Teaching Phonics Through Poetry

Grade Level: First Grade
Presented by: Michelle Leal, Hawthorne Elementary, San Antonio, TX
Length of Unit: 7 days

I. ABSTRACT
This unit is designed to help teachers combine phonics and reading instruction with the study of poetry. Teaching specific skills through poetry will allow teachers to cover both skills and content within the same lesson; thereby saving important instructional time while deepening content and improving instruction. Easy center ideas are included with each lesson to extend the content into independent practice. These teaching techniques can later be used with other poetry or literature so that phonics skills are taught within a literary framework rather than in isolation.

II. OVERVIEW
A. Concept Objectives:
   1. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   2. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   3. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
B. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence:
   1. Decode words with common vowel sounds that can be spelled in different ways (such as boot, blue, few; shout, cow; boil, toy; bed, head)
   2. “The Swing” by Robert Louis Stevenson
   3. “The Purple Cow” by Gelett Burgess
   4. “My Shadow” by Robert Louis Stevenson
   5. “Rope Rhyme” by Eloise Greenfield
   6. “I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make” by Jack Prelutsky
   7. “Table Manners” by Gelett Burgess
   8. “Sing a Song of People” by Lois Lenski
C. Skill Objectives:
   1. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ow”, “ou”, and “oo”.
   2. Students will learn that the same vowel combinations can make different sounds, specifically “ow”, “ou”, and “oo”.
   3. Students will decode unknown words by applying their knowledge of common vowel sounds, specifically “ow”, “ou”, and “oo”.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
A. For Teachers:
B. For Students:
   1. Poetry from What Your Kindergartener Needs to Know
   2. Poems usually contain rhyming words
   3. Words are made up of letters that symbolize sounds
   4. Letters are combined in different ways to create different sound combinations
IV. RESOURCES
A. Hirsch, Jr. E.D. *What Your First Grader Needs to Know.*
B. Fountas, I. & Pinnell, G.S. *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom*
E. SchifferDanoff, V. *The Pocket Chart Book.*

V. LESSONS
Lesson One: “The Swing”
A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objectives
   a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
2. Lesson Content
3. Skill Objectives
   a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ow”.
B. Materials
1. “The Swing” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
2. markers
4. Big chart paper modeled on Appendix A
5. Sentence strips with words from poem written on them but leaving off the final rhyming word on each line. For example, “How do you like to go up in a”
6. Final rhyming words written on individual sentence strips. For example, “swing.”
7. Pocket chart
C. Key Vocabulary
1. pleasantest – agreeable or cheerful
2. cattle – more than one cow
3. countryside – rural district
4. poem – a composition, usually metrical and rhymed, that expresses creative imagination
5. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is a recurring beat
6. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
7. stanza – section of a poem
8. imagery – mental images or figurative language
D. Procedures/Activities
1. Explain to children that we are beginning a unit on poetry. Ask them what they know about poetry or what they think it is.
2. Monitor the children’s responses. If they do not suggest it, remind them poetry usually uses rhyming words and has a rhythm to its words.
3. Give examples of jump rope rhymes that have distinct rhymes and rhythm. For example: Cinderella,
   Dressed in yella,
   Went upstairs to kiss a fella,
   Made a mistake,
Kissed a snake,
How many doctors did it take?
Most children will recognize this common rhyme and will be able to hear its strong rhythmic beat.

4. Read “The Swing” to the class while pointing to it on the big chart paper. Emphasize the rhythm of the language and rhyming words. Also explain any unfamiliar vocabulary used in the poem at this time.

5. Ask the children to close their eyes and visualize the words. Reread the poem. If there is a swing at your school, you may want to take the class out to experience the feelings of being on a swing at this point in the lesson. If not, ask them to remember what it was like when they have been on a swing.

6. Ask children to share what they saw and/or thought of while listening to the poem. Ask the children to remember what they said because they will draw a picture of it later.

7. Reread the poem again, this time having children read it with you. Ask them to focus on identifying the rhyming words. Have children call out the words they identified as rhyming. Have them come up and underline each set of words with a marker. Use a different color for each set of words. When finished, ask children if they can identify the rhyming pattern ABAB.

8. Discuss how most poetry has a rhyming pattern.

9. Call attention to the last stanza. Explain how poems are broken up into sections or stanzas. Have children look at rhyming words “brown” and “down”. Slowly segment the sounds of the word and explain how letters “ow” together make a new sound. Have children say the words slowly with you.

