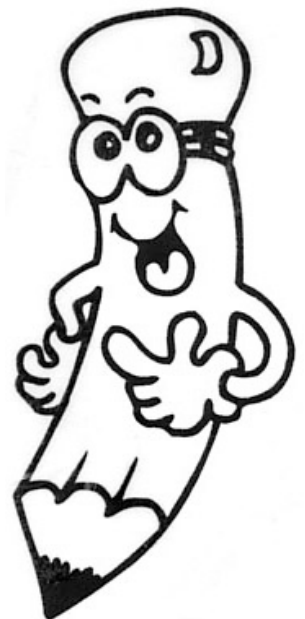


The Promise of Poetry for Struggling Readers



Presented by:
Maria Walther
1st Grade Teacher
Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary School
2700 Stonebridge Blvd.
Aurora, IL 60502
630-375-3239
maria_walther@ipsd.org
www.mariawalther.com
Twitter @mariapwalther



Poetry + Powerful Reading Instruction = Success

Powerful reading instruction is comprised of the following components:

- Frequent read-aloud experiences
- Engaging conversations
- Playful phonemic awareness activities
- Explicit phonics instruction
- Robust vocabulary teaching
- Thoughtful comprehension lessons
- Meaningful fluency development activities
- Multilevel, flexible, small group instruction
- Ample time to read independently
- Effective writing instruction
- Integrated content area studies

Why Use Poetry to Teach Struggling Readers?

- Poetry Is Short!
- Poetry Plays With Language
- Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words
- Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme
- Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary
- Poetry Is Perfect for Fluency Practice
- Poetry Boosts Comprehension
- Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic
- Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing

Source: Walther, M. P., & Fuhler, C. J. (2010). *Teaching struggling readers with poetry: Engaging poems with mini-lessons that target and teach phonics, sight words, fluency, & more—laying the foundation for reading success.* Scholastic.

Look! Look!

by Jack Prelutsky



Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me,

a book all filled

with poetry,

a book that I

can read

and read.

A book!

Exactly

what I need.

Look! Look!

A book

to open wide,

and marvel

at the words inside,

to sit

and savor

quietly.

Look! Look!

A book!

A book for me.

Why Use Poetry to Teach Struggling Readers?

A Few of My Favorite Song Picture Books

Sing (Raposo & Lichtenheld, 2013)

Take Me Home Country Road (Denver, 2005)

There Was an Old Monster (Emberley, 2009)

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Look! Look!" by Jack Prelutsky

Create a Poetry Binder

Enlarge a copy of "Look! Look!" and chorally read and reread for enjoyment. This poem would be an ideal opening poem for students' "Poetry Binders."

How Shall We Read Our Poems Today?

1. Teacher Read Aloud
2. Fill-in-the-Blanks
3. Tag-Team Reading
4. Choral Reading
5. Turn Up the Volume or Turn Down the Volume
6. Speed It Up! or Slow It Down!
7. Clap the Beat
8. Readers Theater
9. As a Round
10. Sing to a Favorite Tune like "Twinkle, Twinkle"

Adapted from "10 Ways to Read a Poem" by Mary Bigler, Judson Literacy Conference 2010

More Teaching Ideas for "Look! Look!"

Once you've read "Look! Look!" for enjoyment, revisit the poem with students to highlight one or more of the following literacy skills:

Phonics: /-ook/ word family

Fluency: Using punctuation to make meaning

Vocabulary: Vivid verbs—marvel, savor

Writing Conventions: Exclamation mark (See Mini-Lesson in *M-by-M Writing*, p. 90)

Exclamation Mark (Rosenthal, 2013)

Hurry! Hurry! (Bunting, 2007)

If You Were an Exclamation Point (Lyons, 2009)

Good Books, Good Times!

Good books.

Good times.

Good stories.

Good rhymes.

Good beginnings.

Good ends.

Good people.

Good friends.

Good fiction.

Good facts.

Good adventures.

