



Steps Toward Writing Poetry

Curriculum Unit 91.04.05
by Pearl Mitchell

My objective for this unit is to create a smooth guide for children, as they take their steps toward writing poetry.

First, I shall introduce workable methods which may be utilized in the classroom. These methods are to motivate children to the point where they are eager and exuberant about expressing themselves poetically. They will accomplish this by writing poetry, after they have interestingly delved into the joyful task of reading poems written by a variety of poets. They will also be encouraged to research the lives of some of these poets, in order to obtain a feeling of human understanding about the writers of poetry.

It is my expectation to include works with which the students in New Haven can relate. For example, the poets mentioned in my unit will be of various ethnic backgrounds. They will have the following influences: American, African, Caribbean, Spanish.

Within my unit, I shall suggest areas of learning and concentration for the children, in order to boost their understanding of poetry. A list of vocabulary words will be added as well.

Finally, I shall incorporate a special bibliography for teachers and one for the students. Materials which may be ordered for classroom use will also be listed. They will include books of poetry, pictures or photos, drawing paper, pencil, crayons or magic markers. My students' poems will also be included.

This unit may be used for children of the elementary grades through junior high school grades and even above if desired. Teachers would use their discretion and their adaptive skills to best suit their individual needs in terms of their exact grade level and or instructional level.

The time allocated for poetry depends on schedule and preference. With my experience, I would suggest that a good portion of Fridays be used for the Writing process in general. That would include writing prose in the early morning and later writing poetry. If possible, math may be taught on Fridays as well. This schedule would actually involve Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Some teachers might prefer to teach Spelling and Math for the first hour and a half and then devote the rest of each Friday to prose and poetry. This Friday treat would be welcomed by the students. Along with the city's regular curriculum, this added feature would create for the children a nourishing dessert.

It has been my experience that young children react best if their teacher first reads to them poems of interest.

Children for example, enjoy the sunshine, the beach, they enjoy watching the birds, the sky and the airplanes which fly overhead. They love animals and they like to play. They are interested in those people who have their best interests at heart. They are small humans, but they read adults well, so they will respond warmly if adults show their natural sincere selves. For these reasons when teaching poetry, I immediately read for my students favorite poems of mine which contain subject matter which they find appealing. I then allow them to find or to select poems of their own choosing, and at this time, they obtain the chance to read such poems to themselves and to their peers. It is then that I teach areas of concentration, such as, metaphor, imagery, et cetera on a brief and simple basis.

A section of this unit will be geared towards these concentrations and it is my hope that teachers will find this unit one which brings them success in teaching poetry and in observing their students as they surprisingly write good poetry.

Children do become excited and interested when they find that they are actually able to produce and become actively involved. In the area of poetry this happens also, whether the children are taught to practice rhyming or not. I have discovered that children tend to naturally use playful sounds and rhymes to bring about appreciable poems, which are appealing to both adults and children. A favorite poem of mine, for example, "The Red Wheelbarrow,"¹ by William Carlos Williams brings about such a simple yet beautiful picture in the mind's eye of a red wheelbarrow over which the glistening rain falls. It is easy to then view in mind the white chickens standing by. For a child, there should be little difficulties with such images. This is an outdoor scenery which would certainly appeal to a child, especially since most children enjoy farm animals. The children will, therefore, be encouraged to compare things that happen in their lives, such as, dreams, encounters, imaginations or research. These tasks will be intertwined in their ideas of past, present and future, which they will place in their poetic stanzas.

At first, the students will be required to write freely. Freely, meaning that they will write whatever comes to their minds and whatever ideas flow to their pens or pencils. This method is used by me in creative writing during the prewriting stage, and I have found that it encourages the flow of ideas without inhibitions. Later, however, they will write on student selected topics.

These topics will consist of any appropriate topic which each student will be given an opportunity to select. These topics are usually placed on the chalk board for the students to use as a guide as they work. There is never a problem if a child decides to write on a topic which was never placed on the chalk board. The idea is to find a way of getting the children to write at leisure and in a contented manner. Before placing the children's ideas on the board, it is also a good idea to help the children by giving them a great deal of suggestions which will help them in their thinking. For example, the children need to be aware of the fact that they may write about any present or past experiences which they have encountered, even as a toddler or earlier if they are able to recall that far. They may write about their genuine feelings on any subject; they may write about a dream or a desire, and the like.