10. Ask children to list other words they know that have the same sound in them. Write the words on the big chart paper modeled on Appendix A. Depending on time, you can list the words yourself or you could do “shared” or “interactive” writing with the students writing the “ow” part of the word and you supplying the rest (p. 191-206 in Word Matters). If a child says a word that has an “ou” but makes the correct sound, write it in the second column and briefly explain how different letters make the same sounds (it will be covered more thoroughly later).

11. Leave the big chart paper up on a wall so children can add other words they find throughout the week.

12. Reread the poem one more time. Have the children raise their hands when they hear the words with the “ow” sound. Tell them they will continue practicing the sound during their reading centers.

Reading Center Extensions:
1. Pocket Chart Center – Place the sentence strips for “The Swing” in order in a pocket chart. Place the missing rhyming words in an envelope. Using the poem on the big chart paper as a guide, the group should fill in the rhyming words at the end of each line. If a group is ready for a more challenging task, they could sequence the entire poem before adding the missing rhyming words.

2. Art or Writing Center – In their poetry journal, the children should write or draw about what they imagine seeing while swinging. You could divide this into a two-day center, with the first day for illustrating and the second day for writing.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Teacher will collect the poetry journals and assess how well the children understood the imagery in the poem.

2. Teacher will informally assess the pocket chart to check how well the students identify and correctly place each of the rhyming words.

3. Teacher observation of student participation in class discussion.
Lesson Two: “The Purple Cow” by Gelett Burgess

A. Daily Objectives
   1. Concept Objectives
      a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
      b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
      c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
   2. Lesson Content
      a. “The Purple Cow” by Gelett Burgess
      b. “The Swing” – review
   3. Skill Objectives
      a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ow”.

B. Materials
   1. “The Purple Cow” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
   2. picture of a cow
   3. markers
   4. Poetry Journal
   5. “ow” chart from yesterday
   6. magnetic letters
   7. small magnet boards or cookie sheets
   8. sentence strips with words from “The Purple Cow” written on them and then cut into individual word cards
   9. pocket chart

C. Key Vocabulary
   1. poem – a composition, usually metrical and rhymed, that expresses creative imagination
   2. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is a recurring beat
   3. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
   4. imagery – mental pictures or figurative language

D. Procedures/Activities
   1. Quickly review what poetry is and that poems usually have rhyme and rhythm. Ask them to explain what each term means.
   2. Review “The Swing” from yesterday. Draw attention to the “ow” words and emphasize the sound it makes.
   3. Introduce the “Purple Cow” as a fun poem that creates a funny images in your head. Again point out that poetry often brings out some emotion in the reader or audience. Ask the children to pay close attention to the picture created in their minds from the poem.
   4. Read the poem from the big chart paper. Ask the children to share the images created in their minds with the class. Show the picture of the cow. How is that image different than the one created by the poem? Have them come up with other creative things that would be fun to see but they would not want to be.
   5. Reread the poem emphasizing the rhyming words. Like yesterday, have children identify the rhyming words and underline them with a marker. Identify the rhyming pattern as the same one used yesterday ABAB.
   6. Ask children if they recognize any vowel combination from yesterday. They should find “cow” and “anyhow”. Review the sound and look at the “ow” chart from yesterday. Go over any words the children added during the previous day. Praise them for being aware of letters in the words they are reading. If they have not added many words, encourage them to actively look for words in books, signs, and other environmental print. Give
children a chance to look around the classroom at this time to find “ow” words. Add them to the list if they make the appropriate sound.

Reading Center Extensions:
1. ABC center – Give each child in the group a set of magnet letters and a small magnet board. Using the “ow” chart as a guide, they should spell the words on the list with the magnet letters. Make sure that they read each word after spelling it. When they finish, they should write the words on a sheet that will be collected by the teacher.
2. Art – In their poetry journal, each child should draw a funny illustration that will make others laugh. Underneath it they should write a sentence explaining their picture.
3. Pocket Chart – Because the poem is so short, students can sequence the words in the entire poem by placing the words on sentence strips in the appropriate order in a pocket chart.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Teacher will collect poetry journals to assess how well students used pictures and words to convey emotion.
2. Teacher will observe pocket chart groups to assess how well students order the words in the poem.
3. Teacher will review the list of “ow” words written by each student.

Lesson Three: “My Shadow” by Robert Louis Stevenson
A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objectives
   a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
2. Lesson Content
   a. “My Shadow” by Robert Louis Stevenson
3. Skill Objectives
   a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ow” and “ou”.
   b. Students will learn that the same vowel combinations can make different sounds, specifically, “ow” and “ou”.
   c. Students will decode unknown words by applying their knowledge of common sounds, specifically the “ow” and “ou”.

