



Listening to the Rhythm and Tone of Poetry to Increase Comprehension

Curriculum Unit 11.03.06
by Laura J. Namnoum

Introduction

I teach fourth grade at Nathan Hale School in New Haven, Connecticut. My classroom is comprised of a diverse community of learners with a wide variety of academic abilities, interests, and prior knowledge. Nathan Hale is a school with students that come from a variety of backgrounds and have a diverse set of needs and skills. Inquiry based learning is a focus at my school. Students are expected to internalize their learning through exploration and questioning. They are given many opportunities to investigate information independently, with partners, or in small groups.

This unit is designed to build student comprehension of poetry by focusing on the sound of words and phrases. Students will be given the content and skills to read poetry and gain a deeper understanding so that they are able to read and write poetry independently. Students will investigate a variety of poems by focusing primarily on the sounds. They will begin by analyzing free verse poetry and note the rhythm of the poems. First they will focus on how line breaks influence the rhythm, and then they will notice how alliteration and onomatopoeias influence the sound. They will produce beats by clapping or with instruments to accompany the words. They will also be asked to reflect on the tone the author intended. Then they will note syllable structure and clap out each syllable using haikus. Finally, they will read poems with iambic meter (a soft then hard pattern of beats). They will read the poems with rhythm and will play instruments to the beat. Throughout the unit they will be expected to use their new set of skills to write poetry that mimics the style and emotion of their favorite poets. They will reflect on their poems and explain why they chose specific structure, words, and rhythm to express their ideas. They will be given the skills to read with prosody, rhythm, and voice. They will also have the skills to write meaningful poems with rhythm and tone. Students will be given the content and skills to go beyond forming a general understanding and interpret the meaning of the poem by focusing on the sounds, rhythm, and tone. Tone will act as a bridge from sound to sense. Students will read a variety of poem by an assortment of authors and reflect on the rhythm of the poems. As a result of this unit, students will have the skills to read and write the genre of poetry independently.

Objectives

Poetry should be a source of pleasure for young readers and act as a way to develop the dimension of sound in communication. Too many times, students worry that poetry is something that is hard to read. They might even think that reading poetry isn't interesting. This unit is designed to give students analytical skills and experience to help them enjoy reading poetry by making it easier for them to read and understand through rhythm. Students will be exposed to a variety of authors both old and new. They will be trained to listen to the words and the rhythm or meter the author intended. They will ask and answer questions pertaining to the author's crafts, word choices, and structure chosen. They will inquire about the poems and answer each other's questions with their own thinking. After they are well versed in the author's techniques they will practice writing some of their own poetry.

Students will have an analytical look at poetry and how words and structure are purposeful and can be experienced in a rhythmic way. Students will gain the skills needed to appreciate poetry independently throughout their life. Reading and writing will be the focus subject areas for this unit.

Standards

This unit is in accordance with the Connecticut State Standards and New Haven Standards. Students must be exposed to a variety of literature and have opportunities to respond in literal, critical, and evaluative ways. Students will listen and speak to communicate ideas clearly. Students will express, develop, and substantiate ideas through their own writing and artistic and technical presentations. This unit is designed to meet the following state standards: (reading) 1.2 Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation. 2.1 Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader. 3.1 Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modules. (writing) 3.2 Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task. 4.3 Students use standard English for composing and revising written text. This unit will also assist with Connecticut Mastery Tests standards: B1 Identify or infer the author's use of structure/organizational patterns. B3 Use stated or implied evidence from the text to draw and/or support a conclusion. C2 Select, synthesize and/or use relevant information within the text to write a personal response to the text. D1 Analyze and evaluate the author's craft including use of literary devices and textual elements. D2 Select, synthesize and/or use relevant information within the texts to extend or evaluate the texts.