There are a variety of poems that are available to children. To read them aloud enables us to better hear the tone, the rhythm of the poem, and the rhyming, as well as, the best placement of words which the author selected carefully.

Letter poems, as well as lyrical poems and others, may be introduced to the children. Letter poems are poems that address someone and actually sound like letters. The lyrical poems, on the other hand, are "short in form, concentrated in its expression, subjective in its observations, personal in subject matter, and songlike in

quality.”²

Children should be exposed to as many poets as possible. It is important for the teacher to keep this in mind and to endeavor to use positive poems which will conjure up feelings of happiness and self worth. Building self esteem of all children is necessary. Poetry written by people, such as Lynn Joseph and Grace Nichols, who are both from the Caribbean, express what life is like in a tropical climate.

Lynn Joseph was born in Trinidad and now resides in the United States. She has said that she wants “to give boys and girls who aren’t familiar with the Caribbean a glimpse into another child’s world.”³ Since I too am from the Caribbean—Jamaica to be exact, I do agree that the children who read and listen to these poems will relate well to them. Children do love the sunshine and the beach.

In Joseph’s poem “Coconut Kind of Day” the persona tells of driving with Daddy in the park to find the coconut man. Once the coconut man is found, the persona buys a coconut in order to drink the fresh cool water from within. As the persona drinks the sweet water—the natural fruit juice dribbles down the chin. The eagerness to drink this water to relieve ones self from the heat of the tropics sometimes causes such a reaction.⁴

Other poems in this book *Coconut Kind of Day* tell of the Red Wonder (The sun), the Steel Drum, The Jumbi Man (A man who dresses with his body painted and with a costume resembling those in Africa who perform during a ceremony.) The Jumbi Man however joins others in the festive singing of the calypso songs. I would say that the last two poems mentioned above would certainly bring about shared knowledge of a culture and that alone would serve as a mini-trip to the island itself.

“The poet Grace Nichols was born and grew up in Guyana, West Indies, and she expresses in her poems what life is like in a tropical climate—in the Caribbean to be exact. Nichols received “the prestigious Commonwealth Poetry Prize in 1983.”⁵ For children, she writes books on subjects of their interest.

The first stanza of one of her poems, “Come on into My Tropical Garden,” tells of the laughter and the taste of fruits on the island. The second tells of the comfort of a hammock, the breeze as it caresses the trees and the people who pick flowers, such as the hibiscus and the relaxing moments at the zoo. The poem invites the reader to enter the tropical flower garden.⁶

One of my favorite poems taken from Nicholas’ poetry book *Come on into My Tropical Garden* is “Alligator” which tells of the intriguing experience received by the island children when they visit the alligator at the Carony River. They refer to the “Alligator,” as “Mama,” perhaps because she is the mother of reptiles in the river, and also because of her important figure there. The eagerness of wanting to see her is suggested when the children call out to her in a friendly manner—twice. When the alligator begins to move, however, the voices of the children are heard in the form of a shriek, as the combination of intense curiosity becomes a kind of fear. The children would laugh and shout “RUN FOR YOUR LIFE.”⁷

The illustrations done in this book by Caroline Binch are excellent and expressive in many ways. The second poem which I would like to discuss is “Granny Granny Please Comb My Hair.” This poem would appeal to most girls who are familiar with getting their hair combed by a relative, especially their grandmothers when mom is not available. Here, the loving relationship between granddaughter and grandmother is felt and made clear by the words used by the grandmother to her little granddaughter “now who’s a nice girl.”⁸ This poem deals with not just love, but how to build self esteem in children regardless of their economic situations. It is also a part of the island custom which is profitable and actually taken for granted. The third poem for discussion is the

"Cow's Complaint." This poem deals with the mistake of referring to a cow as being a lazy cow when in fact the cow supplies us with so much. The items granted us are mentioned in a fun manner to the young readers and they include of course "milk for cornflakes crispy and crunchy,"⁹ hamburgers and steaks, the help received when the grass is eaten and therefore the mowing of it is free. The poem ends by asking the reader to think again especially if the reader's shoes are made of leather. This particular poetry is written for children ages 7-11.