B. Materials
1. “My Shadow” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
2. markers
3. Poetry Journal
4. “ow” chart based on Appendix B
5. small lamp or overhead projector
6. various classroom items – like a pencil, small book, scissors, blocks, or other interesting shapes
7. magnet letters
8. cassette tape of three poems “The Swing”, “The Purple Cow”, and “My Shadow” with words for each
9. various “ow” words written on index cards – 7 to 10

C. Key Vocabulary
1. poem – a composition, usually metrical and rhymed, that expresses creative imagination
2. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is recurrent beat
3. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
4. imagery – mental image or figurative language
5. india-rubber ball – small bouncing ball made of hard rubber
6. nursie – short for a nursemaid, or babysitter

D. Procedures/Activities
1. Read the poem out loud to the children. Ask for their reactions to the poem. Explain any unfamiliar vocabulary at this time.
2. Reread the poem, this time strongly emphasizing the rhythm of the words. Encourage children to act out the movements that go with the words.
3. Discuss how shadows are formed. Why does your shadow always stick with you? Can you ever run fast enough to get away from it? Why? Then why did the shadow not appear when the boy went out before the sun rose? Children should understand that shadows are the dark areas where your body blocks the light. Light is required to make shadows.
4. Take out the small lamp or overhead projector (a lamp works better because you can’t easily move the projector) and place it in front of you. Turn off the classroom lights and place various classroom objects under the lamp so the children can observe the shadows they make. Move each object around so that children see how the shape of shadows depends on the position of the object relative to the source of light.
5. With the class lights still off, shine the light on various students. Have them hold various positions to see how their shadow changes. Move the lamp to show how the same position will look different depending on the location of the sun or other light.
6. Turn the lights back on. Reread the poem, this time focusing on the rhyming words. Have students underline the rhyming words and identify the rhyming pattern. This time it’s AABBCDDD…
7. Ask children to find any words with “ow” in them. Have children come up the chart and underline them.
8. Read the words with the class. Explain how in some cases the same letters can make different sounds. Before the “ow” made a sound like in brown and now it is making a long /ô/ sound. Practice making the sound several times. As a class, slowly segment the words, making the correct sound for the “ow”. Decode the words together.
9. Emphasize to the class that now that they know this letter “chunk” or “group”, they can apply it to help them sound out other words. They may have to try both sounds to see which one would make sense with the rest of the letters in the word.
10. On the board, write the following words: mow, row, down, grow, flown, stow, clown, minnow. Slowly segment the sounds for each word to model the decoding process for the children. Show how both sounds need to be tried to determine the correct word.
11. Have children come up with a list of “ow” words that make the long /ô/ sound and list them on another chart paper modeled on Appendix B.

Reading Center Extensions:
1. Overhead center – Using magnet letters and the new “ow” word chart, the children spell the words from the list on the overhead. Explain how the letters on the wall are shadows of the letters on the projector.
2. Art or Writing Center – In their poetry journals, children draw an illustration of a shadow and write a short description of what it is.
3. Listening Center – Make tapes of the poems the children have learned and place them in the listening center with copies of each poem for the children to listen to and read along with.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Teacher will collect poetry journals to assess how well students completed the assignment.
2. Teacher will observe overhead center to assess how well students spelled the words from the list.
3. Teacher will call children one at a time to read the “ow” words on the cards. Teacher can determine if the child is able to apply his or her new decoding skills.

Lesson Four: “Rope Rhyme” by Eloise Greenfield

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives
   a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.

2. Lesson Content
   a. “Rope Rhyme” by Eloise Greenfield

3. Skill Objectives
   a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ow” and “ou”.
   b. Students will learn that the same vowel combinations can make different sounds, specifically, “ow” and “ou”.
   c. Students will decode unknown words by applying their knowledge of common sounds, specifically the “ow” and “ou”.