Overview

Week 1

This unit will be taught over a five week period. Week one will focus on how to read a variety of free verse by Shel Silverstein. Students will focus on authors' structure while reading free verse poems that have a strong

rhythm. Introduce the idea of the author leaving the reader with a feeling or emotion. Have students describe the initial feeling they have when reading the poem. Have students note techniques the author used to get his or her mood across. Students will note repeated words, repeated phrases, word choice, or changed stanza structure. They will inquire in small groups why the author chose to write in this way. They will note words, phrases, or structure that helped accomplish the author's goal. They will give final reactions to the poems. Students will then focus attention on line breaks. Students will modify a poem's line breaks to change the meaning of the poems and will create their own found poems. They will analyze the difference in sound and rhythm when the line breaks change.

Week 2

In the second week, students will note the authors tone using the knowledge gained from week one. They will also notice specific authors' crafts used in free verse. They will read a variety of examples of poetry that include alliteration and onomatopoeia. Alliteration is a craft authors use by repeating the same sound at the beginning of a word. Onomatopoeia means words or phrases that imitate a sound. They will be asked to analyze the newly introduced techniques the author used to add rhythm. The teacher will highlight students' ideas. Students who notice a rhythm of the poem can use instruments such as maracas or drums and play the beat to the class. The class will join in by clapping the rhythm or using instruments (depending on how many instruments the teacher has). The students will notice the rhythm in the poem by creating a faster or slower, louder or softer beat. Students will then work in small groups to find favorite poems with rhythm and will play the beat they hear. The lesson will be extended by having students write their own free verse poems with rhythm using alliteration and onomatopoeia.

Week 3

During week three, students will start by listening to and reading haikus. They will make a list of their observations and analyze what makes a poem a haiku. Ask students what feeling did the author want to leave the reader with? Have students work in partners to identify the tone of the poems they are reading. Discuss as a class what the tone of the poems is. The teacher will use homemade or borrowed instruments (such as a drum) to syllabicate the poem in correspondence to the tone. For example, if the tone is serious the students can create a serious sound while syllabicate the words. Students will then work in groups to find new haikus that they can use to create a beat that corresponds with the syllables and tone. This lesson will be extended with students writing their own haikus. This activity can be repeated with cinquains if you feel that your students are struggling with counting syllables. Students must know how to syllabicate for the following lessons. Students should note that cinquains have an increasing syllable count. The first line has two syllables, the second has four syllables, the third has six, the fourth has eight, and the fifth has two syllables.

Week 4

Students will practice reading a variety of poems while paying attention to the sounds of the words in each line. They will read poems by Emily Dickinson and Jack Prelutsky. They will practice reading each line and pausing. Students will note when the lines rhyme and when they do not. It should be noted that these poems rhyme in an ABCB pattern. They will raise their voice for rhyming words and explain how rhyming adds to the sound of the poem. Students will also note the meter the poem is read with. The poems chosen follow an iambic meter. This meter is when poets write with a short syllable followed by a long syllable. These poems follow a heartbeat pattern. Students will read the poem and pat their laps softly for the weak syllable and clap for the strong syllable. They will discover (but do not need to know by name) a pattern called hymn meter in Emily Dickinson's poems. The pattern she uses is made up of four-line stanzas or quatrains in which the first

and third lines have four stresses and the second and fourth have three. They will then discover (but again do not need to know by name) an iambic trimeter in Jack Prelutsky's poems. This is a meter of poetry that uses three stressed syllables per line. Once the meter is noted, students can use instruments to accompany the beat of the poem. Students will then try to write their own couplet ABCB pattern poems. They will perform their couplet, and the class can note if the poems have an iambic meter in any of their lines.

Week 5

During the last week, students will work on editing their own poetry. They will compile an anthology of the poems they found and wrote each week. The poems written in this unit will be published and bound. Students will memorize their favorite poem and will share the poem once by reading it with rhythm and once using instruments. They will explain why they chose the beat and how it expresses the tone they intended.

Background Knowledge

Why use Poetry?

Poetry is a beautiful form of the written language with roots in oral expression, which is emphasized in this unit. When you immerse children in this genre you are immersing them in a skillfully crafted language. They learn how the authors can include a large amount of ideas with the fewest amount of words. Fountas and Pinnell wrote that there are five reasons teachers should use poetry in their class. Poetry "Enables students to appreciate the sound and imagery of language. Invites students to understand and view themselves and their world in new ways. Enriches students' lives as they discover words, sound, and rhythm in unique, creative ways. Intrigues students as it offers puzzles within puzzles. Captures the essence of meaning in the sparest of language" (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). Poetry is an invaluable tool to use with students for them to understand a variety of concepts more deeply.