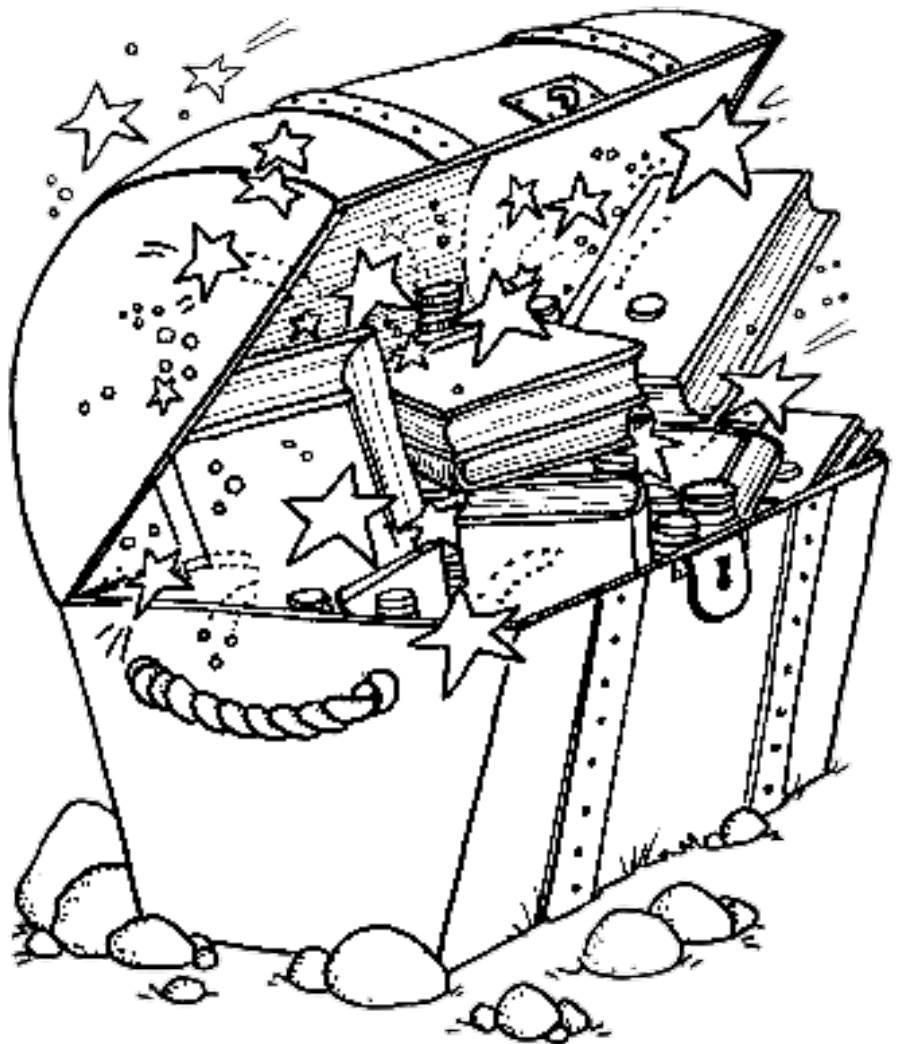
Good acts.

Good stories.

Good rhymes.

Good books

Good times.



Lee Bennett Hopkins

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times*. (H. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins. (p. 17)

Poetry Is Short!

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Good Books, Good Times!" by Lee Bennett Hopkins

Celebrate Books!

Share this poem at the beginning of the year to spark a conversation about students' favorite books. Return to "Good Books, Good Times!" again at the end of the year to ask students to make a class list of treasured tales.

Picture Book Pairings—Books That Feature Reluctant Readers

Miss Brooks Loves Books! (and I don't) (Bottner, 2010)

Miss Malarkey Leaves No Reader Behind (Finchler & O'Malley, 2006)

Read All About It! (Bush & Bush, 2008)

Books to the Ceiling

Books to the ceiling, books to the sky.

My piles of books are a mile high.

How I love them!

How I need them!

I'll have a long beard by the time I read them.

Arnold Lobel

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (Ed.). (1990). *Good books, good times*. (H. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins. (p. 29)

Poetry Plays With Language

Rhyming Words—*Roses Are Red Poems* (See M-by-M Writing p. 114)

Adjectives—"What I Told Mrs. Morris When She Asked How I Was Feeling Today" *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies* (Nesbitt, 2007, p. 24)

Prefixes—"The Zoo Was in An Uproar" *Something Big Has Been Here* (Prelutsky, 1990, pp. 62-63)

Lemonade and Other Poems Squeezed from a Single Word (Raczka, 2011)

Haiku—

Won Ton (Wardlaw, 2011)

Guyku: A Year of Haiku for Boys (Raczka, 2010)

The Year Comes Round: Haiku through the Seasons (Farrar, 2012)

Hi, Koo! A Year of Seasons (Muth, 2014)

Poetry Plays With Language

Phonemic Awareness Skills to Highlight Through Poetry

Before displaying poem in a pocket chart, on the overhead, or on an interactive whiteboard, begin by reading the poem aloud to strengthen students' skills in the following areas.