B. Materials

1. “Rope Rhyme” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
2. markers
3. Poetry Journal
4. jump rope
5. “ow” chart based on Appendix A
6. “Rope Rhyme” on cassette tape
7. sentence strips with lines from the poem written on them

C. Key Vocabulary

1. poem – a composition, usually metric and rhyming, that expresses creative imagination
2. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is a recurring beat
3. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
4. chant – to sing or speak in a distinctive rhythm

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Read the poem aloud from the chart. What does it make children want to do? To jump rope. Explain to the children how the strong beat of the poem is read in a chant to accompany people while they jump rope. The strong rhythm helps them to keep the beat.
2. Practice the poem several times until the children are comfortable with it. Go outside to the playground and allow children to jump rope while saying/singing the poem.
3. Return to the classroom and reread the poem. Identify the rhyming pattern and underline words with markers. The pattern is AABBCDDDEE.
4. Now call attention to the word “now”. Which of the “ow” sounds does it use? Remind students that the same letter combinations can make more than one sound.
5. Now have children look for words with “ou” in them. They should find “ground”, “sound”, and “count” (three times). Show the children the “ow” chart from the
first day and explain how the “ou” makes the same sound as “ow” in brown. Add the three words to the second column of the chart.

6. Encourage children to look for “ou” words that can be added to the chart throughout the day.

Reading Center Extensions:
1. Art or Writing Center – Have children think of their own favorite jump rope rhyme and illustrate it in their poetry journals. “Cinderella”, “Chicka Chicka”, and “Mulberry Street” are some examples.
2. Listening Center – Add “Rope Rhyme” to the Listening Center.
3. Pocket Chart – Children use the big chart paper to place the sentence strips in the proper order.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Teacher will collect poetry journals to assess how well children drew imagery from poetry.
2. Teacher will informally observe the pocket chart groups to assess how well students sequence the sentences.

Lesson Five: “I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make” by Jack Prelutsky

A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objectives
   a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
2. Lesson Content
   a. “I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make” by Jack Prelutsky
3. Skill Objectives
   a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “ou” and “oo”.
   b. Students will learn that the same vowel combinations can make different sounds, specifically, “ou” and “oo”.
   c. Students will decode unknown words by applying their knowledge of common vowel sounds, specifically “ou” and “oo”.

B. Materials
1. “I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
2. markers
3. poetry journal
4. “ou” chart
5. “oo” chart based on Appendix D
6. pictures of various animals and cards with the sound they make written on them
7. magnet letters
8. small magnetic boards or cookie sheets
9. cards with “oo” words written on them

C. Key Vocabulary
1. poem – a composition, usually metrical and rhymed, that expresses creative imagination
2. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is a recurring beat
3. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
4. imagery – mental picture or figurative language
5. marvel – something extraordinary and astonishing
D. Procedures/Activities
1. Read “I Know All the Sounds the Animals Make”. Most of the children will probably laugh. Ask them why they are laughing. Remind children again that poetry should bring out some emotional response. Like “The Purple Cow”, this poem takes something familiar and changes it to make people laugh.
2. Reread the poem but this time ask the children to make the incorrect sounds that the animals make in the poem. Read it again but now have the children make the correct sound the animals make. Is this as much fun? Poetry is about creating something new and creative so being silly can be fun.
3. Have children create their own silly combinations of animals and mismatching sounds.
4. Have students identify the rhyming words and underline them. Identify the rhyming pattern AABBCCDD.
5. Ask the children to find an “ou” word like we practiced yesterday. They should identify and underline “sounds” and “mouse”. Have them look for any “ow” words. They should find and underline “know” and “cow”. Have them decode these words and determine which sound each vowel combination makes. Be sure to notice who is appropriately decoding the words and who is struggling.
6. Introduce a new vowel combination “oo”. These letters make the sound // like you might say when you see something really cool. Identify the words in the poem that use “oo”. They should find “moose”, “hoot”, “moo”, and “goose”. Using their new knowledge of the sound “oo” makes, have children decode these words all together.
7. Have children come up with other words that have “oo” sound and write them on the big chart paper modeled on Appendix D.

Reading Center extensions:
1. Art – In their poetry journals, have children draw a picture of their favorite animal and have it make a funny noise.
2. Games – Children take the pictures of the animals and match it with its actual sound.
3. ABC – Children use the words from the big chart paper to spell “oo” words with the magnetic letters. When they finish, they should write the words on a sheet that will be collected by the teacher.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Teacher will collect poetry journal to assess how well directions were followed.
2. Teacher will review the list of “oo” words written by each student.
3. Teacher will call over students one at a time to assess if they are able to apply “oo” sound and decode new words.

