



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2003 Volume III: Teaching Poetry in the Primary and Secondary Schools

Music and Poetry

Guide for Curriculum Unit 03.03.02
by Thomas Sullivan

This unit combines ideas from music composition with poetry learning in an effort to help students write poetry. Nursery rhymes will be used to model the concepts and to incite the class to write their own work. The students will learn the nursery rhymes and then accompany the recitation of the rhymes in at least three broad methods. The first method will be to clap the syllables of the rhyme while one part of the class recites the verse. The second will be to accompany the nursery rhyme in a more traditional way, using our voices to inflect rising and lowering sounds, or clapping at certain actions, while the verse is being recited aloud. The third concept will be to highlight whatever actions of the nursery rhyme we can by imitating the sound of that action (while the poem is being read). In each case we are not only reciting the nursery rhyme, we are performing it. The goal is that this process will help the students to write their own poems so that we can perform them in the manner described.

(Recommended for Music, grade 3.)

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