Poetry is also a genre that can easily be performed. Often poets intend for their writing to be performed or read out loud. Once students are comfortable with a poem, they can perform it in front of the class. This can give them overall confidence because they are performing a published author's work, and can help to eliminate fears when performing their own writing. When a student performs something, it invites students to interpret and communicate poetic meaning using many symbol systems including art, dance, and music (Gardner 1983). It is a way to internalize written language in a way that is deeper than just reflecting.

What is Poetry?

Poetry brings together sounds and words in an original form. When read, it intrigues the reader and can evoke intense imagery and profound meaning. Poets are the most selective when it comes to choosing words. They choose words not only for their meaning, but also for their sound and length. They choose to put words together based on how they sound to form an image or idea in the reader's mind and also so that the reader can gain a deeper meaning. The best poets have mastered the art of surprise. They might include a surprise ending, or include a rhyme to surprise the reader. Quality poetry makes the reader want to read it over and over again and the length of most poems promotes re-reading and close attention. The reader might gain a deeper understanding each time the poem is experienced. Also in poetry, thoughts and emotions can be

provoked by a single word.

Poetry does not need to take a specific form. It also does not need to rhyme. Rhyme is only one technique authors use. It does not need to shape all poems. All poets try to make their poems sound in a way that will add to the meaning. Many poems are written so that sense is generated out of sound. Poets play on the way phrases or independent words sound throughout the poem. Creating sounds through words chosen help add meaning.

Rhythm of the Words

In our fast paced world, we need poetry. It helps us question, observe, and discover words through a rhythm. It forces the reader to read fast or slow, in the way the author intended. Rhythm has a direct access to the unconscious. It can hypnotize the mind and enter our bodies creating a movement. It has a power when it is read. To human beings, rhythm is a natural thing. "The rhythm of poetry is sometimes said to be based on the rhythm of work, but no one wonders then why we work rhythmically. The heartbeat—pa-thunk, pa-thunk, pa-thunk" (Hass, 1984). Rhythm is all around us, if you listen closely to the sounds surrounding you. It is something we notice at a young age. If you listen right now, you will probably hear a rhythm whether it is the crashing of the waves or the passing of the cars, it is there. Humans find comfort in rhythm. It creates an order, making us feel safe and secure. It helps us predict what will happen next, and it helps us remember what we have just experienced.

Rhythm is the ordered application of stress from one syllable to the next (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). Rhythm can help to convey specific meanings. For example, the speed of the rhythm can help the reader understand the poem. If the rhythm is fast, the poem indicates action or excitement. If the rhythm is slow, the poem indicates peacefulness, or harmony. Rhythm in a poem is similar to the beat of music. Repetition of words or patterns can also add to the rhythm. Many times, a change in rhythm alerts the reader that there is a change in action or meaning. "If you have heard enough poetry read aloud or recited, you can hear the rhythm in your head as you read" (Fountas and Pinnell, 2001). Most students should be able to hear the rhythm in their heads if the teacher reads aloud more than once.

One way that the author can create a rhythm is through accent. Accent is how we stress a word. For example the word "present" can be read two different ways depending on where the accent or stress is placed. In the sentence, "In this present time, I will present you with a gift," the word "present" is stressed differently creating a distinction between two meanings of the word. If the stress is placed on the second syllable and is read as pre **SENT** , you are referring to offering something. If the accent is placed on the first syllable and is read **PRES** ent, you are referring to the current time. We turn our volume up or down for the two syllables to create the distinction between those words.

Authors use accent to create rhythm in their poetry. Notice in the poem "The Moon was but a Chin of Gold" how Emily Dickinson uses the understanding of accent to create a rhythm in this poem. Make sure when reading that you stress the word or word part that is capital and bold.

