

Ekphrasis: From Photographs to Poems

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Introduction

This summer, my daughter and I visited the Creative Vision Factory on their First Friday of June Open House. We arrived in an artful space full of chairs at a long table littered with bits of glazed clay and etching tools. Sitting opposite us were another mother with her two daughters, one six and the other twelve. We came with the shared purpose of creating art on a glazed tile. These tiles would be collected, fired up in a kiln, sorted by color, packed, transported, and arranged in a mosaic at neighborhood school.

Funded by the State of Delaware's Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, the Creative Vision Factory's mission is to foster the creative potential of individuals on the behavioral health spectrum in a studio art environment that cultivates integration with the local art community through a program of exhibitions, workshops, and communal workspace. One such product is the Stubbs Elementary School mosaic which is a public art piece created by children and adults who contributed their own tiles to the mural. Each tile is a mini art piece that tells a story. More community members worked over the summer to assemble the mosaic in the school.

I believe this project united the school and community and sends a mighty message: art brings people together. The mosaics created by the Creative Vision Factory are powerful tools that instantaneously beautify neighborhoods as they unify community members, both young and old. This visit had a lasting impact on me: I intend to use the idea of making a mosaic together with my class as my key objective for this curricular unit. Participating in this effort transformed my ideas about art. Art brings people together, no matter how large or small their roles are. What if my students write poems on paper tiles and we use these tiles to create our own mosaic?

Rationale

In the past several years, my district has emphasized nonfiction writing in Reading and Language Arts. This past year, my second graders achieved excellent test scores measuring the following subsets: Phonics, High-Frequency words, Comprehension: Literature, and Comprehension: Informative. The outlying Vocabulary subset was lower than I hoped it would be. Therefore, I am striving to address vocabulary development in my instruction this year. I want to surround my students with words and their synonyms

and antonyms. I want my students to engage in conversations using vibrant words. What better course of action than to mesh vocabulary development with poetry writing? By giving my students the structure and context of poems, they can use surrounding texts for cues to word meanings and apply novel words that can elevate their ability to acquire new words.

In our Fantastic Ekphrastic Scholastic seminar, we defined poetry as “an art form consisting of figurative language intentionally structured by lines.” We also defined ekphrasis as “poetry about any art form created to evoke a sensory response.” This curriculum unit will use photographs to stimulate my students' writing. Through the vivid images of nature and animals, my students can imagine themselves as part of the scene. I plan to use photographs taken of images seen during a walk through the woods to inspire my students to write poetry. The emphasis will be on poetry forms and vocabulary.

The Common Core State Standards that will be addressed include Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: L.2.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content and L.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. Also, Speaking and Listening will be addressed when the students participate in collaborative conversations about their poetry (Comprehension and Collaboration SL.2.1). Finally, students will write narratives in which they recount short sequence of events (Text Types and Purposes W.2.3).

Student Demographics

Since I graduated from University of Delaware in 1987, I've taught in Christina School District which is Delaware's largest school district and serves more than 16,000 students. For seventeen years, I have had the privilege of teaching at West Park Place Elementary School. West Park hosts several programs that include English as a Second Language (ESL), Delaware Autistic Program, REACH (Realistic Educational Alternatives for Children with Disabilities), Accelerated Academic, and Montessori. According to the annual report generated by the Christina School District, about a third of our students are ESL and represent about twenty-five different countries. About forty-five percent of our student population are free/reduced lunch students. Our demographics are 19% African American, 17% Asian, 11% Hispanic/Latino, 47% White, and 7% Multi-Racial. I am a second grade, self-contained teacher and teach multiple subjects that include English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This year, my class has twenty-one students, three of whom are Special Education learners, and another two who are English Language Learners.

Located about a mile from the heart of University of Delaware, West Park Place has a wonderfully diverse population of under 400 students. Many students have parents who work for UD or are visiting from other countries to teach or attend higher education UD programs. This creates a bustling hub where education is highly valued in our West Park

Place community. In fact, this year West Park Place Elementary School is being recognized by the National Association of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for student achievement documented gains. Our students showed exceptional performance on state tests and made remarkable progress in closing the achievement gaps between student groups, including those from low-income families, racial minority groups and students with disabilities. In 2011, West Park Place received the National Blue-Ribbon School designation from the United States Department of Education for consistent student achievement. Our instruction is aligned with Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. My fellow teachers work with our administrators collaboratively in Professional Learning Communities to analyze student data, set goals, monitor progress, and plan meaningful learning activities. Currently we look at beginning year data derived from IReady to respond to students' needs. Based on the Christina School District's annual report, West Park Place teachers are predominately Highly Effective and Highly Qualified and have many years of experience with most carrying at least one master's degree.

Ekphrastic Poetry, Photographs, and Vocabulary

According to Poetry Foundation's definition, an ekphrasis poem is a vivid description of a scene, or more commonly, a work of art. When looking at an art form, which in our case is a photograph, there are several things to take notice of: what is happening? Who or what is the subject of this photograph? What is the mood of the photograph—what sounds, smells, feelings, and tastes could be associated with it? How does this photograph connect with you personally? How would you summarize its main ideas?