Wishes, Lies, And Dreams is a book which consists of poems written by elementary children in the New York City Schools. The book is presented by their teacher the well known Kenneth Koch. His book compiles real practiced methods of teaching poetry to elementary school children.

The well known Maya Angelou, an African American poet has written many books. She writes about the joy, the tenderness and the sadness of life. The poems—"Africa," "No Loser No Weeper," "Sounds Like Pearls," "Passing Time," "Grey Day," and "Alone," can be found in Angelou's book *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie*. These poems are appropriate for the elementary school grades—one through eight, and as other poems they should be discussed as a class project. The children will thereby be given the opportunity to see how images and metaphors are used in poems in order to bring life, action and movement to poetry. Angelou certainly uses a great deal of images. There are many other appropriate poems written by her for the grades mentioned; therefore, the teachers who decide to use her books would have fun selecting their own.

Langston Hughes, a famous African American poet writes candidly about his people in this country—The United States. "He selected and compiled a group of poems which are housed in his book *Selected Poems*. This he did before his death in 1967."¹⁰ He tells of his black brothers and their experiences in America, the musicians in New York, jazz and blues—it is told in lyrical poetic style with vigor. From this book, I would like to recommend for children of elementary grades through eight the following poems: "Afro-American Fragment," "Sun Song," "Aunt Sue's Storie," "My People Heaven," "In Time of Silver Rain, and Joy." Hughes' poems deal mainly with sharp images than with a great deal of metaphors.

"Rita Dove, won a Pulitzer Prize for her third collection of poems *Thomas and Beulah*."¹¹ She used rich images to capture her readers. For the middle elementary grades, I would recommend works taken from *Grace Notes* as follows: "Fifth Grade Autobiography," "Flash Cards," "Fantasy And Science Fiction," "Sisters," "Mississippi," "After Storm," "Horse and Tree." Teachers might like to select from her many works, and use some of mine, as well. "Rita Dove now teaches creative writing at the University of Virginia, and she is an African American poet."¹²

Another poetry book which I would strongly recommend for the elementary classroom and beyond is *Mike a Joyful Sound*. This book contains a collection poems written by several African American poets, namely, Gwendolyn Brooks, John Henrik Clarke, Lucille Clifton, Countee Cullen, Marie Evans, Karama Fufuka, Nikki Giovanni, Eloise Greenfield, Kali Grosvenor, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Dakari Kamau Hru, Langston Hughes, Cedric Mc Clester, Nahette Van Wright Mellace, Gordon Nelson, Abiodun Oyewole, Useni Eugene Perkins, Sonia Sanchez, and Alfred L. Woods. These poems express worthwhile messages for young and old and should be read for content and for pleasure. All the poems are illustrated by a husband and wife, namely, Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu. They both live in New York. Some of my favorite poems selected from this book are the following: "For Peace Sake," "What Color Is Black," "Dream," "My People," "Color," "The Mask," "Harriet Tubman," "Who Can Be Born Black," "A Protest Poem For Rosa Parks," "Brother," and more which should be read and enjoyed.

Another famous American poet whom I would like to mention is Shel Silverstein. He is known for his amusing poems which make people, especially little people—chuckle. In his book *A Light in the Attic*, Silverstein captures the interest of children with poems such as: “Hammock,” “How Not to Have To Dry The Dishes,” “Reflection,” and “Messy Room.” For example, in his poem “Reflection” there is a drawing at the bottom of the poem which shows a boy wearing shorts. He has a large round head which he uses to bend over as he looks into the water under him. As he does so, he begins to laugh. He then comes to the conclusion that he the boy was upside down or perhaps the boy he saw was right side up. ¹³

Silverstein’s images are made to come alive with the help of caricature drawings which children love. For example, “Headache” expressed that having a tree growing out of a caricature of a child is a worrisome thing. The bare branches are shown, and the poem suggests that the reader or viewer of such should wait until Spring. Of course by Spring the foliage would certainly take over the situation, and what of the child?