The **MOON** was **BUT** a **CHIN** of **GOLD**
A **NIGHT** or **TWO** a **GO** ,
And **NOW** she **TURNS** her **PER** fect **FACE**
U **PON** the **WORLD** be **LOW** .

If you read carefully you will notice the rhythm she used. The first line has four stressed syllables, the second line has three stressed syllables, the third line has four stressed syllables, and the fourth line has three stressed syllables. The pattern she uses is four stressed, three stressed, four stressed, three stressed, and then the end of the stanza. Each line starts with an unstressed syllable and ends with a stressed syllable. Also between each stressed syllable is one unstressed syllable. She wrote this and many more poems in a rhythm or meter called iambic. Iambic meter is a set of words composed of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. Dickinson's poem in particular is called hymn meter because it is the meter that is used in many Christian hymns. Emily attended church regularly and used this pattern frequently in her poetry. This meter is unique because it has a four/three pattern of stresses.

An easy way to notice if a poem has an iambic meter is to clap out the rhythm of a poem. The unstressed syllables are soft, or weak, and the stressed syllables are loud, or strong. Try re-reading Dickinson's poem by clapping softly for the unstressed syllables and loudly for the stressed syllables.

Another technique Dickinson used is that she rhymes the second and fourth line. This is another technique used in hymn meter and adds to the rhythm of the poem. It helps give the reader predictability when reading the poem. The reader is expecting the same sound to appear.

Another author who uses an iambic meter is Jack Prelutsky. Prelutsky writes poetry aimed at a younger audience than Dickinson, yet he uses a similar style of meter to create rhythm. Notice the similarities and differences in Prelutsky's poem "I wish I had a Dragon."

I **WISH** I **HAD** a **DRA** gon
With **DIA** mond **STUD** ed **SCALES**
With **CLAWS** like **SILV** er **SA** bers
And **FANGS** like **SIL** ver **NAILS**

Prelutsky uses the iambic meter called iambic trimeter. This is a meter of poetry that uses three stressed syllables per line. This is also different because of the amount of unstressed syllables he uses. The first line has four unstressed syllables and the second has only two unstressed syllables. He continues this pattern throughout.

Rhythm of words is not only achieved through a strict repetition of accent or stress. It can also be achieved in a free verse format. Free verse poems do not choose one particular pattern or order. However, all poems have the possibilities of patterns even if they are not choosing a specific format. "Free verse rhythm is not a movement between pattern and absence of pattern, but between phrases based on odd and even numbers of stresses" (Hass,1984). For example, a poem can have rhythm if the pattern is three, three, four stressed syllables. Even though there is no repetition the words can still have a movement.

Rhyme and Sound Patterns

Many poems have a repeated sound. This sound helps to connect the poem together and gives pleasure to the

listener.

The first sound pattern that is most common is rhyme. Rhyme is a correspondence in terminal sounds. For example, "leaf" rhymes with "beef." The ending sounds are the same. Rhymes do not need to be spelled the same, but they need the same end sound. Readers enjoy rhymes, especially when the pattern is repeated, because it gives them a sound to expect. They find reassurance and comfort when they hear the matching rhyme. The best rhymes are those that are unexpected and surprise the reader. The reader expects a rhyme but doesn't exactly know how it will be delivered.

The second sound pattern is alliteration. Alliteration repeats consonant sounds. In the first four lines of Jack Prelutsky's "The Dance of Thirteen Skeletons" Prelutsky uses alliteration to create a sound pattern. Notice the repetition of /s/.

In a snow-enshrouded graveyard
Gripped by winter's bitter chill,
Not a single sound is stirring,
All is silent, all is still

The use of repetition also demonstrates the use of rhythm. Many times the repetition of consonants helps set the mood or tone. Similar to alliteration is consonance. Consonance is when the author repeats consonant sounds at the end of the words. These words do not rhyme but have one consonant in common at the end of the word. If you look back to the example of "The Dance of Thirteen Skeletons" by Prelutsky, you can notice consonance throughout this section of the poem. You might notice the repetition of the letter d in "enshrouded, graveyard, gripped." You might also notice the consonance of repeated ll in the words "chill, all, and still."

