

Lesson 1: What Is Poetry? (2 Days)

☐ Getting Started

Have you ever read a book of poems? Have you ever memorized a poem? What do you know about poetry? The unit you are about to begin will introduce you to some amazing poems and amazing poets. You may discover that you have a poet inside of you!

Special Note: Save all of the poems you write in this unit, as you will need them all for the final project.

Stuff You Need

- *Handy Guide to Writing* by Beyond the Page
- *R is for Rhyme: A Poetry Alphabet* by Judy Young
- colored pencils* (Activity 4 - optional)
- journal
- thesaurus

Ideas to Think About

- What relationships and patterns can be found within the words of a poem?
- Why is it important to understand these relationships and patterns?
- How do figurative language and word patterns affect a poem and the reader/listener?

Things to Know

- **Syllable** -- a part of a word that contains a vowel sound
- **Line** -- words grouped together in a horizontal row of a poem
- **Stanza** -- lines of poetry grouped together
- **Couplet** -- a two-line stanza
- **Quatrain** -- a stanza that contains four lines
- **Meter** -- the pattern of rhythm or beats in a line of poetry
- **Rhyming pattern** -- the way that the end of different lines rhyme in a poem
- **Weak rhyme** -- words that almost rhyme
- **Onomatopoeia** -- a word that sounds like the noise the word makes
- **Alliteration** -- the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words
- **Metaphor** -- a figure of speech that compares two unlike things
- **Simile** -- a metaphor that uses the word "like" or "as" in the comparison
- **Visual imagery** -- words that show you a picture in your mind
- **Synonyms** -- words that have the same or similar meaning

☐ **Reading and Questions**

There are many different types of poems a poet can write. It is important to learn about some of the more common features, structures, and types of poetry. Writing poems that follow particular patterns is often a great way to begin your journey as a poet. Read the following poems and explanations in the book *R is for Rhyme* for each of these letters:

E is for End Rhyme

G is for Ghazal

I is for Iambic

M is for Metaphor

Q is for Quatrain

W is for Weak Rhyme

Then look through the book and choose at least three additional poems and explanations to read. When you are done, answer the following questions.

1. Have you ever heard of any of the types of poems or poetry terminology found in the book? If yes, which ones?

2. Which poem was your favorite? Why?

3. Record the names of three of the additional poems you read. Why did you choose these?

Activities

☐ Activity 1: Poetry Vocabulary

To better understand poetry and to write your own, you must understand the special terms associated with poetry. There are many special relationships and patterns within the words of a poem. On the "Poetry Vocabulary" pages, you will explore some of these relationships and patterns.

☐ Activity 2: Rhyming Patterns

To figure out the rhyming pattern of a poem, you assign a letter to each line of a poem. You start with "a" at the end of the first line. If the second line does not rhyme with the first, you would write down "b." If the third line does not rhyme with either the first or second line, you would write down "c." When two lines in a poem rhyme, they are given the same letter. The following stanza from the poem "How Would You Act?" (from "E is for End Rhyme") has an aabb pattern.

"How Would You Act?"

If you were a bird, (a)
You'd want to be heard. (a)
If you were a horse, (b)
You'd run, of course. (b)

Reread the poem and description for "E is for End Rhyme." Then follow the instructions on the "Rhyming Patterns" page to identify the rhyming patterns of three additional poems.

Day 2

☐ Activity 3: Memorizing Poetry

When you read poetry aloud, treat the words delicately. Make them sound smooth rather than choppy. Instead of automatically stopping at the end of a line, follow the punctuation marks to guide where to pause and stop. For example, look at the first stanza of "My Quilt" from "Q is for Quatrain":

"My Quilt"

My grandmother made
The quilt on my bed,
With squares made of memories
And colorful thread.

Instead of pausing at the end of the first line, continue right onto the next line, pausing at the comma after "bed." Likewise, you wouldn't pause at the end of the third line. Find a poem to memorize in the book *R is for Rhyme* or in another book of poetry. (If a poem is long, ask a parent if you can memorize just a few stanzas.) A poem that has meaning for you will probably be easier to memorize. Poems that

rhyme or have meter are also often easier to memorize. Think about the tone of your voice and the speed at which the poem should be read. Read the poem over and over aloud until you have it memorized, and then recite the poem for your family.

