

POETRY STUDY



Poetry Study for 2nd-5th Grades

Based on the book, *Random House Book of Poetry for Children: A Treasury of 572 Poems for Today's Child* selected by Jack Prelutsky, illustrated by Arnold Lobel

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Study created by Jimmie

Structure of poem study for each poem:

1. Read the title and poem aloud while the children listen.
2. Ask them what they heard – this is narration. They tell back all they understood from the poem. This may include the topic, descriptions, specific words and images.
3. Read the poem again, and repeat the narration.
4. Hopefully this time the children can offer even more details.
5. Allow them to ask questions about things that are still unclear.
6. You can ask specific questions of the poem as well if you want to draw out certain aspects of the poem. Ask the questions listed below in the unit study.
7. The child can read the poem aloud now, if you desire.

For each theme, there are at least two choices of notebooking pages. The child can copy the appropriate poem onto the themed paper for handwriting practice or for copywork.

Personification

Definition: A form of figurative language when a thing or abstract concept is given human characteristics.

Questions for each poem below: What is the thing that is being personified? What human attributes or abilities is it given? Why does the poet use personification?

1. Things to Do If You're a Subway, Bobbi Katz p. 92
 2. Fog, Carl Sandburg p. 96 *illustrate the poem on the page provided
 3. Paper Dragons, Susan Allan Schmetzl p. 40
 4. Steam Shovel, Charles Malam p. 216 *use with kite notebooking page
 5. Dandelion, Hilda Conkling p. 25 *use with dandelion notebooking page
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Fog

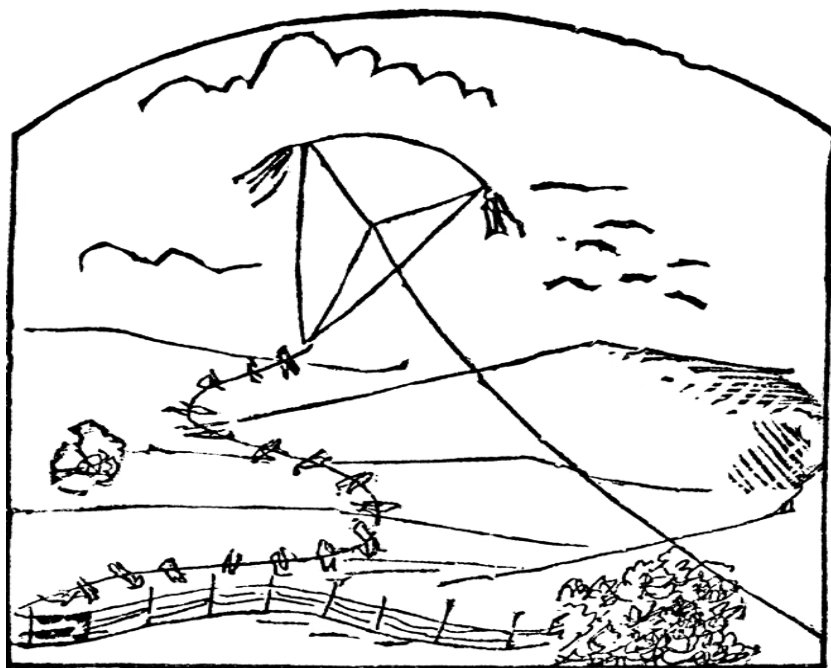
by Carl Sandburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.







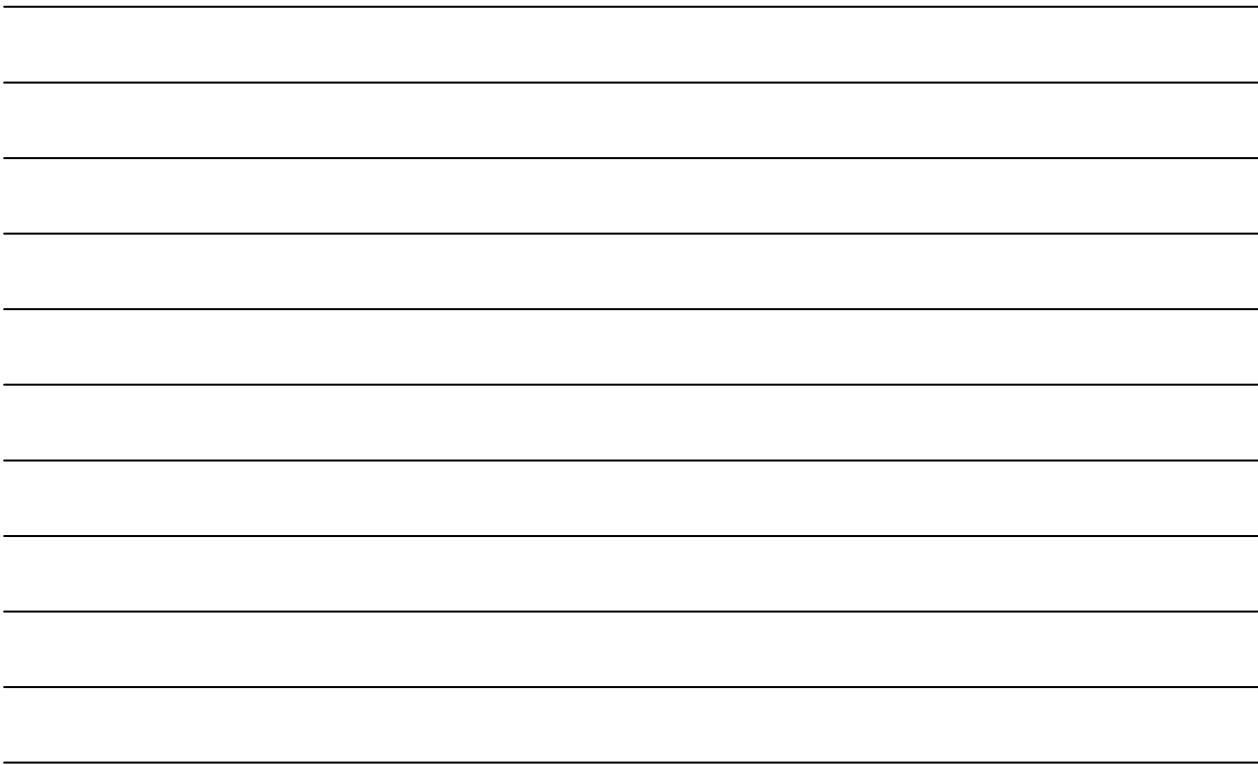


Imagery

Definition: Descriptive words and phrases used to create a mental picture (image) in the reader's mind. Visual imagery is the most common, but imagery can also appeal to the other senses – touch, hearing, smell, or taste.

Questions for each poem below: Identify all the imagery in the poem. What senses are being used (sight, sound, touch, smell, or taste)? Why does the poet use imagery instead of simply using a single adjective?

1. A Dragonfly, Eleanor Farjeon p. 75 *use with dragonfly notebook page
 2. The Rain Has Silver Sandals, May Justus p. 29 *use with rain notebook page
 3. The Toaster, William Jay Smith p.217
 4. Dreams, Langston Hughes p. 225
 5. Keep a Poem in Your Pocket, Beatrice Schenk de Regniers p. 226
 6. Concrete Mixers, Patricia Hubbell p. 94
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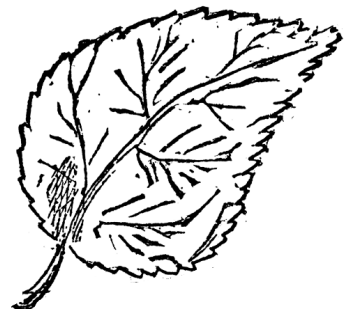
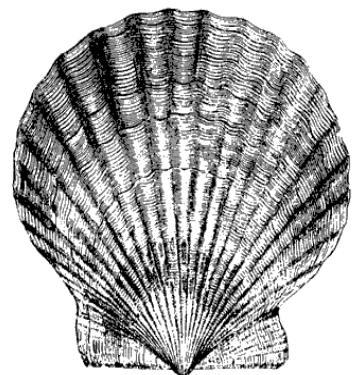
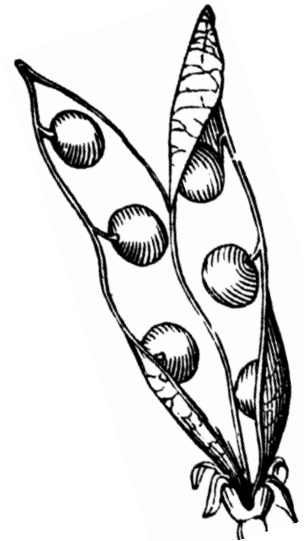
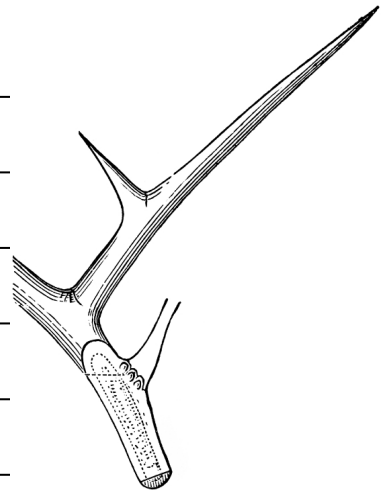
Poems of Imagination

These poems require you to read between the lines and imagine alongside the character in the poem.

Questions for each poem below: What does the character in the poem say and what does he/she actually mean? How is imagination used in this poem? Why doesn't the poet tell you that the character in the poem is using his/her imagination? Is it easy to tell that the character is using his/her imagination? What clues do you have?

1. People Upstairs, Ogden Nash p. 93
 2. One Day When We Went Walking, Valerie Hobbs p. 129 *use with nature page
 3. They're Calling, Felice Holman p. 139
 4. The Runaway, Robert Frost p. 138
 5. Poem: The Bed Book, Sylvia Plath p. 217 *use with bed notebook page
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Poems of Sound

alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, rhyme, nonsense words

Definitions:

Alliteration is the repetition of beginning consonant sounds, as in

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds, as in

Consonance is the repetition of final consonant sounds, as in

Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates an actual sound, as in

Questions for each poem below: Identify the alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia, and rhyme in the poems below. (It may be helpful to make a copy of the poem, and let the child highlight various sound elements.) What do these sound elements add to the poem? What other words could be used to express the same ideas? If they were not there, how would the poem be different?

1. Eletelephony, Laura Richards p. 192
 2. Antonio, Laura Richards p. 191
 3. Jabberwocky, Lewis Carroll p. 170 *illustrate the Jabberwocky on the page provided
 4. Fishes Evening Song, Dahlov Ipcar p. 78
 5. Sea Shell, Amy Lowell p. 29 *use with seashell notebook page
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JABBERWOCKY

by Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought --
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And, has thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Poems that Tell a Story (Narrative Poems)

Definition: A narrative poem is one that tells a story.

Questions for each poem below: What is the story being told? Go through the events in order. How does the form of a poem add to the story? Would this story be better told in prose (not a poem)? Try telling it in prose. Compare it to the poem. Which is more interesting? Most of these narrative poems are longer than the poems in other categories. Why are narrative poems usually long? Do they have to be long?

1. Colonel Fazackerly, Charles Causley p. 204
2. The Wrong Start, Marchette Chute p. 132
3. I Wish I Could Meet the Man that Knows, John Ciardi p. 134
4. Mummy Slept Late and Daddy Fixed Breakfast, John Ciardi p. 147
5. Patience, Bobbi Katz p. 149
6. Daddy Fell into the Pond, Alfred Noyes p. 156
7. Smart, Shel Silverstein p. 157

For these poems that tell a story, have your child draw the story or a scene from the story.