Another sound pattern is called assonance. Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds. The words "silent and still" are placed together in the last line of "The Dance of Thirteen Skeletons." Both words have a strong i sound.

The last feature of sound is onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound it stands for. Words such as buzz and slurp sound like what they mean. Edgar Allen Poe uses onomatopoeia in the poem "The Bells."

Hear the Sledges with the bells-
Silver Bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!

Notice how Poe emphasizes the sound of the bells by imitating the actual sound they make. The reader is able to vividly imagine the ringing when reading "The Bells."

Forms of Poetry

Poetry is a unique genre of literature for many reasons. One reason it is unique is because it can be fiction or nonfiction. Poems can focus on a character, setting, or point of view. They can focus on a theme or message. They are intended to suggest a tone or emotion. Poems can describe things in a vivid fashion, creating life. Most forms of poetry originate in the past but have been written for children to enjoy today. Some of the most common forms that both adults and children enjoy are free verse, lyric, narrative, limericks, cinquain, concrete, found, list, formula and haiku. This unit focuses on free verse and haiku. However, you can incorporate any form of poetry into this unit (especially in week one and two).

One form of poetry that is looked at in week three is haiku. Haiku is a style of poetry adapted from Japan. Haiku uses simple language. There are no rhyming or repeating words. There are also no metaphors. A haiku must have only three lines. As stated earlier, the first and third lines have five syllables and the second line has seven syllables. Because there are so few syllables, these poems explain as much as possible with few words. Most haikus are about concepts in nature.

Free verse is another form of poetry that is used in week one of this unit. Free verse gives the writer more options when writing. This form does not have to rhyme or have a regular rhythm. It does not need to have a certain amount of lines or syllables. The author chooses what sounds right to him or her. The intentions when writing this form is to choose words and sounds that help express the meaning, tone, or feeling. The author has the freedom to change the poem to their liking.

Another form of poetry that is popular in children's' poetry is formula poems. This type of poetry is used in week four. Hymn meter is a type of formula poem. It is structured poetry that forces the reader to insert words into a preestablished structure. Hymn meter is structured by accent and syllable counts. The first line must be eight syllables long, the second line is five syllables long, and the pattern repeats. Each line starts with a short syllable followed by a long syllable. Hymn meter is used in this unit during week two and is explained more thoroughly in the Background Knowledge section called Rhythm of Words. Iambic trimeter is also a formula poem looked at in this unit during week two. Jack Prelutsky writes in iambic trimeter. He writes so that each line has six syllables and every other syllable is stressed. Iambic trimeter is also explained more completely in the Background Knowledge section called Rhythm of Words.

Meaning and Emotion

Poetry communicates ideas in skillful ways. Read the first stanza of "Monotone" by Carl Sandburg and notice the meaning and emotion.

The monotone of the rain is beautiful,
And the sudden rise and slow relapse
Of a long multitudinous rain

In "Monotone" Sandburg creates a feeling of calmness. Describing rain coming down as monotone creates a peaceful feeling. There is beauty in the sound and the image you get when you think about his words. The reader gets to experience the sound of rain while reading. There is a rhythm in his words just like there is a rise and slow rhythm of the rain. Poetry can take his experience with the world and compress the meaning into just a few words. By compacting the weather he is experiencing into three short lines he intensifies the emotion and every word becomes part of the message he is sending to his audience.

Tone

Understanding the author's intention can be difficult if the reader does not understand the tone of the author. If the tone is playful, and the reader does not understand this, then the reader might misunderstand a joke. Think of the words, "you're right." The speaker can say those two words with a variety of meanings. The speaker might say them as a statement, question, or sarcastic remark. Interpreting the words depends on how they are delivered. It is much easier to infer the speakers' intentions when their words are heard orally. However, there are some clues to help the reader understand the author's intentions.