Phonological Awareness (oral/listening activities—no print)

- Word Awareness/Concept of Word—Give students counters and a cup or ask them to use their fingers or take a sideways step. Read aloud a sentence from the poem. Invite students drop a counter in the cup, put up a finger up, or take a sideways step each time they hear a word.
- Concept of Syllables—Select a multisyllabic word from the poem. Clearly say the word and invite students to clap once for each syllable they hear.
- Concept of Phonemes—Say a word from poem, invite students to chop the word by making a chopping motion for each sound they hear.

Phonemic Awareness (oral/listening activities—no print)

- Rhyme recognition—Ask students to identify the rhyming words they hear as you read the poem.
- Phoneme matching—(Alliteration) Read an alliterative sentence and say, "Listen to this sentence and tell me what sound you hear at the beginning of most words."
- Phoneme blending—Select a word from the poem to segment. Say each phoneme separately then say, "Listen to these sounds and tell me what word they make."
- Phoneme segmentation—Select a word from the poem. Say, "Listen to this word, tell me how many sounds you hear or tell me the sounds you hear in the word _____."
- Phoneme manipulation—Play with the words! Substitute, add, or delete sounds to create new words.

For additional phonemic awareness teaching ideas see *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010), p. 44.

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for "Brother" by Mary Ann Hoberman

Fluency Fun with Tongue Twisting Poems—Challenge students to reread this tongue-twisting poem faster and faster.

Picture Book Pairing

Once Upon a Baby Brother (Sullivan, 2010)

Brother

I had a little brother
And I brought him to my mother
And I said I want another
Little brother for a change.

But she said don't be a bother
So I took him to my father
And I said this little bother
Of a brother's very strange.

But he said one little brother
Is exactly like another
And every little brother
Misbehaves a bit, he said.

So I took my little bother
From my mother and my father
And I put the little bother
Of a brother back to bed.

Mary Ann Hoberman



Source: Paschen, E. (2005). *Poetry speaks to children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks. (p. 95)

For teaching ideas see p. 41 of *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

**What I Told Mrs. Morris
When She Asked How I Was Feeling Today**

“Grumbly, grouchy,
groggy, grumpy,
sleepy, slouchy,
fussy, frumpy,
whiny, weary,
cranky, crazy,
dingy, dreary,
loopy, lazy,
dizzy, drowsy,
crusty, crummy,
loony, lousy,
scruffy, scummy,
bleary, batty,
shaky, shabby,
rusty, ratty,
cruddy, crabby.
That describes it,
Mrs. Morris.
Thank you for the
new thesaurus.”

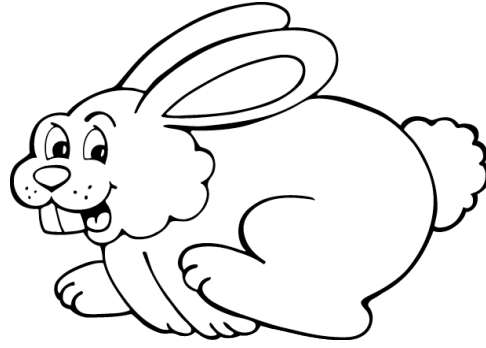


Ken Nesbitt

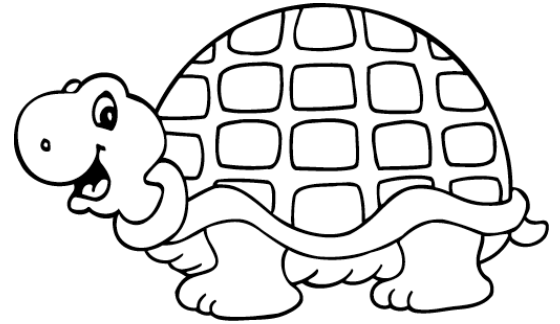
Source: Nesbitt, K. (2007). *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (p. 24)
Learning Target: Adjectives

The Zoo Was in an Uproar

The zoo was in an uproar,
the rabbits stamped their feet,
the pigs expressed displeasure,
the gnus refused to eat,
“Disgraceful!” gabbed the gibbons,
“Barbaric!” boomed the bear,
“Distressing!” wept a leopard,
the ferrets fumed, **“Unfair!”**



“Repellant!” puled a puma,
“BIZZARE!” a badger bawled,
the donkeys were disgusted,
the pandas were appalled,
the camels ran for cover,
the turtle fled her shell,
the seals stayed underwater,
a walrus felt unwell.