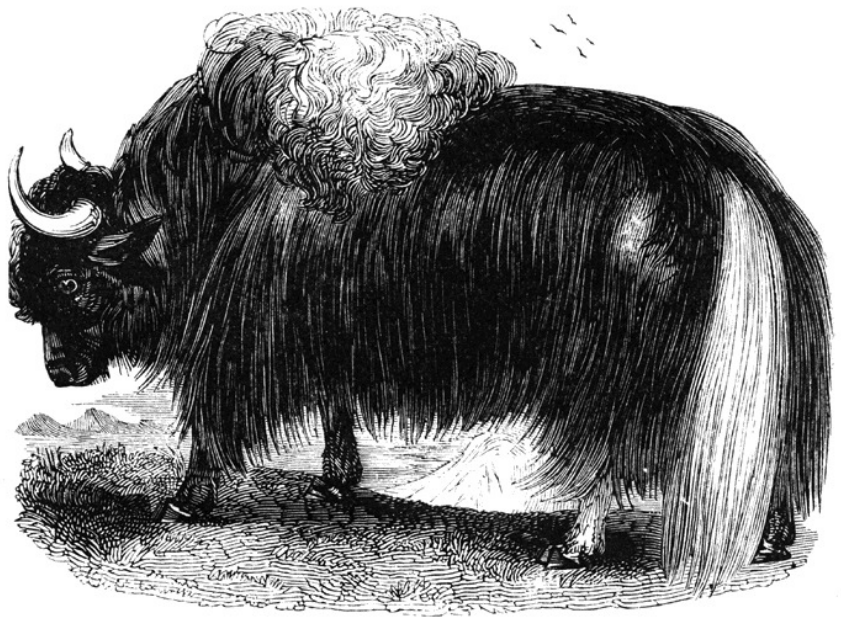
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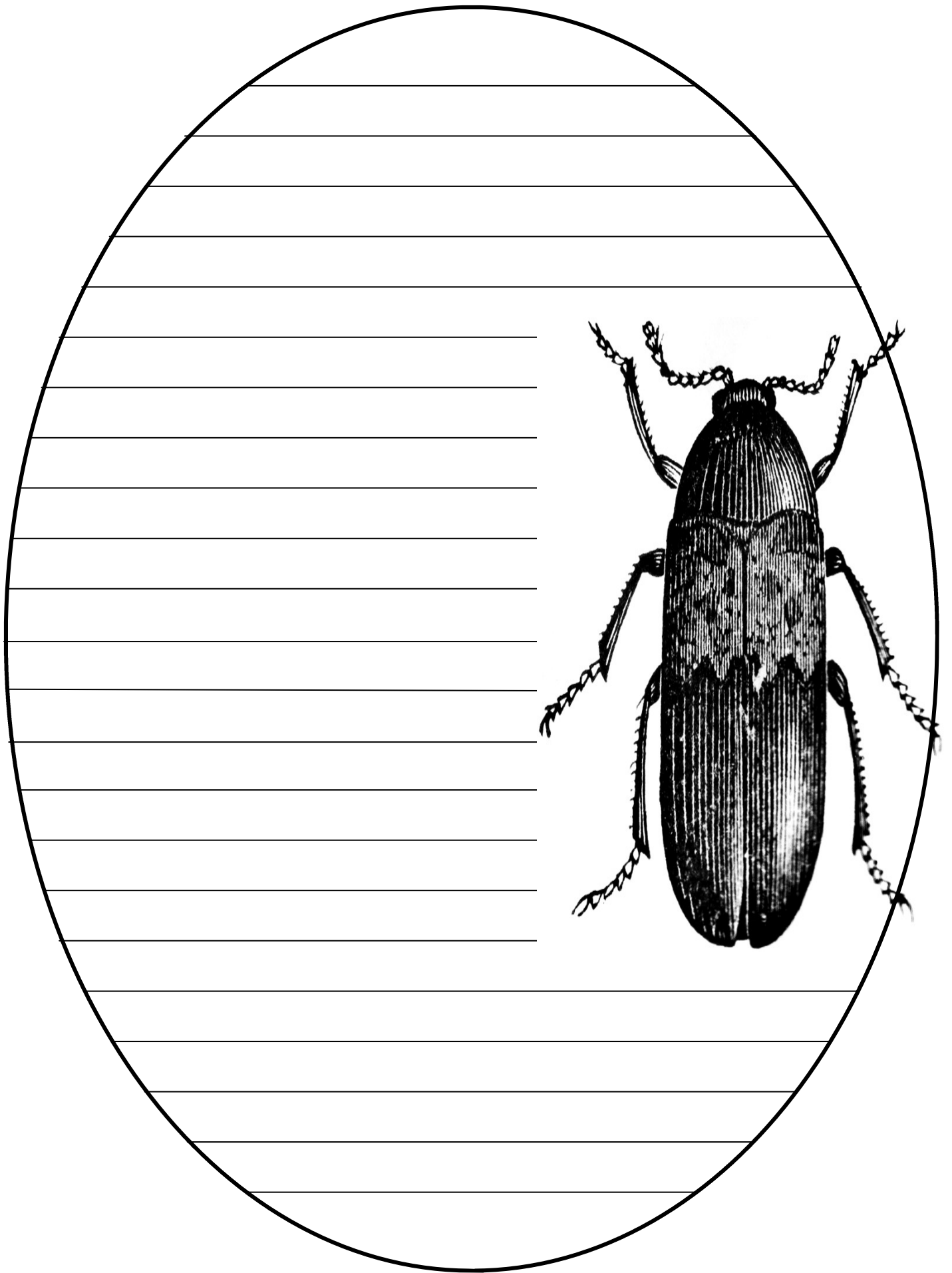
Repetition (of words or phrases)