☐ **Activity 4: Poetry Techniques**

Poets use a variety of techniques to make poetry more enjoyable and vivid. Remember that there are special rules and relationships found among the words in a poem. The use of figurative language can greatly affect the way the poem reads or sounds. Read and complete the activities on the pages, "Poetry Techniques," to learn more about some important figurative language devices and other tools that poets use.

☐ **Activity 5: Keeping a Journal**

Most authors keep a journal and encourage aspiring writers to do the same. You can record ideas, reflections, words, observations, and anything else in this journal. As you think about writing poetry, refer to your journal for inspiration and ideas. Take some time to record some ideas right now.

Wrapping Up

Reading and writing poetry can be a wonderful way to use language creatively. Poetry allows you to decide just what you want to write about and how you want the words to be structured. In this unit you will practice writing poetry and read some amazing poems. Review the poetry vocabulary words and poetry techniques listed in the "Things to Know" section. As you write your poems, try to apply these language techniques.

Life Application

See if you recognize poetry outside of books, perhaps on billboards, in a newspaper, or in a movie. Anytime you read or hear a poem in a different context than a book, write it in your journal.

Poetry Vocabulary

Include the title for each poem that you reference for your answers below. Don't forget to enclose poem titles in quotation marks.

Syllable - a part of a word that contains a vowel sound

The number of syllables a word has equals the number of "beats" the word has when spoken. For example, say the word "wonderful" aloud and count the number of beats in the word (won - der - ful = 3 beats or syllables).



Look at each word in the line below. Above each word write the number of syllables it has.

"The butterfly felt freezing winds" -- from the poem "Ballad of the Butterfly and Rose"

Line - the words grouped together in a horizontal row of a poem



Write your favorite line from one of your favorite poems in the book.

Stanza - lines of poetry grouped together



Record a stanza from one of the poems in the book.

Couplet - a two-line stanza



Record a couplet from the book.

Quatrain - a stanza that contains four lines



Identify three poems in the book with quatrain stanzas.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Meter - the pattern of rhythm or beats in a line of poetry



Read 2-3 stanzas of "Two Chains" (from "I is for Iambic") aloud. Note how the poem has a repeating pattern of rhythm (meter) that makes it easy to read out loud. Next, read "Bluebird" (from "M is for Metaphor") aloud. Do you think the poem has a repeating pattern of rhythm?

Rhyming pattern - the way that the end of different lines rhyme in a poem



Write a stanza for a poem that follows an aabb rhyming pattern (the last words in lines 1 and 2 rhyme, and the last words in lines 3 and 4 rhyme)

Weak rhyme - words that almost rhyme (such as *are* and *ear*)



Make a list of three pairs of words that are weak rhymes.

_____ / _____
_____ / _____
_____ / _____

Rhyming Patterns

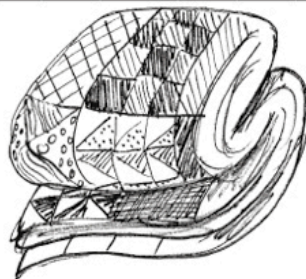
Directions: Write a stanza from each poem and write the letter of the rhyming pattern at the end of each line.



"Two Chains"
from "I is for Iambic" (choose one of the last four stanzas)



"Oh, Don't You Wish"
from "K is for Kyrielle"



"My Quilt"
from "Q is for Quatrain"

Poetry Techniques

Onomatopoeia – words that sound like the noise the word makes.

Read the poem and description for "O is for Onomatopoeia" in *R is for Rhyme*. Identify the words in the poem that are onomatopoeic.

Alliteration – Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in a line of poetry, such as "silly skunks like to sing."

Find an alliterative phrase in *R is for Rhyme* and then write an alliterative phrase of your own.

Metaphor and simile – A metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two unlikely things. A simile is a metaphor that uses the words "like" or "as."

Make a metaphor or simile for each of the common objects below. The first one has been done for you.

Example: A spoon is like the Big Dipper falling into the black hole of your mouth.

Summer is _____

Flowers are like _____

Red is _____

The child was as _____

Synonym – words that have the same or similar meaning

To be a true author you must become very familiar with synonyms. Finding the right word to create the right meaning can often be challenging. Be sure you have a thesaurus on hand as you are writing your poems in this unit. When you are tempted to use a common word — *happy, sad, red, scary, mad* — look it up in the thesaurus and make it even better.

Pick out five words from the poems in the book *R is for Rhyme* and use a thesaurus to find a synonym for each word.

Word	Synonym
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

Visual imagery - words that show you a picture in your mind

Your parent will read aloud a poem from the book *R is for Rhyme* without showing you the picture. Illustrate what you “see” in your mind.