“How wicked!” whined a weasel,
“UNCALLED FOR!” cawed the crows,
the tigers lost their tempers,
a polecat held his nose,
“Unseemly!” screamed the eagles,
the lions roared with wrath,
that day the hippopotamus
forgot to take a bath.



Jack Prelutsky

Poetry Is Comprised of Well-Chosen Words

A Sampling of Teaching Ideas for “Cinderella’s Double Life” by Marilyn Singer

Readers Theater—Divide the class or guided reading group into half. Make a copy of one side of the poem for each group member. Provide time for students to practice and polish their performance. If they enjoy this poem, students can perform others from the book *Mirror Mirror* (Singer, 2010).

A Poetry Challenge—Challenge students to write a poem by following Marilyn’s Singer’s lead and using the same words forward and backwards.

Singer, M. (2013). *Follow, follow*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dial.

In Singer’s sequel to the book *Mirror Mirror* she creates another collection of “reverso” poems about fairy tales.

Teaching Ideas: Poetry; Different Perspectives

Poetry Incorporates Rhythm and Rhyme

“My Sister is a Sissy” by Jack Prelutsky

Meaning Vocabulary—Synonyms

In this poem, Prelutsky uses the synonyms *afraid*, *terrified*, and *scared* to describe the way the sister feels. Build on these words by creating a word web of all the different ways writers can say *scared*. Post the web in your room for future reference. (*M-by-M Writing* p. 59)

Picture Book Pairing

Scaredy Squirrel (Watt, 2008)

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 41

Poetry Contains Rich Vocabulary

Three Read Aloud Words

Source: *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010) p. 26

Poetry Is Perfect for Fluency Practice

Cooke, L. (2013). *A little book of sloth*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Join Lucy Cooke, founder of the Sloth Appreciation Society, and visit Slothville, a sanctuary in Costa Rica for orphaned and injured sloths, to learn more about sloth’s mellow ways.

Teaching Ideas: Create a multi-genre text set using: “Slow Sloth’s Slow Song” (p. 65) of Jack Prelutsky’s book *Something Big Has Been Here* (1990) and *Let’s Look at Sloths* (Piehl, 2011); Fluency Fun Lesson (*M-by-M Reading* p. 71) (For a text set about Rocks see *M-by-M Writing* p. 152)

Cinderella's Double Life

Isn't life unfair?

Stuck in a corner,

while they're waiting for a chance

with the prince,

dancing waltz after waltz

at the ball,

I'll be shining

these shoes

till the clock strikes midnight.

Till the clock strikes midnight,

these shoes!

I'll be shining

at the ball,

dancing waltz after waltz

with the prince

while they're waiting for a

chance,

stuck in a corner.

Isn't life unfair?

Source: Singer, M. (2010). *Mirror mirror*. (J. Masse, Illus.). New York: Dutton.



My Sister Is a Sissy

My sister is a sissy,
she's afraid of dogs and cats,
a toad can give her tantrums,
and she's terrified of rats,
she screams at things with stingers,
things that buzz, and things that crawl,
just the shadow of a spider
sends my sister up the wall.

A lizard makes her shiver,
and a turtle makes her squirm,
she positively cringes
at the prospect of a worm,
she's afraid of things with feathers,
she's afraid of things with fur,
she's scared of almost everything—
how come I'm scared of her?

Jack Prelutsky



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1984). *The new kid on the block*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 138).

Slow Sloth's Slow Song

I am a sloth
a sloth am I
I live in trees
But I can't fly
I do not run
I am so slow
But I am where
I want to go.

. Jack Prelutsky



Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 65)

Twaddletalk Tuck
by Jack Prelutsky



I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk
and I talk when I run and I talk when I walk
and I talk when I hop and I talk when I creep
and I talk when I wake and I talk when I sleep
and I talk when it's wet and I talk when it's dry
and I talk when I laugh and I talk when I cry
and I talk when I jump and I talk when I land
and I talk when I sit and I talk when I stand
and I talk and I talk into anyone's ear
and I talk and I talk when there's nobody near
and I talk when I'm hoarse and my voice is a squawk
for I'm Twaddletalk Tuck and I talk and I talk.

Source: Prelutsky, J. (1990). *Something Big Has Been Here*. (J. Stevenson, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 64)

Poetry Boosts Comprehension

Can You Infer What This Poem Is About?

<p>Hungry monster, you grumble, wheeze, never seem full. You stop everywhere to graze and go off again in search of more for your keepers to shove between your greedy jaws. Do you digest when you rest?</p>	<p>Clues</p>	<p>My Schema</p>
---	---------------------	-------------------------

"Garbage Truck" by Marci Ridlon

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (1987). *Click, rumble, roar: Poems about machines*. (A. H. Audette, Illus.). New York: HarperCollins.