Lesson Six: “Table Manners” by Gelett Burgess
A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objectives
   a. Students will understand that words are made up of combinations of letters that can be blended to decode words.
   b. Students will understand that poetry has rhythm and rhyme.
   c. Students will understand that poems use imagery to convey meaning and emotion.
2. Lesson Content
   a. “Table Manners” by Gelett Burgess
3. Skill Objectives
   a. Students will learn the sounds of common vowel combinations and identify them in words, specifically “oo”.
   d. Students will learn that the same vowel combinations can make different sounds, specifically, “oo”.
e. Students will decode unknown words by applying their knowledge of common vowel sounds, specifically “oo”.

B. **Materials**
1. “Table Manners” written on big chart paper, preferably laminated
2. markers
3. blank big chart paper
4. poetry journal
5. cassette tape with “Table Manners” and words printed so that children can follow along
6. cards with “ow”, “ou”, and “oo” words written on them

C. **Key Vocabulary**
1. poem – a composition, usually metrical and rhymed, that expresses creative imagination
2. rhythm – the movement or flow in which there is a recurring beat
3. rhyme – words that have the same ending sound
4. imagery – mental picture or figurative language
5. broth – clear, thin soup

D. **Procedures/Activities**
1. Read “Table Manners”. Most of the children will probably laugh. Ask them why they are laughing. Does this poem remind them of anyone they know?
2. Reread the poem. This time ask the children to make the motions suggested by the words in the poem. How do they look? Would they want to eat with someone who ate like the Goops?
3. This is a great time to discuss the importance of good manners while eating at the table. Have the children brainstorm a list of 3 –5 rules that everyone should follow at the dinner table. The teacher can write these rules on a piece of big chart paper or you can do a “shared” or “interactive” writing lesson where the children help you write the rules (p. 191-206 in *Word Matters*).
4. Reread the poem and have students identify the rhyming words and underline them. Identify the rhyming pattern ABCB DEFE. This is a new rhyming pattern so be sure to explain it carefully to the class.
5. Ask the children to find an “ou” word. They should identify and underline “loud”. Have them look for “oo” words. They should find and underline “Goops” four times. Have them decode these words and determine which sound each vowel combination makes.
6. Review the vowel combination “oo”. Look at the chart from yesterday. Can they add any new words today?
7. Write these words on the board: boot, loud, toot, crow, crown, mouth, and glow. Have children slowly sound out the words while applying what they have learned about vowel combinations. Model how sometimes you have to try more than one sound for a vowel combination to see which one is correct.

Reading Center extensions:
1. Art – In their poetry journals, have children draw a line down the center of the page. On one side, draw a picture of a Goop using bad table manners. On the other side, draw a picture of themselves using good table manners. Write a short explanation of why table manners are important.
2. Listening Center – Add “Table Manners” to the cassette with the other songs and place in the listening center.

E. **Assessment/Evaluation**
1. Teacher will collect poetry journal to assess how well directions were followed.
2. Teacher will call over students one at a time to assess if they are able to apply all three vowel combinations to decode new words.
VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

A. This activity will use Lois Lenski’s “Sing a Song of People” to bring together all three of the vowel combinations and the rhyme and imagery studied in this unit.

B. Write each stanza of the poem on a separate sheet of big chart paper and read it aloud to the class. Have them close their eyes while you reread it. Discuss the imagery of the poem. What mental pictures did they develop while listening to the poem?

C. Divide the class into five groups. Give each group one stanza of the poem. Give them a copy of Appendix J. They should identify the rhyming words and pattern and record them on Appendix J. They also write all “ow”, “ou”, and “oo” words on Appendix J.

D. When they have completed Appendix J, they should begin planning actions that show the images created in their stanza. Give each group time to practice doing the motions while one student reads the stanza.

E. When all groups are ready, have them line up in order and go through the whole poem. They should be able to move through it using the rhythm of the poem. When they have practiced enough and are ready to perform, invite other classes to see your poetry in action.

VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

Appendices A-J

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix A
Example of “ow” chart

Words that Make the “ow” Sound

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OW</th>
<th>OU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Example of a Poetry Journal

Poetry Journal

Maria
Appendix C
Picture of a Cow
Appendix D
Example of chart

“OW” Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COW</th>
<th>SHADOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Appendix E
“ow” words

show  blow

down  gown

low  row

crowd  flower
Appendix F
Example of “oo” chart

“OO” Words
Appendix G
Animal Cards and Words

moo

oink

quack

croak
Appendix H
Animal Cards and Words

bark

purr

roar

squeak
Appendix I
“ow”, “ou”, and “oo” words

flow
crown
grow
shout
scoot
cow
loud
hoop
Appendix J
“Sing a Song of People” by Lois Lenski

Rhyming Words:


“OW” words:


“OU” Words:


“OO” Words:


