems with a tree theme.

Locate other poems by Joyce Kilmer.

Create a journal to enter data obtained from the observations of the tree planted as a class.

6. Evaluations

Check for student understanding of point of view through the writing sample on the destruction of a tree.

The student will demonstrate an understanding of personification through the illustration of a tree.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

7. Standardized Test Connection

Reading: point of view, main idea

F. Lesson Six: "Catch a Little Rhyme"

1. Objectives

Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

The student will identify rhyme in a selected poem.

2) The student will identify a couplet and develop a couplet that enhances "Catch a Little Rhyme."

The student will read with expression.

4) The student will identify ideas that support how to catch a rhyme.

2. Materials

a copy of "Catch a Little Rhyme"

"Catch a Little Rhyme" displayed on large chart

computer with word processing program for computer

You Be Good & I'll Be Night

construction paper

3. Background Information

Eve Merriam (1916-1992) was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She later made her home in New York City. Merriam first wrote short stories and poetry. Eve Merriam also wrote books that did not follow the traditional male/female roles of the 1960's. In her book titled Mommies at Work (1961) she explored roles that were not yet accepted by society. As stated in the title of this book she wrote about mothers that worked outside the home.

b. After Merriam had children of her own, she started writing children's picture books and poetry. Eve Merriam used syllable play and puns in her poetry. She liked to use groups of words to create a visual image to help her readers "see" and "hear" her verse. She also wrote biographies for children. Her poems were first published in different magazines. She discussed poetry on the radio in New York City. When Merriam was not writing, she enjoyed visiting libraries, second hand book shops, swimming, riding a bicycle and traveling.

4. Procedures

Using the book, You Be Good & I'll Be Night by Eve Merriam, the concept of rhyme will be explored using the next to last poem about a nanny goat (name of poem and page number not noted on page). Discuss the definition of rhyme (a repetitive rhythm throughout a poem). Add the definition to the poetry vocabulary chart. Next the teacher will read the first stanza of the nanny goat poem aloud. Then have the students brainstorm words that rhyme with the last word in every other line of the first stanza of the nanny goat poem. Post the list on the board.

Now read another poem by Merriam and leave out the second rhyming word, and have the students create words to fit into the pause.

Read "Catch a Little Rhyme" by Eve Merriam to the students from a large chart of the poem. Discuss the life of Eve Merriam with the students. Use the information found in the background information section of this lesson to aid in the discussion. Question the students about how they would attempt to catch a rhyme. Using their imagination, students will illustrate themselves catching a rhyme on construction paper. After the students complete their illustration, they will write another couplet for "Catch a Little Rhyme" using the second couplet of the poem as a model. In a small group the students read "Catch a Little Rhyme" and add their couplet as they read it. Students that want to share their couplet can read it in front of the class.

Create a class poem. Have the students type their couplets one to a page into the classroom computer so it can be compiled into a book titled, (teacher's name) Class's Catch a Little Rhyme Book. The students can illustrate their couplets once the computer has printed them out.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Have the students line up in the order that their couplet appears in the class poem book. Then go to another class and have the students share their couplets with the other class. The teacher can begin by reading the first couplet.

Locate other poems by Eve Merriam. Add them to the Poetry Notebook that is being kept in the classroom.

6. Evaluations

Each student will develop a couplet following the same format as the poem, "Catch a Little Rhyme."

Through teacher observation, the student will provide rhyming words for an unfamiliar poem.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

From the class discussion, the teacher will observe the student's ability to provide supporting details from the poem.

7. Standardized Test Connection

a. Language Arts: writing

Reading: supporting details

G. Lesson Seven: "By Myself"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

1) The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

1) The student will identify pairs of rhyming words in "By Myself."

The student will read with expression.

The student will recognize the poet's point of view from the poem.

2. Materials

a copy of "By Myself"

paper doll pattern

ink pad

manila paper

poetic vocabulary chart

She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl

3. Background Information

Eloise {El-oh-ees} Greenfield (May 17, 1929-) was born in Parmele, North Carolina. As a child she was extremely shy and dreaded writing assignments in school. The writing assignments exposed her inner most feelings, and this made her feel uncomfortable. Greenfield loved to read books. Eloise Greenfield did not begin her writing career until she was twenty years old. She wrote songs, stories and novels.

Greenfield's writing portrayed the Black community in a positive way. Her writings are based on a strong sense of family and the importance of racial harmony. She wants to instill a positive self esteem in children. Greenfield also feels that children need a positive way in which they can cope with negative experiences that they encounter in their lives. She believes that children need to be taught to be creative problem solvers.

