

Lesson 6: Art and Poetry

☐ Getting Started

Today you will explore poems that reflect the culture and geography of the Mountain states and the Pacific Coast states. We often refer to these regions as the West. The West has a variety of habitats and has some of the most beautiful landscapes in the country.

Stuff You Need

- *My America: A Poetry Atlas of the United States* by Lee Bennett Hopkins
- *R is for Rhyme: A Poetry Alphabet* by Judy Young
- colored pencils
- paints or pastels

Ideas to Think About

- What is the relationship between illustrations and poems in illustrated poetry books?
- What techniques do poets use to make their poems more interesting and effective?
- How do poets influence the emotions and thoughts of the reader?

Things to Know

- Songs and poems follow many of the same patterns.
- Art can include visual art, drama, music, and writing.
- The titles of poems, songs, and short stories are enclosed in quotation marks.
- In the title of a poem, song, or work of art, the first and last words are capitalized as are most other words. Articles ("a," "an," "the") as well as short conjunctions (like "and," "or," "but"), and prepositions (like "in," "to," "for") are lowercased.
- A **couplet** is a two-line stanza.

☐ **Reading and Questions**

In *My America*, read the poem in the sections, "The Mountain States" and "The Pacific Coast States," which all deal with the West. Next, answer the questions below.

1. What was your favorite poem from this section? Why?

2. What did you learn about the culture and geography of the West after reading the poems?

3. Record the simile in the poem, "Skier."

4. Which poem creates the most vivid image in your mind? Describe what you see when you read the poem.

5. The mood of a piece of writing refers to the tone of the writing and how it makes the reader feel. What do you feel when you read the poem "Alaska"?

Activities☐ **Activity 1: Couplets**

Reread "Boulder, Colorado" and "Skier." These poems are created with two couplets. Couplets are stanzas made up of two lines. On the "Couplets" page, write a poem that contains two couplets with your town and state as the title and the subject of the poem. Follow the rhyming pattern of "Boulder, Colorado."

☐ **Activity 2: America the Beautiful**

The poem "For Purple Mountains' Majesty" is a reference to a patriotic song called "America the Beautiful." As with poems, you use quotation marks when you write the titles of songs. In all titles, you capitalize the first and last words as well as most other words. Articles ("a," "an," "the") as well as short conjunctions (like "and," "or," "but"), and prepositions (like "in," "to," "for") are lowercased.

Read over the song lyrics on the activity page provided. Many popular songs and poems reflect the relationships that exist between people and their environments. The song "America the Beautiful" reads like a poem. Many poems can be turned into songs, and many songs can be read as poetry. Songs and poems follow similar structures and often include rhyming words. If you can play an instrument, play "America the Beautiful" and practice singing it. If you do not know the song, ask your parent to sing it to you, or find a recording online.

Write down the words to your favorite song. Decide where the lines should begin and end if the song were to be read as poetry. Does it sound like a poem when it is read aloud?

☐ **Activity 3: Art and Poetry**

My America uses beautiful artwork to enhance the lovely language of the poems in the story. The artwork reflects the words and images of the poems. Look at the illustration that accompanies the poem "Behind the Redwood Curtain." In the painting, the bird is flying from behind a subtle curtain in the woods.

Write a poem using one of the patterns described in the book, *R is for Rhyme*, and accompany your poem with an illustration. Select a medium for your artwork:

watercolors, tempera paints, or even pastels (anything other than markers, crayons, or colored pencils).

Wrapping Up

Today you analyzed the idea of art as poetry and poetry as art. Art can include a variety of products. What is your favorite type of art: music, visual arts, drama, or writing?

Couplets

Directions: Write two couplets to make a poem about your town. Make the title the name of your town and state. Illustrate your poem.

by



America the Beautiful

Key G



1. O beau - ti - ful for spac - ious skies, for am - ber waves of grain; for
2. O beau - ti - ful for pil - grim feet whose stern im - passionate stress -
3. O beau - ti - ful for he - roes proved in li - ber - a - ting strife, who
4. O beau - ti - ful for pa - triot dream that sees be - yond the years; thine



pur - ple mountain maj - es - ties a - bove the fruited plain! A -
 A tho - rough fare of freedom beat across the wilder - ness! A -
 more than self their coun - try loved, and mer - cy more than life! A -
 al - a - bas - ter cit - ies gleam, un - dimmed by hu - man tears! A -



mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee, and
 mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God mend thine every flaw, con -
 mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! May God thy gold re - fine, till
 mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed his grace on thee, and



crown thy good with broth - er - hood from sea to shi - ning sea!
 firm thy soul in self - con - trol, thy lib - er - ty in law!
 all suc - cess be no - ble - ness, and ev - ery gain di - vine!
 crown thy good with broth - er - hood from sea to shi - ning sea!

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⦿ Skills

- Use concrete sensory details in writing. (LA)
- Describe structural differences of various forms of writing. (LA)
- Write the names of poems, short stories, and musical compositions in quotation marks. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

Tell your child that today she will read poems about states in the West. Ask her what she knows about this region.

Reading and Questions

1. What was your favorite poem from this section? Why?

Answers will vary.

2. What did you learn about the culture and geography of the West after reading the poems?

Answers will vary.

3. Record the simile in the poem, "Skier."

He swings down like the flourish of a pen / Signing a signature in white on white.

4. Which poem creates the most vivid image in your mind? Describe what you see when you read the poem.

Answers will vary.

5. The mood of a piece of writing refers to the tone of the writing and how it makes the reader feel. What do you feel when you read the poem "Alaska"?

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Activities**Activity 1: Couplets**

Check to see that your child has written two couplets that follow the same rhyming pattern as the poem "Boulder, Colorado," in the poetry book *My America*.

Activity 2: America the Beautiful

If your child does not know the song "America the Beautiful" take some time to teach it to her or find a recording online that she can listen to.

Activity 3: Art and Poetry

Encourage your child to share her artwork and poem. Display it in a prominent place.

Wrapping Up**Questions to Discuss**

- What is art? (music, visual arts, writing, and drama)
- Can you describe the structure of a couplet? (It is a two-line stanza.)
- Describe different types of stanzas. (Couplets and quatrains are possible answers. "Q is for Quatrain" in *R is for Rhyme* also listed additional stanza types.)

Things to Review

Review the idea that illustrations in poetry books can enhance the poem, but it is also great to read poetry books without illustrations so that you can create more of your own visual images.

Ask your child to write the name of a song and the name of a poem that she likes. Check to see that she capitalized the titles properly and enclosed them in quotation marks.