It seems fitting to share with teachers some knowledge about the poet Richard Hugo. Hugo was a well known distinguished and accomplished artist who wrote essays on poetry and on writing. He also wrote poems, which would perhaps be more suitable for children above the elementary levels, however, Hugo’s book *The Triggering Town* is the type of book which inspires teachers to write. Hugo won the Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize for *What Thou Lovest Well Remains American* and *The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir*. He once was the editor of the Yale Younger Poets Series and directed the creative writing program at the University of Montana. “Unfortunately, he died in 1982, but W. W. Norton and Co., published his collected poems under the title *Making Certain It Goes On* in 1983, and his autobiographical essays under the title *The Real West Marginal Way* in 1986.” ¹⁴ *The Triggering Town* consists of lectures and essays on poetry and on writing. It gives food for thought and one can learn much from this book about poetry and about life in general. This book is not a collection of Hugo’s poems. Hugo felt this way: “Your triggering subjects are those that ignite your need for words.” “The hard work on the first poem is responsible for the sudden ease of the second.” ¹⁵ “If you just sit around waiting for the easy ones, nothing will come.” ¹⁶ “Be conscious of the entire poem, not just a line.” ¹⁷ “Certain key words mean something to the poet they don’t mean to the reader.” ¹⁸ In real life try to be nice. It will save you a . . . of trouble and give you more time to write.” ¹⁹

Teachers who are interested in motivating children before they actually begin to write poetry will be interested in reading the book *Writing the Natural Way*. Although this book is not written by a poet, the information contained within is very useful. It was written by Gabriele Lusser Rico, Professor of English and Creative Arts at San Jose State University in California. She is also a creative writing consultant for McGraw-Hill and D. C. Heath. ²⁰ Her works expand to the application of using clustering, as well as, creative methods in the teaching of writing. Rico has found a startling and excellent response among her students when she applies such methods when teaching writing. As a result, she has been acclaimed for her success in this endeavor, the book mentioned above, Rico gives credit to Dr. Joseph Bogen who wrote an article on hemispheric specialization and creativity. Learning about the two different modes of the brain convinced her that a deliberate right-hemisphere involvement in this complex symbolic activity was needed. Rico was also introduced to *The Hidden Order of Art* in which a complex diagram resembling a road map was presented. ²¹ It was this non-linear brainstorming procedure called clustering—very much like mapping. Clustering is usually used before the actual writing of an essay occurs. It may also be used before writing a poem. Its purpose is intended for organization. It serves as an outline, but it is quick and simple. It begins with an oval shape in the center which have arrows leaving this area called the nucleus, and emerge into other oval shapes. The nucleus contains a word which is the subject to be written on. The second or third or more oval shapes would contain words of associations that come to mind during the brain storming period. A flood of words and ideas

seem to come to the brain at a time such as this, even if the thinker believed at first that he or she would and could not think of a thing to write on the given or chosen subject. Teachers who have never used this method will find it most useful in the classroom. It is a worthwhile beginning point, which will lead to expanded ideas, and which will bring pride not only to students, but to their teacher's, as well.

These ideas so far are geared to stimulate research materials which may be used in the classroom. Each teacher will obviously have private preferences, and should use them.

This flexible unit has given teaching suggestions, which should motivate students to enjoy the reading, the appreciation and the writing of poetry. The birds eye view of the books suggested are tools of motivation for teachers. Teachers may use these suggestions along with their self selected books to broaden the horizons of the children they teach.

As the poet Richard Hugo once said: "What about the student who is not good? Who will never write much? It is possible for a good teacher to get from that student one poem or one story that far exceeds whatever hopes the student had. It may be of no importance to the world of high culture, but it may be very important to the student. It is a small thing, but it is also small and wrong to forget or ignore lives that can use a single microscopic moment of personal triumph." ²²

The following are areas of concentration which ought to be taught to children in order to facilitate the reading and writing of poetry. These areas will bring about more understanding of poetry in general:

Areas of Concentration

1. Poetry

"A highly organized artistic genre (a group of works with common form) of oral or written expression that seeks to instruct, inform or entertain." ²³ It is often written in stanza form. Modern day poets sometimes dispense with the use of stanza. Poetry is used in short written or oral form to express our interests.