I started my school year with a plan to promote poetry writing and build vocabulary. I requested that each child come prepared with two composition books that would be their Poetry Journal and Vocabulary Builder. I read poetry to my class nearly every day, so they can hear and see the variety of forms and types. On the Epic website, there are thousands of books to read for free during the school day and I created a poetry collection of about twenty developmentally appropriate poetry books to read to my class. A very early hit was *Pizza and Other Stinky Poems* by Harriet Ziefert:

Pizza by Harriet Ziefert

Through the teeth
And past the gums
Look out stomach,
Pizza comes.

As soon as my students saw the boy's very large mouth ready to swallow up the slice of pizza, my students were hooked! Displaying it on my Smartboard made the process of reading as a class natural. We dove into the poem and giggled at the words. We talked

about what kind of writing this was and the class correctly identified it as a poem. We discussed the characteristics of poems and the class agreed that poems have words that rhymed. I did not mention that not all poems have to rhyme, yet.

Each day of the first week of school, I selected short and fun poems to read to the class. Sometimes, I showed the poem to them, but most of the time, I read the poem, so the class could visualize the poems themselves. Following the poem, I gave the class five minutes to write or draw in their Poetry Journal.

During the second week of school, I targeted one type of poem on which to work. I thought that Acrostic poems would be a good start. Acrostic poems which have a topic idea running down the left side of the page. Each letter in the topic word has a new thought that runs off the side from left to right and is relevant to the topic word. We used their own name as our first topic, but the second graders struggled with the rules of this form: they didn't always start with the correct letter or their thought was irrelevant to the topic. Nevertheless, we looked at more Acrostic poems examples and tried again the next couple of days.

Then, I thought Diamante poems might be a bit easier for the students, since the form employs nouns, adjectives, and verbs to describe a subject. I displayed the rules for writing a diamante poem and one example.

Lines	Here are the rules:	Here is an example:
1	Noun	Spring
2	Adjective, Adjective	Lovely, Bright
3	Verb, Verb, Verb (Three -ing words that go with your noun)	Living, Breathing, Flowering
4	Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun (Four nouns or a short phrase linking your topic or topics)	Crocuses, Tulips, Raindrops, Sunshine
5	Verb, Verb, Verb (Three -ing words that go with your noun)	Showering, Warming, Blossoming
6	Adjective, Adjective	Living, Colorful
7	Noun	Season

Like the Acrostic poem, the Diamante poem required a certain skill readiness that my second graders didn't yet possess. Their collective knowledge of parts of speech was weak and I realized that I needed to chill out a bit and focus on exposing my class to poems without requiring them to write to a specific form for now.

So, I switched gears and began using photographs of my story's vocabulary words to begin the ekphrasis part of my unit. I intended to use photographs to show the meaning

and context of words so that my students could understand these words better and apply these words readily in conversation. The first story told a tale of a girl and her father going for a hike in the woods, where they followed a trail along a stream and later encountered goats at a farm nearby. I asked my daughter to go on her own hike through White Clay Creek and take photographs of situations that would invoke these vocabulary words: branch, evening, greedy, woods, stream, and trail. Many photographs she took were interesting and I selected a few to place in a google slideshow. Each day following our vocabulary building lesson, we looked at one photograph of woods for about five minutes and discussed these questions:

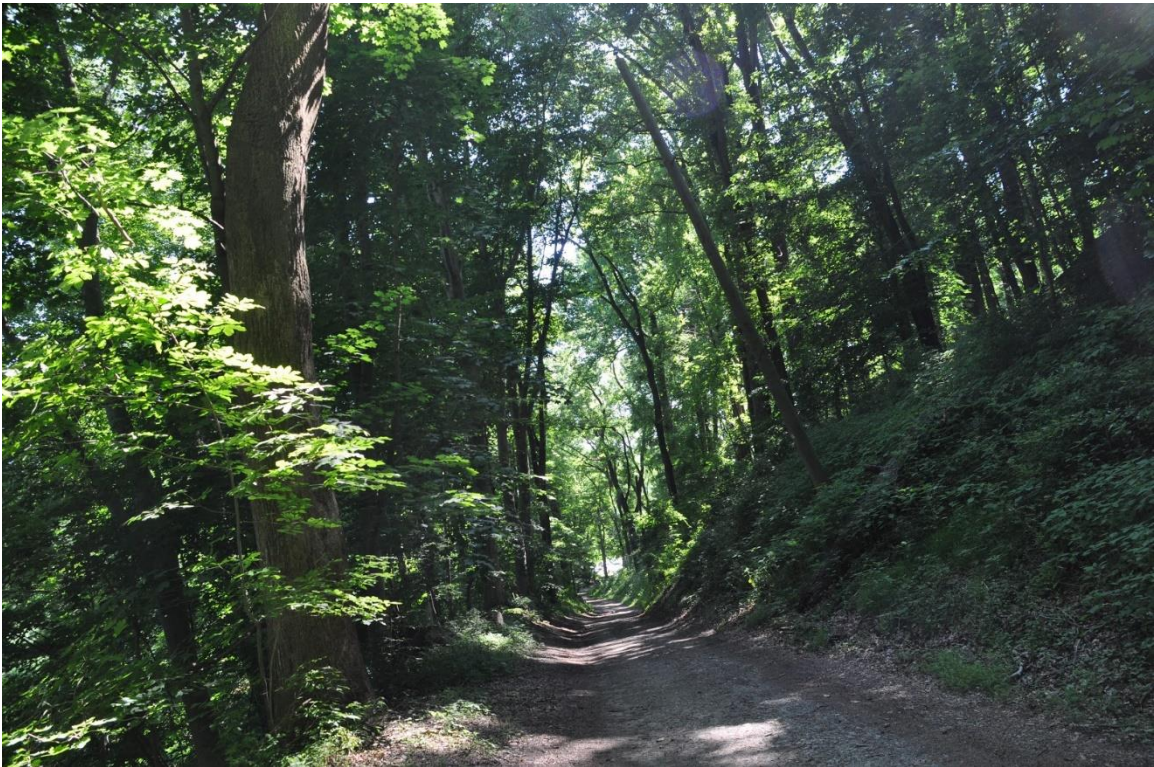


Figure 1: Image Credit: Luci Ostheimer.

- What does this photograph show?
- When you look at this photograph, what sounds do you hear?
- What smells do you taste?
- How do you feel when you look at this?

I thought there would be a nice discussion, but I didn't realize how excited my class would be about a photograph of woods. They couldn't stop buzzing about how they've been there, how they could hear birds, how they could feel the fresh air, and how they'd love to run down the path. It was amazing how each child could really see themselves in this space and having a great time in nature. This time when I launched them into their

Poetry Journal, they wrote stories about their own experiences of being in the woods and around nature and they wanted more time to write even though their five minutes was over.

In this next section, I plan to introduce a variety of poetry forms that will fit into the skillsets of 2nd and 3rd grade students.

Forms of Poetry

In his book, *Explore Poetry!* Andi Diehn writes, “Poems are words put together in patterns that tell stories, teach lessons, or describe people, places, or things. Poetry is an art form that people like to read and listen to.” In addition, children need to understand that poems can be long or short, they can rhyme or not rhyme, or they can make a certain shape on the page. Some poetry requires counting and other poetry follows not rules at all. There are several poetic forms that my second graders will be using successfully so I am using this next section to tell about them and to give examples.

Acrostic

A poem that runs a topic down the left side of a page. Each letter in the topic has a new thought that runs off the side from left to right and is relevant to the topic word¹.

FALL by Leanne Guenther

Farmers bring the harvest from the land.

Animals prepare for the winter chill.

Leaves fall from the trees—floating

Lightly to the ground.

Cinquain

A cinquain is a five-line poem that projects an image of an object, person, or idea. It may have this form:

Line one: One-word title

Line two: Two words or a two-word phrase that describes your title

Line three: Three words or a three-word phrase that describes an action relating to your topic

Line four: Four- or five-word phrase that describes a feeling or thought relating to your topic

Line five: One word (synonym or similar word) that refers to your title.

School

Learning place
Raise your hand
Lots of friends having fun
Academy

Another cinquain form is to count syllables in the lines so that there are 2 syllables in the first line, 4 in the second, 6 in the third, 8 in the fourth, and 2 in the last line².

Ice Cream

Ice cream.
Cold and yummy.
I love its sweet richness
as it finds its way into my
tummy.

Concrete

Concrete poems are shaped like their subjects... even a toilet.

ode To a CoMMode

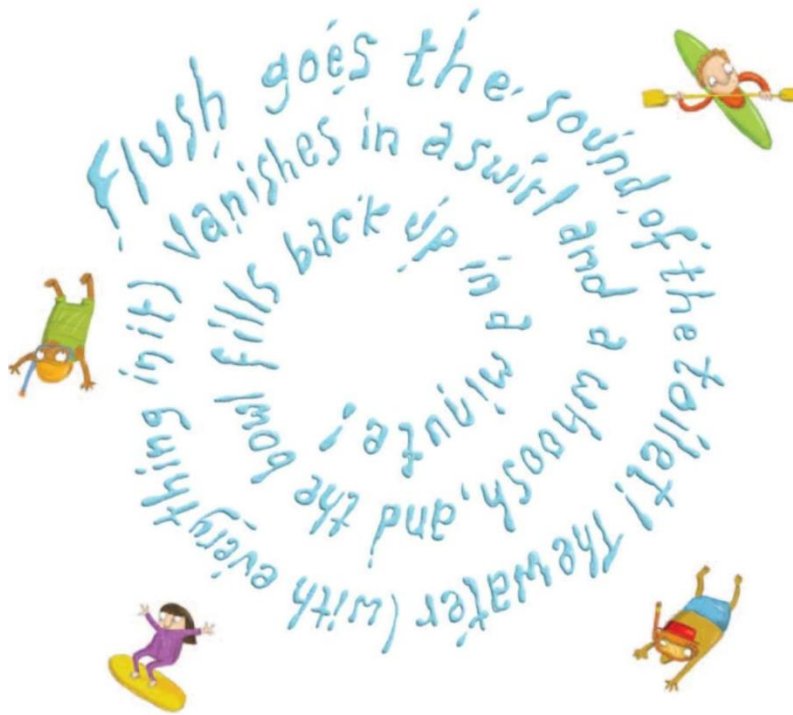


Figure 2: Image Credit: Ode to a Commode: Concrete Poems, p. 6.