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Getting Started

✿ Ideas to Think About

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⦿ Skills

- Increase reading and writing vocabulary through the knowledge of synonyms. (LA)
- Read independently daily to increase vocabulary. (LA)
- Read a variety of texts, including poetry. (LA)
- Identify and interpret elements of fiction. (LA)
- Paraphrase to indicate active listening. (LA)
- Think about the tone of voice and the speed at which the poem should be read. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

Explain to your child that today he will be introduced to a special form of writing called poetry. Explain that poetry is a very different form of writing than stories or paragraphs. Ask your child what he knows about poetry and if he has ever read or written any poems.

NOTE: As your child works through this year of language-arts units, encourage him to refer to the *Handy Guide to Writing* if he has questions about grammar, punctuation, or the writing process.

Reading and Questions

1. Have you ever heard of any of the types of poems or poetry terminology found in the book? If yes, which ones?

Answers will vary.

2. Which poem was your favorite? Why?

Answers will vary.

3. Record the names of three of the additional poems you read. Why did you choose these?

Answers will vary.

Activities

Activity 1: Poetry Vocabulary

Review your child's responses to the sheets, "Poetry Vocabulary."

Answer Key:

- **Syllable:** Your child should have marked the syllables in the line as follows: "The (1) butterfly (3) felt (1) freezing (2) wings (1)"
- **Line:** Answers will vary
- **Stanza:** Answers will vary
- **Couplet:** If your child needs help finding a couplet, ask him to reread "G is for Ghazal."
- **Quatrain:** Answers will vary but may include "Ballad of the Butterfly and the Rose," "How Would You Act," "Two Chains," "The Sweet Tooth Candy Shop," or any poem containing 4-line stanzas
- **Meter:** The poem "Bluebird" does not have a rhythm pattern. Although the specific patterns of rhythm in a poem can be difficult for some students of this age to grasp, your child should be able to note that "Two Chains" has a regular, repeating pattern of rhythm and "Bluebird" does not.
- **Rhyming pattern:** the last words in the poem's first and second lines should rhyme; the last words in the third and fourth lines should also rhyme
- **Weak rhyme:** Refer to the pages for "W is for Weak Rhyme" in the book for more examples

Activity 2: Rhyming Patterns

Answer Key:

- "Two Chains" from "I is for Iambic" (abcb)
- "Oh, Don't You Wish" from "K is for Kyrielle" (aabb)
- "My Quilt" from "Q is for Quatrain" (abcb)

Day 2

Activity 3: Memorizing Poetry

Your child should choose a poem to memorize and recite. If he chooses a long poem, you may want to have him memorize just a few stanzas. Advice was provided about using the punctuation in a poem as a guide about where to pause or stop (as opposed to automatically pausing at the end of each line). As your child recites his poem, listen for tone of voice and speed. Provide feedback to your child when he is finished.

Activity 4: Poetry Techniques

Note that for the "Visual imagery" section on p. 2, you will need to read a poem (or section of a poem) from *R is for Rhyme*. Your child will draw what he "sees" in his mind when you read the poem, so do not let him see the illustration on the page(s) in the book.

Review your child's responses on the "Poetry Techniques" pages.

Answer Key:

- **Onomatopoeia:** Answers could include *crunch, whisper, whooshing, gobbled, snap, sizzle, crash, clatter, crispy, whirl, buzz, plop*
- **Alliteration:** Answers will vary. Alliterative phrases are found in several poems in the book. If your child is having problems finding one, point him to "O is for Onomatopoeia"
- **Metaphor and simile:** Answers will vary. If your child gives all similes, encourage him to create at least one metaphor. He can refer to "M is for Metaphor" for examples.
- **Synonym:** Confirm that the synonyms your child found are similar in meaning to the original words he recorded.

Activity 5: Keeping a Journal

Your child will be keeping a thought journal throughout this unit. Encourage him to record his ideas and observations in this journal and to refer back to it on a regular basis.

Wrapping Up**Questions to Discuss**

- Ask your child what he learned about poetry today. Discuss that poetry is a unique genre, much different from other literary genres.

Things to Review

Review the poetry vocabulary with your child.

Special Notes

Be sure that your child saves all of the poems he writes. He will need them for the final project. Take some time to read poetry aloud to your child at different points during the unit. After you read a poem, encourage him to describe, paraphrase, and explain the mood/tone of the poem.