When reading poems there are ways the reader can infer the tone without hearing the poem first. The tone can come through meter (as described above), rhyme, word choice or repetition. If the meter is quick it can make a poem feel exciting or uplifting. If the poem has a slower meter the poem might have a more somber or depressing tone. The words throughout the poem play a part in the tone of the poem. Poems with strong tone have word choice that helps the reader infer the tone of the poem. The author may choose silly rhyming words that lift the poem up in a silly tone, or the rhymes might be more sophisticated creating a serious tone. If the author repeats a silly word then the reader can infer the author is being playful, but if the author repeats a somber word then the reader can infer the poem is more serious. Since poets know that the tone is important and hard to understand in so few words, many poets use these techniques to insure the reader understands correctly. The reader can easily note tone once they are trained to look for the authors' clues.

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Rhythm and Beats with Free Verse

Objective: Students will be able to hear the rhythm through a variety of poems that are free verse. Students will read poems accurately. Students will write their own free verse poetry.

Essential Questions: Why did the author repeat words or phrases in the poem? How did the author's word choice change the mood of the poem? What tone did the author want to portray? How does the placement of line breaks change the poem?

Procedure Day 1:

1. Introduce the idea of reading poetry by asking the class "Why do people write poetry?" Engage the class in a discussion about why authors choose to write in this genre. Then engage in a conversation about student past experiences with reading and writing poetry.
2. Explain that many poets create an original structure with rhythm and movement.

3. Introduce Shel Silverstein's poem titled "Falling Up." Explain to students that poetry has to be read carefully and should always be read more than once. Then read through the poem. Read through a second time and have the students read with you. Have the students read the poem a third time alone.
4. Ask students to share what they feel when reading this poem. Have students turn and talk and give evidence to prove their thinking. Praise students for their creativity and risk taking while giving evidence.
5. Introduce the idea of tone by explaining that many times the author wants to leave the reader with a particular feeling. Have students look back to the poem and try to find more evidence to support how the author could have intentionally made them feel a certain way.
6. Next students should focus on the beat. Students should notice a beat to the poem that creates a rhythm. This poem has about two beats per line. The beats are not in the exact same positioning per line. However, it still has melodic qualities.
7. Choose a student to provide the main beat for this poem. The student should clap twice during each line. Read the poem and have the whole class find the beat. Then have students brainstorm other instruments that could be used for the beat of this poem. You can use cans filled with beans to help shake the beat of the poem.
8. Then have students look at the poem's structure more closely. Have students turn to talk to partners to share what they notice in this poem. List students' observations on chart paper. Students should notice repetition of the word "up" and the phrase "up over." Have students discuss if this helps the rhythm of the poem. Ask, "Do the lines with repetition have more rhythm?"
9. Have students read the poem "Complainin' Jack" by Shel Silverstein. They should work together in partners to read the poem with rhythm. They could use homemade instruments to help them say the poem with rhythm or simply clap it out. Have them notice the repetition of the phrase "in-the-box" and word "complain" and discuss if the repetition adds to the rhythm. Some students might notice that the last stanza has a faster rhythm than the rest of the poem. If students notice this they should be complimented for their creativity. Students should perform a reading of the poem and students should notice the variety in performances.

Procedure Day 2:

1. Use the poem "Falling Up" again with students. This time they will work on line breaks in the poem. Students will alter the poem by changing the line breaks. Have students read their new poem and explain how the rhythm or feeling/ton has changed.
2. Students should look through a variety of poetry either found online or using the classroom collection of poetry books. They should try to find examples of poetry that has strong rhythm. They must write down the examples they find in their readers response journal to be able to use it later in their anthology. They should practice reading the poem with rhythm and using instruments to enhance the sound of the poem. They should then perform their poetry for the class using instruments.
3. Have students write their own free verse poem that has a strong rhythm. The poems can be finished for homework. This poem will be saved to used later in the student's anthology

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their responses to the essential questions. They will be assessed on how they read each poem and how they use the instruments to create a beat for the poem. They will also be

assessed on being able to find a poem with strong rhythm. Lastly, they will be assessed on their writing based on creativity and rhythm.