4. Procedures

Have the students close their eyes and picture themselves as anything they would want to be. Then have the students share their ideas of what they want to be with a partner. Next have each student create a picture depicting his/her idea by using his/her own fingerprints.

Read "By Myself" to the students from a large chart. Discuss the poet's point of view in the poem. The poet believes that the most important thing is to be yourself. Define "be yourself" by giving examples of what makes each student special in his/her own way.

Discuss the life of Eloise Greenfield, using the background information found in the beginning of this lesson.

Read She Come Bringing Me That Little Baby Girl by Eloise Greenfield to the students as another example of the importance of family to the poet. Then have the students share with a partner how their families are important to them. Next the partner will share the information they heard.

Have the students locate pairs of rhyming words while reading "By Myself" with a partner. Then have each student write the rhyming words on a paper doll pattern. After the students write the rhyming words they found on the doll, they will cut out the doll. The teacher will display the dolls as a family holding hands in the classroom.

In Food for Thought (poetry journal) students will express their feelings concerning the poem and what they think about when they are by themselves.

5. Extensions

Locate other poems by Eloise Greenfield.

Locate other poems about being by yourself.

6. Evaluations

Check for student understanding of rhyming words on paper doll activity.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

Using questioning techniques, the teacher will see if the student comprehends the point of view presented in "By Myself."

7. Standardized Test Connections

Reading: main idea, point of view

H. Lesson Eight: "Jimmy Jett And His Tv Set"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

1) The students will clap the rhythm of the poem.

The student will read with expression.

The student will analyze information in "Jimmy Jett and His TV Set," in order to make reasonable inferences of why Jimmy loves TV.

2. Materials

a large box decorated as a TV set

television section from a newspaper

"Jimmy Jett and His TV Set" on large chart

drawing paper

3. Background Information

Shelby Silverstein (1932-) was born in Chicago, Illinois. Silverstein also writes under the pen name of Uncle Shelby. He has authored many books of prose and poetry. He also illustrates many of the poems in his books. Shel Silverstein is also a composer, song writer, playwright, and an actor. Many critics have criticized the quality of his poetry. Critics feel that his work does not compare to the originality of such

great poets as Eve Merriam.

Silverstein believes that the first requirement of children's verse is that it must be funny. He uses humor and has fun with the poetry that he writes.

His contributions as a poet have been instrumental in showing children that poetry is not hard to write. Silverstein has changed the way poetry is taught in American schools by making it non-threatening and light-hearted.

4. Procedures

a. The teacher will enter the room with a big TV set around him/her reciting the poem, "Jimmy Jett and His TV Set."

As a class, brainstorm the names of the television shows that the students watched since the end of school yesterday. During a class discussion, have the students make reasonable inferences to why Jimmy Jett watched so much television. Using a program guide from a local newspaper, add the hours and the minutes of time the students spent watching television.

Have the students draw themselves watching their favorite television show. Use conversation bubbles to show what they are thinking about while they are watching television.

Discuss the life of Shel Silverstein. Include in the discussion why television was important to this poet and not to Isaac Watts.

Allow the students to stand in the television set and recite or read the poem from a large chart.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem in Food for Thought (poetry journal). They will also write about their favorite television program.

5. Extensions

Students will create a small three-dimensional television set. Then they will rewrite and illustrate the poem on a scroll to be used inside the television set. The student can record the poem on a tape recorder to provide a narration for this project.

Locate other poems by Shel Silverstein.

6. Evaluation

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the poem through oral presentation of the poem.

During the class discussion about Jimmy Jett watching so much TV, the teacher will observe the student's ability to make inferences.

7. Standardized Test Connections

Language Arts: writing

b. Reading: inferences

I. Lesson Nine: "Knoxville, Tennessee"

1. Objectives

a. Concept Objectives

The student will appreciate poetry for its ideas, history, and components.

The student will appreciate poetry in such a way that he/she will search out poems for pleasure.

b. Skill Objectives

The student will compare and contrast his/her personal experiences to that of the poem.

The student will read with expression.

The student will analyze information presented in "Knoxville, Tennessee" to generalize why Giovanni likes the summer season best.

2. Materials

"Knoxville, Tennessee" displayed on large chart

United States map

fresh corn, okra, greens, cabbage, barbecue, and buttermilk

Venn-diagram

3. Background Information

Yolande Cornelia "Nikki" Giovanni {joh-vah'-nee}, Jr. (1943-) was born in Knoxville, Tennessee. Giovanni wanted to be a writer since she was 10 years old. She began writing poetry as a child in Knoxville. While in Knoxville, she lived with her grandmother.

Her writing is based on the new experiences of Black Americans. Giovanni's focus includes black revolutions, violence, and passionate relationships. She also incorporates blues and jazz rhythms in her poetry. Giovanni has recorded her poetry accompanied by jazz and gospel music. Giovanni has been called a word magician due to the images created by her poetry.

Nikki Giovanni often gives poetry readings in the United States. Giovanni is considered a leader in the community. She feels that the older one becomes, the better one writes. She believes in a strong family, and that family is the answer to our future. She now lives in New York City and has won many prestigious awards, such as a grant from the Ford Foundation and a Harlem cultural award grant.

4. Procedures

Locate Knoxville, Tennessee, and your city on a map of the United States. Using map skills, discover what direction your city is from Knoxville, and then compute the distance in both miles and kilometers. You could use both highway miles and air miles.

Brainstorm on a word web the foods that the students enjoy eating at a summer picnic. Then allow the students to taste fresh corn, okra, greens, cabbage, barbecue, and buttermilk. Create two class graphs. The graphs will show the favorite and least favorite foods sampled by the class.

The teacher will state his/her four favorite summer activities. On the fourth stated activity one student will be able to hold the teacher's hand if he/she has the same favorite summer activity as the last one stated by the teacher. Once the student joins the teacher, then he/she repeats the last activity the teacher enjoyed and then four other favorite summer activities he/she enjoys. This procedure is repeated until all students are

connected in a circle. Have the students sit in the circle. Then read "Knoxville, Tennessee" to the students.

Tell the class about the life of Nikki Giovanni. Use the information found in the background information section of this lesson. Then ask the students why they think Giovanni liked summer best.

As a class, create a Venn-diagram to compare and contrast the foods listed in the poem and the class's favorite summer food.

Have each student and the teacher list their favorite summer activities on a piece of paper. Using these two lists of summer activities the student will compare and contrast the teacher's favorite activities to that of the student. This information will be displayed on a Venn-diagram.

To better see the format of the poem, students will read the poem silently from a large chart. Using the format found in Knoxville, Tennessee, students will create a poem about their favorite summer experiences and share it with the class.

Students will express their feelings concerning the poem in Food for Thought (poetry journal).

5. Extensions

Students can write to the Chamber of Commerce in Knoxville, Tennessee, for information about their city.

Locate other poems by Nikki Giovanni.

6. Evaluations

The student will demonstrate an understanding of comparing and contrasting by completing the Venn-diagram.

The student will use appropriate oral expression while reading/reciting the poem.

Using teacher observation, the teacher will test the ability of the student to make reasonable generalizations why Giovanni likes the summer season best.

7. Standardized Test Connections

Reading: compare and contrast, generalizations

Social Studies: map skills

Math: adding

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY: CELEBRATIONS!

Le Poetry Cafe will allow the students to share their favorite poem from the poetry unit. A cafe atmosphere will be created in the classroom. The classroom will be arranged like a cafe, including tables decorated with tablecloths and centerpieces! The waiters will wear chef's hats and aprons and carry trays and ordering pads. The students will design a menu which will contain all of the poems presented in the unit. It will feature the chef's special (the student's favorite poem) which will be denoted by an asterisk. The student will orally present the items selected by the customer. Appetizers will contain facts about the poet, the main course will be the poem, and the dessert will be a picture of the poem. Special guests will be invited to the grand opening of the cafe.

B. Guest Poets will be invited from a local poetry club. The poet will share some of their favorite poems.

C. **Reading Buddies** will be a means for each student to share his/her favorite poems. The third grade student will be paired with a younger student. This will whet the younger student's appetite for poetry. A copy of the poem that the third grade student shares will be sent home for the younger student's parent to read to their child.

Poetry Break will be a time when students drop in on other classes and share a poem they appreciate. A picture depicting their artistic interpretation of the poem will be displayed on the back of the poem being read.

E. **Snack-a-Poem Time** will be when faculty members pop in and announce that it is Snack-a-Poem Time and read his/her favorite poem. You can have a small snack ready in your room (crackers, hard candy) to make this more special!

[Home](#) | [About Core Knowledge](#) | [Schools](#) | [Bookstore](#) | Lesson Plans | [Conference](#)

Send questions and comments to the [Core Knowledge Foundation](#).

© 1997 Core Knowledge Foundation.