Diamante

Diamante poems have seven lines and are in the shape of a diamond. They begin with one thing and gradually transition to end with sort of the opposite.

Synonym Diamante

Monsters

Evil, Spooky

Howling, Shrieking, Wailing

Ghosts, Vampires, Goblins, Witches

Flying, Scaring, Terrifying

Creepy, Crawly

Creatures

Free Verse

Free verse poems are non-metrical, nonrhyming lines that closely follow the natural rhythm of speech. In her book, *Kids' Poems Teaching Second Graders to Love Writing Poetry*, Regie Routman writes, "free-verse poetry is the best way I know to teach kids how to write easily and joyfully."³

The Fog by Carl Sanburg

The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Haiku

"Haiku" is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that celebrates nature and little moments in life. It consists of three lines and use vivid and expressive words and contain seventeen syllables, arranged in lines of 5-7-5 syllables. There is a clever haiku on the Kidszone website that helps you remember⁴:

I am first with five
Then seven in the middle --
Five again to end.

Paul Janeczko wrote that haiku and other poems encourage you to pay attention, create images with words, use only the best words in your poem, and write with economy. Matsuo Basho is considered the greatest haiku poet and here is one of his haiku poems:

An old silent pond...
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.

Narrative Poems

Narrative poems tell a story and should include characters, setting, plot, and a theme. One example of a narrative poem is Shel Silverstein's "A Light in the Attic."

A Light in the Attic by Shel Silverstein

There's a light on in the attic.

Though the house is dark and shuttered,

I can see a flickerin' flutter,

And I know what it's about.

There's a light on in the attic.

I can see it from the outside,

And I know you're on the inside... lookin' out.

Shape Poems

Shape poems tell stories not only through the words chosen by the poet, but also through the shape the poem makes on the page⁵. Shape poems are also free verse, which means it doesn't rhyme or carry a regular structure. In the example below, my second grader first wrote an I Sense It Is Halloween poem and then outlined a pumpkin that she drew.

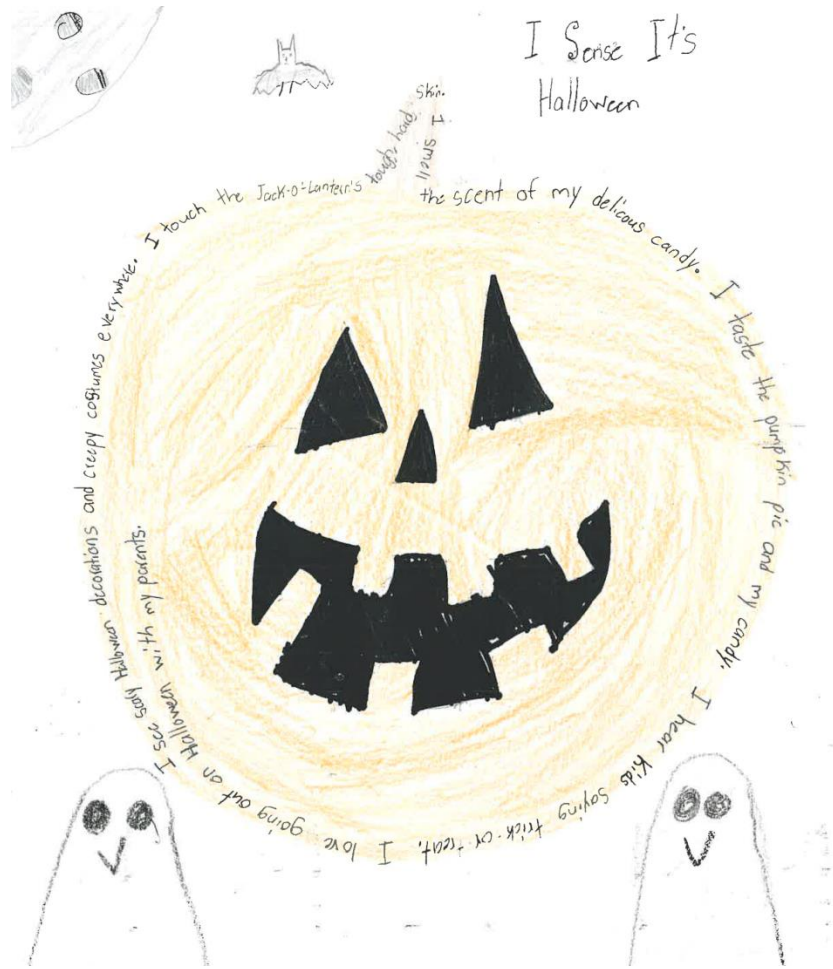


Figure 3: Image Credit: Eva G.

Tanka

A Japanese form of five lines with 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables that uses two images to play off each other. Tanka and haiku are alike, with the first three lines in the same form and two added lines of seven syllables each. Here is an example from the website Literary Terms.

For Satori

In the spring of joy,
 when even the mud chuckles,
 my soul runs rabid,

snaps at its own bleeding heels,
and barks: “What is happiness?”