2. Using the Imagination

The students could be asked to use their imagination in any or every possible way to bring about poetic verses. For example, they could imagine what it would be like if they were another person, at another place, or if in fact they were a thing. They would have to use their minds to do much thinking and reasoning. This exercise would enable them to place themselves at a distance, and to consider carefully thoughts and facts of which they might never have shown the slightest interest. Such an exercise often opens up keen understanding. In order to accomplish a great deal of gratification from this exercise, the children may do free writing or they may first organize by listing their ideas or by mapping (a method of organizing) ideas. This method deals with the implementation of main idea and important details. The following example shows how mapping is used to show main ideas. By attaching extra arrows to the first word, a student may add a few details in words, and then circle those. That may be done for all the words shown, or the student may simply leave only the main ideas as a starter:

(figure available in print form)

As the students think or research depending on the assignment, they should be encouraged to ask themselves questions, such as: How would I feel? What would I do? What can I do? (Depending on the role they decided or imagined they would play.)

3. *Imagery*

Imagery deals with imagining or visualizing what you hear or read about. It deals with the expression of what you feel, but you must show it instead of merely telling about it.

In order to accomplish this, the children may be encouraged to be very observant when looking at objects on which they will write. They should learn to look carefully, think, feel and observe the object, in order to get some pertinent understanding of the person or object they are writing about. They should somehow give substance, detail and feeling in written expression. As they observe they should ask: What is it like? What does it do?

4. *Metaphors*

"An implied comparison between things." ²⁴

5. *Tone*

"The tone of a poem indicates the speaker's attitude toward his subject and toward his audience, and sometimes toward himself." ²⁵

The children will better understand this if examples are given to them on the chalk board or in conversation, as a sentence or paragraph is written or spoken. By using two or three different tones for each selected statement, the children will grasp the idea that the tone actually determines the meaning or the sense of the material at hand. The children will then learn that when they write poetry, they should use the tone they desire, in order that their reader will grasp the attitude and meaning intended.

6. *Rhyme*

"Rhyming involves the element of repetition of identical or of related sounds and it is this repetition that gives the impression of a binding of the words together." ²⁶

7. *Rhythm*

"The sense of movement attributed to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of prose or poetry or to the duration of syllables in quantitative meter." ²⁷

8. *Stanza*

"A fixed or variable grouping of lines." ²⁸

9. *Simile*

"A poetical figure of speech in which particular attributes of one thing are explicitly compared with particular attributes of another thing, usually using the words "like," "as," or "as if" to link." ²⁹

Vocabulary

Persona The speaker of a poem (usually recognized as being different from the poet).

juxtaposition *The placing of a word or phrase directly against another word or phrase without any transitional word connecting the two halves.*

imagism *Clear concrete image*

prelude *A short work meant to introduce a long one.*

The following are poems written by five of my fourth grade students this spring. The children were so happy about their accomplishments in writing in general, that a spring presentation had to be arranged. The presentation involved the reading of the children's work (stories) to their parents and to the other fourth and fifth grade classes. Along with the reading was a dance performance which exhibited the creative abilities of the children in writing, public speaking and dance. Needless to say, I was thrilled and extremely proud of my students.

The Pickle Nickle
I went down town
to buy me a gown
And made a mistake
And bought me a clown
He gave me a pickle
I gave him a nickle
He said, "Thank you pickle."
I said, "Bye bye nickle."

Tashyis Beard
Rain
On a rainy day,
it is poring and it is very boring.
It is not very great
To be in the house
On a rainy day.
Sometimes on a rainy day
it's not boring
And the rain looks like little lines
going down from the sky to the earth.
And sometimes you can go outside
for a little while and maybe the
Rainbow will come out.