Lesson 2: Syllables as Beats

Objective: Students will be able to note the structure variety of haikus. Students will read poems accurately and expressively. Students will be able to connect a beat to the syllables of the poems. Students will be able to compose their own poetry in the same format.

Essential Questions: Why are poems structured with syllable rules? What tone do many haikus have?

Procedure Day 1:

1. Introduce Kobayashi Issa, a famous Japanese writer, who wrote many haikus. Post a variety of his poems. Read them aloud for the class to hear and then have students chorally read the poems.
2. Have students describe and list what they notice about haikus. They should start feeling more comfortable with the idea of tone. Students should share with a partner the way the author made them feel when reading the poem. The class can then discuss their thinking aloud. They should also note that most haikus offer simple explanations or describe nature.
3. The teacher can have students work on the beats they hear in the poem. The teacher should read the poem and clap the syllables. They should then read the poem and clap each syllable.
4. Make sure they note that haikus are short poems organized through syllable structure. They should note that there is a five, seven, five syllable structure per line.
5. Students will use the class library or internet to help them select their three favorite haikus. They will write these down to be placed in their anthology.
6. Students can work independently or in pairs to create music to correspond to the syllables of the poem.
7. Instruments such as maracas, drums, or xylophones can be used to make a sound for each syllable. If instruments cannot be borrowed or made, students can clap along with each syllable.
8. Depending on how complicated an instrument you choose, students can make louder, softer, higher, or lower beats to correspond to each syllable. Allow experimentation with noises and ask students why they chose to create the sound the way they did. Since the poems are so short, they should also be able to perform them with their instruments.
9. Students will write their own haikus about nature. They will brainstorm as many senses as they can about the season you are currently experiencing in a web organizer. They will then choose a few ideas to write a haiku.
10. Their haikus will be published to be put into their anthology.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their responses to the essential questions. They will be assessed on how they clap the syllables. Lastly, they will be assessed on their poetry writing.

Lesson 2: Soft and Hard Beats

Objective: Students will be able to hear the rhythm of a variety of poems. Students will read poems accurately. Students will be able to compose their own poetry in a similar format.

Essential Questions: What makes a poem have movement or rhythm? How do you know a poem has movement or rhythm when you read it? How does an author create tone?

Procedure Day 1:

1. Introduce Emily Dickinson a unique poet. Give a brief overview of Dickinson's life. Explain things about her such as she was a normal young girl and would like to go to parties and spend time with friends. Even though she socialized she was thought of as a shy girl. She was so shy that she wouldn't attend a school without her brother. When she became a teen she began spending more time alone and started writing poetry. She has said that literature can "take us lands away."
2. Post "The Moon was but a Chin of Gold" by Dickinson. Read the poem three times as explained above.
3. Students should be able to reflect on the tone of this poem without talking to peers. Have students write down the tone of the poem and provide evidence in their reading response journals.
4. Have students describe what they notice that is different about this poem. They should notice the pattern of four lines then a stanza break and an ABCB rhyming pattern.
5. Once everyone has gotten the feeling for the rhythm of the poem, explain to the class that Dickinson used a specific style of writing that helps readers know how to read her poems. Explain that this rhythm is similar to the rhythm in many hymns. Play the first verse of "Amazing Grace" (you may need to obtain permission to play this song because it is a church hymn). Have students compare and contrast the sounds of "Amazing Grace" and "The Moon was but a Chin of Gold." Students should note that both song and poem have the same rhythm. Students can sing "The Moon was but a Chin of Gold" to the same rhythm as "Amazing Grace."
6. Ask a volunteer to try to clap the beat along with the song. The student will most likely clap out the loud beats. Help direct their rhythm so that it matches with the meter.
7. Have students notice that there are soft and hard sounds. Show the students the rhythm of the first line by clapping your thighs for the weak syllables and clapping your hands loudly for the strong syllables. You can underline the syllables that are strong so that students see this clearly. Have students share and discuss what they notice, then continue with the rest of the stanza. Discuss and chart what you notice about the entire stanza. Students should note the four, three, four, three stress for each line. Have students practice clapping the last two stanzas with a partner.
8. Post four examples of Dickinson's poems (Some examples are "I Started Early, Took my Dog," "It's all I have to Bring Today," "She Sweeps with many-Colored Brooms," and "The grass has so little to do with it.") Read the poems aloud with students. Have students choose which poem they like the best. They will then work with a partner and practice clapping out the beats.
9. Give them time to reflect on what they learned with their partner in a readers' response journal. They should also copy their favorite Dickinson poem to be used in their anthology.