Strategies

Poetry Read Aloud

I think the best strategy for teaching poetry writing is to read poems daily. I read in *Backpack Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing*, that there are a couple of suggestions to read poems. When you first read a poem, read the poem straight through. Then, when you read it a second time, read to understand each word and look up words in a dictionary when necessary. Stop and ponder what the poem means. I have come to think of this exercise as meditative because we listen closely to the poem, then think silently about it. My goal is not to race through a poem, but to let the poem rest in the listener's mind and be reflected on. I also have a poem section in my classroom library, so I can expose my class to a variety of poems and point out that not all poems rhyme.

Poetry Journals

For this unit, my students will learn their vocabulary words and then reflect on a photograph of each word. Then, my class has a couple of minutes to talk to their team to share ideas. When the sharing time is over, the class writes in their journal for ten to fifteen minutes. Second graders have a very wide range of abilities and many students get straight to work with no problem. But others need encouragement, so I invite them to begin with an “I wish” statement or tell three things about the photograph: I see... I think... I wonder...

Figurative Language Device Cards

A figure of speech occurs whenever a speaker or writer, for the sake of freshness or emphasis, departs from the usual denotation, or literal definitions of words⁶.

Figurative language is used to express something beyond the literal or exact meaning. It helps readers think about things in new ways. I have found that teaching figurative language makes writing poetry more fun. Here are some basic examples that work well with second and third graders. I prepared poetry vocabulary cards that explain figurative language terms and provide examples.

Simile

In my friendly definition, I wrote that a simile is a figure of speech that compares two unlike things by using the word like or as. Some examples include:

She was as quiet as a mouse.

The bag was as light as a feather.

He was as clever as a fox.

He runs like a cheetah.

Her eyes twinkle like stars.

Here is the first stanza of Lord Byron's poem The Destruction of Sennacherib:

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wav rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison of two unlike things and describes one thing as something else. For instance, "My sister is a calculator" means that my sister does math facts very fast. Here is another example:

Dandelion by Conkling

O little soldier with the golden helmet,
What are you guarding on my lawn?
You with your green gun
And your yellow beard,
Why do you stand so stiff?
There is only the grass to fight!

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech in which human characteristics or qualities are given to an animal, an object, or an idea, such as "pancakes call you down for breakfast." Some others include:

The branches were dancing in the breeze.
The delicious smell of cookies pulled me into the room.
The gentle wind softly kissed my cheek as I walked.

Here is Emily Dickinson's poem "Hope" is the thing with feathers.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul

And sings the tune without the words

And never stops at all.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named like “buzz” or “sizzle.” Onomatopoeia creates sounds, so the reader or listener can hear those sounds in the poem:

The rustling leaves kept me awake.

The buzzing bee flew away.

Here is a poem by Lee Emmett:

water plops into pond

splish-splash downhill

warbling magpies in tree

trilling, melodic thrill

whoosh, passing breeze

flags flutter and flap

frog croaks, bird whistles

babbling bubbles from tap

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words and it focuses on the sound of a word and not the letters in a word. “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers” is a well-known alliterative phrase as is “How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?” Here is an alliterative poem by unknown.

Aeronautics

A flea and a fly in a flue,

Were imprisoned; Now what could they do?

Said the fly, “let us flee.”

“Let us fly,” said the flea,

And they flew through a flaw in the flue.

Vocabulary Cards

When I prepare my lesson, I select eight to ten words for my students to learn. I make a set of cards that each have the friendly definition of the word, a sentence that applies the word, connections that help make the word more accessible, synonyms of the word, and a photograph that captures the essence of the word. There is an example of the vocabulary card for “stream” in Supplemental Resources.

Then, I introduce the new vocabulary words to the class and read several stories that use the set of words so that the students can hear the words used in different ways. Through the course of the week, students practice learning the new vocabulary words by acting them out and using them in class discussion and activities. Examples of the vocabulary cards can be found in Supplemental Resources.

Classroom Activities

Introduction to Poetry Writing

This lesson should take about two class sessions.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that poems are forms of writing that develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, L.2.4, L.2.5, W.2.3

Vocabulary: poem, poetry, pattern, context, line, sensory poem

Materials: Poems from *Creatures of the Earth, Sea, and Sky* by Georgia Heard: “Hummingbird,” “Whale Chant,” and “Eagle Flight.” Poems from *The New Kid on the Block* by Jack Prelutsky: “Snillies,” and “An Unassuming Owl.”

Photographs of kids (baby goats) and stream.

Day 1: Vocabulary Part: I will introduce the vocabulary words and their meanings and explain that poems come in many different forms and are written for different purposes.
Read Aloud Part: I will read this variety of poems that are about real and imagined animals. We will discuss key details of the poems and compare how they sound very different, but all are poems. Next, I will focus on the vocabulary word “line” and discuss how a line in poetry is like a sentence in a paragraph. We will examine how the lines look in each of the poems. For example, each line in “Hummingbird” zigzags like the movement of a hummingbird. The lines in “Whale Chant” have just one, two, or three words in them. “Snillies” and “An Unassuming Owl” have lines that begin like a sentence but continue a new line, and every four or five words change to a new line again. We will discuss how poets decide how to structure their lines. I will instruct my class to take out their poetry journals and write to a photograph of one of our vocabulary words. For example, if the vocabulary word is kids, I will display a photograph of three baby goats rollicking on playground equipment. Using think-pair-share, I will ask the

students these questions: Who is in this photograph? What are they doing? What is the setting of this photograph? Why do you think they are on that rickety bridge? How do you think they move from place to place? Then I will collect and write a bunch of responses on the white board. Finally, I will model how our collected responses can help me write a poem about this photograph. For the last few minutes, the class will write in their poetry journals.