Marissa Harris
The Sun
The sun is hot but it is in one spot
I play in the sun all day
I play on my bike and ride with Mike.
I like the sun because when it rains,
the sun makes the rain go away.
One thing I don't like about the sun
is that when it is snowing the sun
makes the snow go away.

Marlene Washington
Our Washing Machine
It is a funny way that
my washing machine runs.
It keeps making a funny noise.
It goes chin, chin, chin, chin,
chin, chin, until it
stops.

Deion Long
Birds
Birds in the sky can make you cry
But they can't make you die.
They sing so soft, they sound like men
It seems like one or ten whistling men.

Antuan White
The Sun
The sun comes up so bright and clear
And through the night
The moon comes up nice and clear
And dark as a black dog.
When the sun comes out so bright,
and hot and pretty it looks so good and hot.
I don't like rain, but I like
when the sun comes up and shines in my face.

The motivated children who wrote the above poems attend Katherine Brennan School in New Haven, Connecticut.

Lesson Plan #1

Objective Students will learn to identify imagery, metaphors, and similes after discussing the meaning of the poem as well as the general contents.

Procedure The teacher will read three short poems to the class. According to the show of hands which will determine which two poems the children like best, two poems will be used for this class.

The children will be told that a class discussion will take place first, after which a game will be played. The game will be called categorizing.

The discussion will begin by asking the children what they liked about the first chosen poem. They will be asked to state what the poem was about, and why they hold such an opinion. They may read a phrase which gave them a particular feeling, etcetera. A general discussion of the meaning will occur within the class.

Next the teacher will place on the chalk board or on large paper which covers the designated area for writing on the chalk board, the following:

Metaphors Imagery Similes

Finally, the children will be asked to read together (softly) the second chosen poem. After the discussion above occurs, the game of finding metaphors, imagery and similes may be played. The teacher will request a show of hands in order to determine whether anyone could find one of the categories. (It might be helpful if this was also done with the first chosen poem.) When a student finds a category, that student writes what was found under the designated category.

If the teacher cares to extend this lesson she may pass out writing paper containing the categories already typed on the paper. The children would then read another story, tell their feelings in written form, then fill in the categories.

Lesson Plan #2

Objective Children will learn to write poems about Africa, as they learn about the African heritage. They will better understand their present lives, if they learn of their roots. (The children in the New Haven Inner City Schools are predominantly of African Heritage. If the class which is being taught this lesson consists of students of other heritage, then a time should be used for such heritage to be discussed. Poems relating to such heritages would also be written.)

Procedure Without using any stereotyping, which will defeat the purpose of the lesson and cause ill feelings to develop, plan to teach one of the following: Africa, The African Contribution, African Culture, Africa Today, Patterns of Life in Africa, African Customs, African Art. For this particular lesson let us use for instance Patterns of Life as it pertains to textiles .

The teacher should show the children the beautiful pictures of the textiles worn and used in West Africa. These textiles are made with thread and are woven with brilliant colors. They are also used for clothing, (in wrapped form) covers, spatial markers, and culturally, they are used to express the accumulated wealth and knowledge of a society and the status of the person to whom they belong. ³⁰

The teacher should show the picture of the man and woman who are viewed using various methods of weaving. The children should tell of their feelings toward the information gained, and write a poem each about the Kente cloths.

Materials *The book Patterns Of Life by Peggy Stoltz Gilfoy, Published for the National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C., 1987. Writing paper, pen or pencil for each student. (Books about African History including the present lives of African Americans can be purchased at the Yale Art Gallery and at Black Print Book Store, New Haven)*

Lesson Plans #3

Objective *Children will learn to appreciate African Art and write poems about a selected African sculpture.*

Procedure *The teacher should take the children to the Yale Art Gallery in New Haven. The docent will be previously requested to show the children the West African Art Exhibit. This exhibit is a permanent collection of the gallery. It contains sculptured figures which express fertility, the pendants and jewelry of West Africa, also the stool thrones carved by the natives, the wooden door carved by them, as well as, the masks used for ceremonies. These and more represent the way of life and expresses the long lasting traditions of a people. The children will appreciate viewing the hair-styles which they too enjoy wearing today.*

After delving into the lesson, the children should be asked to write a poem about what they learned. They may use the mapping or the clustering method of organization first.