Other Poems for Inferring

**These poems appear on reproducible pages in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

When Riddles Come Rumbling (Dotlich, 2001)

"Cat Kisses" by Bobbi Katz**

Source: Yolen, J. & Peters, A. F. (2007). *Here's a little poem: A very first book of poetry*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick. (p. 32)

"Crayons: A Rainbow Poem" by Jane Yolen**

Source: Paschen, E. (Ed.). (2005). *Poetry speaks to children*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc. (p. 23)

"Groundhog" by Maria Fleming**

Source: Hopkins, L. B. (2005). *Days to celebrate: A full year of poetry, people, holidays, history, fascinating facts, and more*. (S. Alcorn, Illus.). New York: Greenwillow. (p. 19)

Poetry Creates Interest in a Topic

Lewis, J. P. (2013). *Face bug*. Honesdale, PA: Wordsong.

Welcome to the Face Bug Museum with close-up photographs and poems about 14 different bugs. Ends with "And Now a Word from our Bugs" that tells readers, in first person point-of-view, where each bug lives, how it grows, what it eats, and what eats it.

Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other science-related poetry titles see Poetry p. 107)

Singer, M. (2011). *Caterpillars*. Waynesville, NC: Earlylight.

In this poetic nonfiction book, Singer begins with a poem, then continues to use each line of the poem on a separate page to describe the lives and life cycles of caterpillars. In addition, she uses photographs, labels, and captions to enhance the information found in the running text.

Teaching Ideas: Science—Insects; Poetry; Informational Text (For other caterpillar poems see Poetry p. 94)

Poetry Sparks Enthusiasm for Writing

Teach Students to Write Free Verse and List Poems

Sources: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* (Walther & Phillips, 2009)
Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Bober, N. S. (2013). *Papa is a poet: A story about Robert Frost* (R. Gibbon, Illus.). New York: Holt.

While waiting in Grand Central Terminal in New York City, Lesley Frost, the eldest Frost child, reminisces about her family's life on Derry Farm. With snippets of Frost's poems sprinkled throughout the text, readers get a sense of who Robert Frost was and where he got the ideas for many of his poems.

Teaching Ideas: Writing Genres—Poetry; Biography—Told from the point of view of his daughter

Immerse Your Students in Poetry: Notice Poetic Devices

Alliteration

Mentor Texts:

A My Name is Alice (Bayer, 1984)

"Batty" found in *Laugh-eteria* (Florian, 1999)

Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke (Edwards, 1995)

Onomatopoeia

Mentor Texts:

Poems Go Clang (Gliori, 1997) *Out of print

Clang! Clang! Beep! Beep! Listen to the City (Burleigh, 2009) Picture book written with rhyming couplets

"Clatter" found in *Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry* p. 73

Rhythm—Repetition of Words, Phrases, or Lines

Mentor Text:

I Love Our Earth (Martin & Sampson, 2006)

Shape—Concrete Poems

Mentor Text:

Come to My Party and Other Shape Poems (Roemer, 2004)

Rhyme

Mentor Text:

Billy & Milly: Short & Silly (Feldman, 2009)

Sensory Images

Mentor Text:

The Black Book of Colors (Cottin 2006/2008)

Teacher Resource: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* pp. 139-140

Comparison

Creative Conventions

"Coprolite" found in *Can You Dig It? and Other Poems* (Weinstock, 2010)

Once I Ate a Pie (MacLachlan & MacLachlan Charest, 2006)

Teacher Resource: *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction* pp. 140-141

A Few Poetry Resources

Kids' Poems (Routman, 2000) (1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd/4th Grade)

Literature Is Back! (Fuhler & Walther, 2007)

Month-by-Month Reading Instruction for the Differentiated Classroom (Walther & Phillips, 2012)

Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction (Walther & Phillips, 2009)

Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem (Prelutsky, 2008)

Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme (Prelutsky, 2005)

Teaching Struggling Readers With Poetry (Walther & Fuhler, 2010)

Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry (Koch, 2000)

Shout! by Brod Bagert

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.

Clap your hands! Stomp your feet!
Feel the rhythm! Feel the beat!

Chunky words all chopped in chips!
Silky sounds upon your lips.

Tell a story—happy, sad;
Silly, sorry; good or bad.

Leap a leap, hop a hop.
See the ocean in one drop.

Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.

Bagert, B. (2007). *Shout! Little Poems that Roar*. (S. Yoshikawa, Illus.). New York: Dial.