Procedure Day 2:

1. Introduce the author Jack Prelutsky. Explain that he is one of the most frequently anthologized poets today. He has written over thirty books and anthologies aimed to entertain young readers.
2. Explain that students will use their knowledge acquired yesterday to help them read Prelutsky's poems today. Have students read, "I Wish I had a Dragon" by Prelutsky. Read the poem three times as explained above. This poem has much more voice and expression than the poems previously read. Make sure to read with a lot of voice. Have the students compare and contrast Prelutsky's style with Dickinson in their reader's response journal. They should also note the different tone.
3. Students should note that there is a different amount of syllables per line more expression. They should also notice that it is the same soft then hard syllable structure and ABCB rhyming pattern.
4. Then have students clap out the syllables together as a class. You can underline where the students clapped loudly so that they can see it clearly. Discuss what the students notice. They should notice that Prelutsky has two stanzas with eight lines each. They should notice that each line has three stressed syllables, and that every other line rhymes.
5. Provide copies of Prelutsky's books so that you have one copy for every two children. Have students search through the anthologies for poems from Jack Prelutsky that follow the soft clap hard clap pattern. If they are having trouble, then they can count the syllables and try to find a six/seven syllable pattern. Have students share their poems orally and by clapping out the soft and hard syllables in front of the class.
6. Students should also copy their favorite Prelutsky poem into their reader's response journal to be used in their anthology.

Extension: For homework, Students will then try to write their own couplet ABAC pattern poems. While sharing with the class the following day, they can note if the poems have a soft hard pattern in any of their lines.

Assessment: Students will be assessed on their responses to the essential questions. They will be assessed on their understanding of tone. They will be assessed on how they clap the syllables. Lastly, they will be assessed on their poetry writing.

References

Fountas, Irene C. and Pinnell, Gay Su. *Guiding Readers and Writers Grades 3-6 Teaching Comprehension, Genre, and Content Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

Frost, Robert, "The Imagining Ear," in *Collected Poems, Prose & Plays*. New York: Library of America, 1995.

Harrison, David L. and Holderith, Kathy. *Using the Power of Poetry to Teach Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and More*. New York: Scholastic, 2003.

Harvey, Stephanie and Goudvis, Anne. *Strategies that Work Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2007.

Harvey, Stephanie and Harvey, Daniels. *Comprehension and Collaboration Inquiry Circles in Action*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.

Hass, Robert, "Listening and Making." *Twentieth Century Pleasures*. New York: Ecco, 1984.

Longenbach, James. "The Spokenness of Poetry," in *The Resistance to Poetry*, Chicago; UCP, 2004.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2002.

Pinsky, Robert. *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide*. New York: FSG, 1998.

Peskin, Joan. "Constructing Meaning When Reading Poetry: An Expert-Novice Study." *Cognition and Instruction* 16, no 3 (1998) :235-263.

Student Resources

Giggle Poetry. 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.gigglepoetry.com/>

Lansky, Bruce. *If I Ran the School*. New York: Scholastic. 2005.

Nisbitts, Ken. "Poetry 4 Kids." 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.poetry4kids.com/>

Prelutsky, Jack. *I'm Glad I'm Me Poems About You*. New York: Scholastic. 2006.

Prelutsky, Jack. *The Dragons are Singing Tonight*. New York: Greenwillow. 1993.

Schoonmaker Bolin, Frances. *Poetry for Young People Emily Dickinson*. New York: Scholastic, 1994.

Silverstein, Shel. *Falling Up*. Brattleboro, VT: 1996.

Silverstein, Shel. *Where the sidewalk ends*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1974.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

©2019 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University

For terms of use visit <https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/terms>