The children should be encouraged to feel proud of their heritage and the fact that they are survivors who must obtain an education in order to independently earn enough money to care for themselves and perhaps help their families.

Materials *Pens or pencils, magic markers and or crayons.*

paper (drawing)

visual memory of the actual sculptures viewed.

Notes

1. (Brooks 172)
2. (Myers 171)
3. (Josephs inner front cover)
4. (Josephs 16)
5. (Nichols back cover)

6. (Nichols 1)
7. (Nichols 3)
8. (Nichols 11)
9. (Nichols 28)
10. (Hughes cover)
11. (Dove cover)
12. (Dove 74)
13. (Silverstein 29)
14. (Hugo cover)
15. (Hugo 17)
16. (Hugo 11)
17. (Hugo 5)
18. (Hugo 5)
19. (Hugo 15)
20. (Rico cover)
21. (Rico 40)
22. (Rico 64)
23. (Myers 237)
24. (Myers 178)
25. (Myers 320)
26. (Myers 259)
27. (Myers 261)
28. (Myers 288)
29. (Myers 277)
30. (Stoltz 17)

Bibliography

Angelou, Maya. *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Diiie* . New York: Bantam Books, 1969.

Poems of wisdom and humor expressing life's experiences.

Brooks, Cleanth. *Understanding Poetry* . New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1960.

All the important aspects of poetry are explained here.

Brooks, Gwendolyn et al. *Make a Joyful Sound* . New York: Checker Board Press, 1991.

Written by several African American poets, this book is informative and enjoyable to teach from.

Dove, Rita. *Grace Notes Poems* . New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989. A collection of political, lyrical and personal poems written with vivid passion.

Gilfoy, Stoltz, Peggy. *Patterns of Life* . Washington, D.C.: National Museum of African Art 1987.

This book tells of the West African textiles and reflects the personal, societal, religious and political aspects of African life.

Hughes, Langston. *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* . New York: Vintage Classics-Vintage Books. A Division of Random House, Inc., 1987. A classical collection of poems by an African-American master of American verse.

Hugo, Richard. *The Triggering Town* . New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979. This book comes in the form of lectures and essays about poetry. It is geared toward teachers.

Hugo, Richard. *The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir* . New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979.

Poems written for adults while Hugo lived in Montana. (The poems are appropriate for upper schl.)

Rico, Lusser, Gabriele. *Writing the Natural Way* . Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., (Distributed by Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1983). This book makes writing easy and fun for all writers. The natural technique begins with clustering—a brainstorming process which places main ideas and important details in an organized fashion.

Myers, Jack. *The Longman Dictionary of Poetic Terms* . New York: Longman, 1989.

This is a dictionary which gives pertinent poetic terms—needed to fully understand poetry.

Bibliography for Children

Brooks, Gwendolyn et al. *Make a Joyful Sound* . New York, Checker Board Press, 1991.

All the important aspects of poetry are explained here.

Joseph, Lynn. *Coconut Kind of Day* . (Island Poems). New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Books, 1990.

A book for children. This book reflects the life in the Caribbean. It deals with the sounds, sights and people of Trinidad, West Indies.

Kock, Kenneth. *Wishes, Lies & Dreams* . (Teaching Children to Write Poetry). New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

A book of classical poetry written by an American poet who shows examples of the poetic works of his students.

Nichols, Grace. *Come on Into My Tropical Garden* . New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1988.

A book of poems which reflect the Caribbean life. This book has excellent drawings of animals and people and its subject matter deals with animals, children and food.

Rico, Lusser, Gabriele. *Writing the Natural Way* . Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, Inc., 1983. (Distributed by Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston). This book makes writing easy and fun for all writers both beginners and advanced. The natural technique is shown, and it begins with clustering—a brainstorming process which places main ideas and details in graphic form.

Silverstein, Shel. *A Light in the Attic* . New York: Harper & Row, 1981. A book written by a well know author who brings joy to children through his poems. The poems are humorous and they will tickle your sides.

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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

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