Definition: Repetition is the deliberate use of the same words or phrases multiple times to achieve a sense of expectation. The reader comes to expect the word to be repeated. Then the poet can continue to use the word or phrase with one effect or choose to not use that expected word for another effect.

Questions for each poem below: What words are repeated? (Make a copy of the poem for the children to mark.) Why do you think the poet chose to repeat these particular words instead of others? Experiment with repeating other words instead. What is the effect? What does the repetition achieve (emphasis, feeling of boredom, feeling of motion, etc.)?

1. Feather or Fur, John Becker p. 69
 2. The Yak, Jack Prelutsky p. 197 *use with yak notebook page
 3. The Secret Song, Margaret Wise Brown p. 24
 4. Every Time I Climb a Tree, David McCord p.119
 5. Clickbeetle, Mary Ann Hoberman p. 193 *use with beetle notebook page
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Symmetry/Pattern

Definition: Symmetry is the deliberate use of a balanced pattern either in words or ideas. Symmetry may include repetition.

Questions for each poem below: What symmetry is used in each poem? Is repetition a part of it? How does the symmetrical pattern add to the poem's meaning or feeling? Try recreating the poem without the symmetry. Does it have the same effect? Do you personally like things to be orderly and symmetrical? Or do you prefer things to be jagged, messy, and asymmetrical?

1. River Winding, Charlotte Zolotow, p. 28
 2. I Heard a Bird Sing, Oliver Herford p. 49 *use with bird notebook page
 3. City, City, Marci Ridlan p. 91 *use with city view notebook page
 4. The Little Boy and the Old Man, Shell Silverstein p. 161
 5. Thanksgiving, Ivy O. Eastwick p. 47
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Ideas for Composing

These ideas can be used all at the end as a culminating activity or scattered among the poem lessons. The students can write complete poems or just work on composing poetically – using poetic language. Writing with elements of poetry makes for more descriptive and interesting prose writing. So if your children don't actually write a poem, know that these concepts carry over well into other facets of writing.

1. Personification

Choose an object and describe how it “behaves” using human terms.

Example – The washing machine angrily scrubs the laundry and in a fit of temper swings it madly around.

2. Imagery Using Five Senses

Choose something to describe. Seasons, a color, or an activity work well. Describe it using all five senses. If necessary, use a list with starters like these:

Looks like

Smells like

Sounds like

Tastes like

Feels like

3. Using the Imagination

Choose an object from nature that you like to play pretend with. Describe it using your imagination. See if others can guess what object you are describing.

Example – An acorn: A stiff, brown fairy cap was lost on the path under the oak tree.

4. Sounds

Choose a machine or animal that makes noise. Create new words to describe the sounds it makes. Try to include rhyme and rhythm to match the sounds.

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