Day 2: Vocabulary Part: I will review how we learned that poems are pieces of writing that describe an event, idea, or emotion in a vivid way; pattern is a way to arrange words in a design to create meaning; context is the background or setting of a poem; and line is a group of words arranged into a row that ends for a reason other than the right-hand margin. Read Aloud Part: I will then read the poem we wrote the lesson before about kids as well as the four other poems. Next, I will display a photograph of our next vocabulary word which could be stream. I will emphasize that context or the background of a poem can set the mood for a poem. In this case, the photograph depicting stream shows a lush green forest interrupted by a White Clay Creek's rushing water, shimmering with rays from the sun. Our discussion will again focus on the setting, but this time there is no animal or person in the scene. I will ask the students to imagine themselves in this scene and think: what do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? What do you taste? What do you feel? After a minute of silent reflection, I will take down responses on the whiteboard. Now, I will teach the class how to write a sensory poem, an unrhymed poem that describes a feeling by telling what it sounds, smells, tastes, looks, and feels like. Finally, I will have my class write a sensory poem about "stream" in their poetry journal.

Manipulative Forms: Acrostic, Shape and Concrete Poems

This lesson should take about three class sessions.

Content Objectives: Students will analyze the structure of acrostic poems and how lines are assembled. Students will arrange lines of poem into different shapes.

Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, L.2.4, L.2.5, W.2.3

Vocabulary: acrostic, onomatopoeia, stanza, shape or concrete poem, simile

Materials: Poems from *Acrostic Poems* by Lisa M. Bolt Simons: "Michelle," "School," and "Butterfly." "Openin' Night," "Falling Up," and "Hug O' War" by Shel Silverstein. *Ode to a Commode* by Brian P. Cleary. *Similes and Metaphors* by Ann Heinrichs.

Photographs of farm, branch, and trail.

Day 1: Vocabulary Part: I will introduce the new vocabulary words acrostic and onomatopoeia. Read Aloud Part: I will read the poems to warm-up the class. During class discussion, I will focus on acrostic poems by modeling how I use certain letters in each line to spell out a word. to write them on the white board. I will explain that onomatopoeia would make my poems more playful and interesting. We will brainstorm

sounds we hear on a farm and use these words as onomatopoeia for an improved acrostic poem. Then the students will write their own acrostic poem for the vocabulary word farm.

Day 2: Vocabulary Part: I will introduce the new vocabulary words concrete or shape poem and stanza. Read Aloud Part: I will read “What About Me?”, “A Twisted Tale,” and “Air Show” to the class and we will look at how the words of a poem are compressed into the shape of a football, twisted into the shape of a pretzel, and stretched along the flight of a fly. Then I will display a photograph of a branch and the class will discuss what may live on or around the branch. I will help the students make a connection to the parts of a tree and the parts of our body so they will consider this analogy: fingers are person as branches are to tree. Together we will finish these sentences: I see ... I think ... I wonder... I feel... We will call these sentences a stanza. I will demonstrate how I can first sketch an outline of a tree branch using a very light pencil. Then I will start at one point of the branch and use a pen to write the stanza onto the lines. The words should be written to move with the outline of the tree. When I finish, I will erase the pencil lines so the class can see how the poem is in the shape of a branch. Finally, the students will create a branch shape poem in their journals.

Day 3: Vocabulary Part: I will review concrete or shape poem and introduce simile. Read Aloud Part: I will read *Similes and Metaphors* and we will talk about how similes make a sentence more interesting. Next, we will look at a photograph of a nature trail that runs through White Clay Creek Woods. We will imagine all the places the trail might take us, and I will write the ideas on the white board. We will reflect how we might feel while we walk on this trail: we might be tired, energized, or fearless. Following this, I will construct some common similes or metaphors: “He was an energizer bunny”, “I was slow as thick molasses”, and “She was as fearless as a lion.” Next, I will ask the students to work in partners to write a stanza about traveling on this trail. After about five minutes, we will share our poems and then set out to create a concrete poem of trail in their poetry journals.

Visual Forms: Cinquain Poems

This lesson should take about two class sessions.

Content Objectives: Students will analyze the structure of modified cinquain poems and how lines are assembled.

Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, L.2.4, L.2.5, W.2.3

Vocabulary: cinquain, phrase, personification

Materials: *Cinquain Poems* by Lisa M. Bolt Simons: *The New Kid on the Block* by Jack Prelutsky: “Louder than a Clap of Thunder!” “My Baby Brother,” and “Super-Goopy Glue.” *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George: “Plowed Fields,” “Spring Wind,” and “Tree Farm.”

