

Parents in the Know

Focus on Poetry

Writing Poetry

There are many different kinds of poems. We all know about poems that rhyme. But, there are many other types of poems you can write with children.

Cinquain: This five line poem has:

- 1 noun as the first line
- 2 descriptive words as the second line,
- 3 action words as the third line,
- 4 feeling words as the fourth line,
- and ends with a synonym for the first line.

Haiku: Three sentence poems about nature that include five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line, and five syllables in the last line.

Meet Jack Prelutsky

Jack Prelutsky was our first U.S. Children's Poet Laureate. He was the first children's poet to be recognized as a representative of children's poetry for our country. He has written over 40 children's poetry books and has been writing for over 30 years.

Jack encourages young poets to "READ! READ! READ! and WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!" He explains that when writing poetry you should concentrate more on what you want to say than the rhyme.

Jack has also compiled several poetry anthologies including The 20th-Century Children's Poetry Treasury. It is considered a classic collection and a "must have" by poetry fans.

Based on: "Author Spotlight: Jack Prelutsky", Kids@Random, <http://www.randomhouse.com/kids/catalog/author.pperl?authoid=24470>



Reading Poetry Aloud

Poetry is made to be performed. However, like any performance, reading poetry well takes practice. Some things to keep in mind:

1. Read over the poem silently several times.
2. Imagine the images of the poem in your head.
3. Look up any words you are unsure of.
4. Practice reading the poem aloud, listening for its rhythm.
5. Share the poem with someone else.

Based on: "How to Read Poetry Aloud", write-out-loud.com, <http://www.write-out-loud.com/how-to-read-poetry-aloud.html>



What Research Says

Children love poetry. That's a good thing! Reading poetry offers many benefits for students. It helps students develop their vocabularies, encourages an understanding of imagery, and an appreciation for words. Writing poetry also helps students become concise and colorful in their writing.

Poetry is also often especially popular with struggling readers. Why? Poems are short, often rhyme, can be predictable, and are meant to be read again and again. Therefore, poetry can be used to improve students' oral reading fluency.

Based on: Denise Johnson, "Web Watch: Poetry Workshop", <http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/webwatch/poetry/>

Focus on Poetry

Rhyming Games

Concentration: Write ten sets of words that rhyme on index cards. Turn them over, mix them up, and take turns trying to match the words that rhyme.

Rhyming Hunt: Choose an object in your house and have your child find or say something that rhymes.

Rhyming Race: See how many words you can list or say in 60 seconds that rhyme with a chosen word.

Read Aloud: Read aloud rhyming poems and have your child clap, snap, or raise his hand each time he hears a word that rhymes.

Sentences: See who can write a sentence using the most number of rhyming words.



Internet Corner

Information on the Internet is always changing. Therefore, what is here today, may be gone tomorrow. However, two great longstanding poetry websites include:

<http://www.shelsilverstein.com/indexSite.html>

Shel Silverstein is a very popular children's poet. You can learn more about his life, work, and books at his website.

Poetry4kids.com is a great resource for budding poets. It provides funny poems, games, ideas for writing poetry, and much more.

Poetry Writing Tips

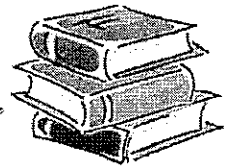
1. Write about things you know.
2. Carry a notebook with you to make notes of things you could write about, ideas you have, and words you like.
2. Read a variety of types of poetry.
3. Picture the image you are writing about in your mind.
4. List descriptive words that tell about your subject.
5. Begin writing your ideas down in phrases.
6. Put your ideas in an order that paints the picture in your mind.

Books for Early Elementary

Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme,
by Jack Prelutsky (Grades 2-4)

Where the Sidewalk Ends,
by Shel Silverstein

The Llama Who Had No Pajama,
by Mary Ann Hoberman



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Books for Upper Elementary

Pizza, Pigs, and Poetry: How to Write a Poem, by
Jack Prelutsky (Grades 4-6)

A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic
Forms, by Paul Janeczko (Grades 4-6)

Dirty Laundry Pile, Poems in Different Voices, by
Paul Janeczko (Grades 3-6)

*"To have great poets there must be great audiences."
~Walt Whitman*

Other Types of Poetry

Sense: Choose an object and write five lines about it. Each line describing one of your senses (Ex. It smells like . . .)

Couplet: Two line poems whose last two words rhyme.
(Ex. School is fun.
I am sad when the day is done.)

Acrostic: The first letter of each line makes a word vertically
(Ex. Dear little friend.
Out in the yard.
Great companion.)

Two Word Poems: Use descriptive 2 word phrases
(Ex. My Family
Late Nights
Long Walks
Big Dinners
Fun Games
Funny Jokes
Good Times)