Photographs of bench and bridge

Day 1: Vocabulary Part: I will review the manipulative forms of poetry and introduce cinquain. Read Aloud Part will include “Louder than a Clap of Thunder,” “Plowed Fields,” and *Cinquain Poems*. I like to think this activity is an especially a good way to learn new vocabulary words. I will show the vocabulary card for bench and discuss how all the words you need for writing a cinquain are here on this card: two adjectives describing bench, three –ing action words that fit bench, a four-word phrase that captures the feeling about bench, and a specific word explaining bench. I will lead the class to see one possible cinquain could be:

Bench

Long, Wooden

Waiting, Sitting, Reading

Long chair for sitting

Seat

After modeling this cinquain, I will direct my class to try doing it on their own in their poetry journals.

Day 2: Vocabulary Part: I will review cinquain and phrase and introduce personification. Read Aloud Part: I will read these poems: “Recess! Oh, Recess!” By Darren Sardelli. “Hey Diddle, Diddle” by Mother Goose. “Whatif” by Shel Silverstein. I will explain that personification is a figure of speech that gives human characteristics to nonhuman objects including plants and animals. I will ask the class to think what if a bridge could talk? What would it say? What do you think is important to the bridge? Then I will have pairs talk about writing a cinquain for the word bridge. After three minutes, students will write cinquains in their journal.

Classical Forms: Free Verse and Narrative Poems

This lesson should take about two class sessions.

Content Objectives: Students will analyze the structure of free verse and narrative poems and how lines are assembled.

Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, L.2.4, L.2.5, W.2.3

Vocabulary: free verse, personification, narrative poems, onomatopoeia

Materials: Poems from *Creatures of the Earth, Sea, and Sky* by Georgia Heard: “Frog Serenade” and “Fishes.” Poems from *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George: “September.” Poems from *The New Kid on the Block* by Jack Prelutsky: “I Am Running in a Circle.”

Photographs of finally, idea, wonder

Day 1: Vocabulary Part: I will introduce free verse as a poem that does not rhyme or follow a regular structure. Read Aloud Part: I will read “Fishes” and “Frog Serenade” and will lead a class discussion on how these poems use two voices and use lots of white space between words. We will discuss how poems can be conversations between two people. I will display a photograph of a player from the 2018 Eagles football team who is kneeling on the ground and has this jubilant expression on his face. I imagined what was racing through his mind at this time: “Finally, we are the champions!” I will lead the class in writing a free verse about this moment:

Finally!

I can't believe it.

The game is over.

I can't believe it.

I feel numb.

I can't believe it.

Pinch me.

I'm not imagining it!

Finally, we are Super Bowl Champions!!!!

I will direct pairs of students to practice telling some “finally” moments that they think of and use two voices. After three minutes, students will write these free verse poems in their journals.

Day 2: Vocabulary Part: I will introduce narrative poems and how they are like writing a story because both narrative poems have characters, setting, problem, and resolution. One major difference is that narrative poems have a theme, a message to be learned. Read Aloud Part: I will read “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” by Clement C. Moore. We will talk about the setting and how the author describes the events so carefully and completely. I will display a photograph of a clear, night sky that is full of millions of stars. We will talk about all the wonders we have about the universe. Next, I will ask the class to write a narrative poem about this photograph. I will model the writing and then direct my students to write their own narrative poem in their journal.

Mosaics and Poems

This lesson should take about one class session to teach the idea.

Content Objectives: Students will transfer poems they have written to paper pattern tiles. Then they will compose and decompose these tiles to create different arrangements.

Standards: RL.2.1, RL.2.2, SL.2.1, SL.2.1a, SL.2.1b, L.2.4, L.2.5, W.2.3

Vocabulary: patterns, repetition, alliteration, cinquain

Materials: Poems from *Creatures of the Earth, Sea, and Sky* by Georgia Heard: “Favorite Bear” and “Bat Patrol.” Poems from *The Great Frog Race and Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George: “Weeping Willow” and “Tree Farm.” Poems from Francisco X. Alarcon including “Bellybutton of the Moon.” Poems from Judith Viorst including “If I Were in charge of the World and Other Worries. Poems from Roald Dahl including “The Dentist and the Crocodile.” [little tree] by E.E. Cummings.

Photographs of wave, impatient, and furious can be found in Supplemental Resources.

Vocabulary Part: I will introduce the word wave and we’ll talk about the different meanings it has. Read Aloud Part: I will read several of the poems listed above and then I will model writing a cinquain with the class. We will use pattern blocks to create designs and then use paper tiles to lay over the blocks and write a word on each tile. The paper tiles will be transferred to construction paper. Eva made a very nice design to her cinquain:

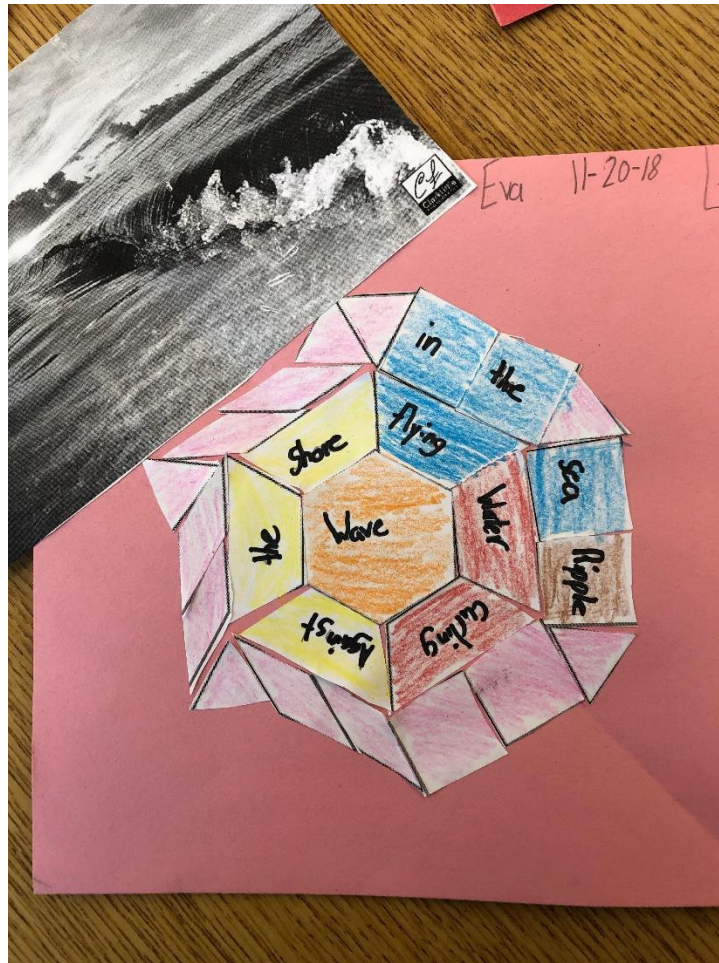


Figure 4: Image Credit: Eva G.

Wave

Water Curling

Against the shore

Flying in the sea

Ripple

I will also instruct the class to use a trapezoid shape in which to write their poems. We can use these tiles to create larger designs. Other variations include selecting two different poems and writing one word on each tile. Then the tiles can be shuffled, and new poems can be made. My students have really enjoyed this mosaic activity and plan to continue doing more throughout the year.

Resources

"Acrostic Poems." Worksheets for Kids. Accessed December 18, 2018.
<https://www.kidzone.ws/poetry/acrostic.htm>.

Teacher Resource

Diehn, Andi, and Bryan Stone. *Explore Poetry!* White River Junction, VT: Nomad Press, a Division of Nomad Communications, 2015.

Read Aloud and Poetry Corner

George, Kristine OConnell. *The Great Frog Race*. Clarion Books, 1997.

Read Aloud and Poetry Corner

Heard, Georgia, and Jennifer Dewey. *Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky: Poems*. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong, 1996.

Read Aloud and Poetry Corner

"How to Write a Cinquain Poem." Poetry4kids. Accessed December 18, 2018.
<https://www.poetry4kids.com/lessons/how-to-write-a-cinquain-poem>.

Teacher Resource: cinquain poems

Kennedy, X. J., and Dana Gioia. *Backpack Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama and Writing*. White Plains, NY: Longman, 2015.

Teacher Resource

Prelutsky, Jack. *New Kid on the Block Poems by Jack Prelutsky*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1984.

Read Aloud and Poetry Corner

Routman, Regie. *Kids' Poems Teaching Second Graders to Love Writing Poetry*. New York, NY: Scholastic, 2000.

Appendix

This four-week unit will implement the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Reading Literature, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Vocabulary. Emphasis will be placed on acquiring and using unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases and demonstrating understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings. Students will write poems through reflecting on a photograph that depicts their vocabulary word, thereby enhancing their vocabulary acquisition. By the end of this unit, students will be familiar with writing acrostic, concrete, cinquain, free verse, and narrative poems. With continued poetry journaling,

reading, and instruction, students will be ready to write haiku and diamante poems later in the year. Here are the Common Core State Standards that will be addressed:

Speaking & Listening

SL.2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.2.1a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

SL.2.1b Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

SL.2.1c ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

SL.2.4 Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

Reading: Literature

RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL.2.2 Recount stories and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., *regular beats*, *alliteration*, *rhymes*, *repeated lines*) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

RL.2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

RL.2.6 Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.

Writing

W.2.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

Vocabulary

L.2.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

L.2.4a Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

L.2.4b Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known prefix is added to a known word.

L.2.4c Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root.

L.2.4d Use knowledge of the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of compound words.

L.2.4e Use glossaries and beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

L.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

L.2.5 Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are spicy or juicy).


L.2.5b Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs and adjectives.

L.2.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe.

Supplemental Resources

Here is a link to my Poetry Vocabulary Cards (<https://bit.ly/2S0xWQe>).

Here is my Vocabulary card for the word “stream” and here is a link to other examples of my Vocabulary Cards. (<https://bit.ly/2W7OULu>).

<p>Friendly Definition:</p> <p>(noun) a body of flowing water that is not too wide or deep.</p>	<h1>stream</h1>	
<p>Sentence:</p> <p>The water in the _____ was up to my knees.</p>		
<p>Synonyms:</p> <p>creek, brook</p>		

¹ Kidszone. Acrostic Poems.

² <https://www.poetry4kids.com/lessons/how-to-write-a-cinquain-poem>

³ Routman, p. 7.

⁴ <https://www.kidzone.ws/poetry/haiku.htm>

⁵ Diehn, p. 18

⁶ Kennedy, p. 447.