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Teaching

Poetry

The
Ultimate
Guide

by Brooke Cohen



**Teaching Poetry:
The Ultimate Guide**

by

Brooke Cohen

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A decorative border of black swirls and flourishes surrounds the text. It starts at the top left, goes up and right, then down and right, then down and left, and finally up and left, with various swirls and loops throughout.

Overview

Guide your students into the world of poetry using this easy-to-follow format poem process.

How to Use

1. Begin by reading Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom and Tailoring Your Approach to fit your students' needs.
2. Next, review the Format Poem Introduction for details on using the format poem process.
3. Select a format poem and copy both sides of the page: the format worksheet and the poem examples.
4. Select and copy a rubric from page 17 or 18 to accompany the format poem.
5. Distribute the format poem pages and rubric to your students.
6. Select one of the Poetry Projects and follow the instructions to complete your poetry unit.

Time

Plan one class-period for presenting and working together on each format poem. Project time requirements are listed with the instructions for each project.



About the Author

Brooke Cohen worked as a middle-school English teacher for several years at Parkway Middle School in Broward County, Florida. Teaching meant the world to her, and she still keeps in touch with some of her students from ten years ago. She feels that poetry gives children a new way to express their innermost feelings.

Brooke is happily married and has two fantastic children.

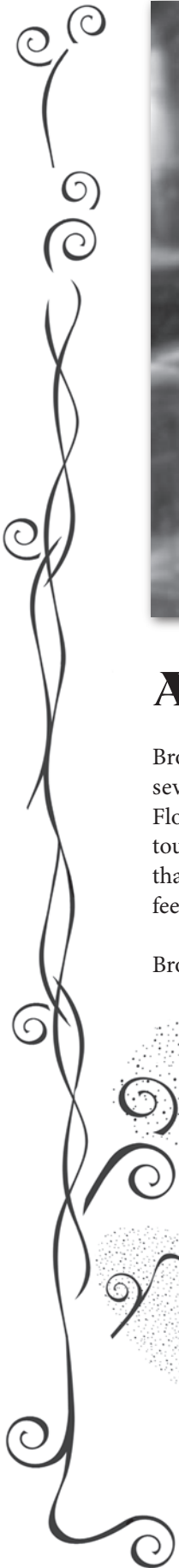


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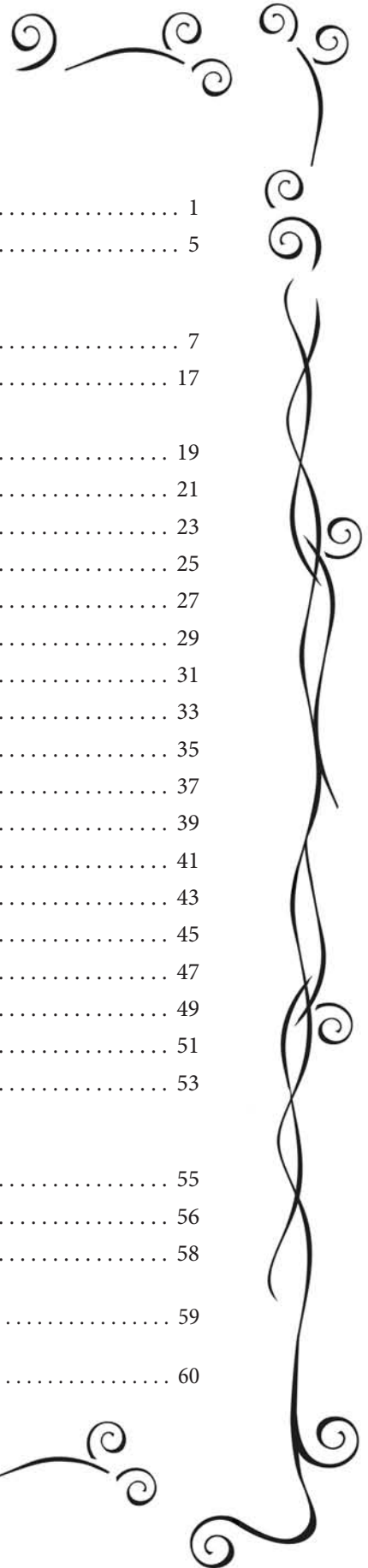
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Preparing to Teach Poetry

Teaching poetry is a very rewarding experience when done correctly. Teenagers love to write poetry and are amazed that a few well-chosen words are able to express their innermost feelings. When teenagers are afraid to write poetry, it is often because they are unsure of how to proceed—there are no clear-cut answers about what is right and what is wrong. Helping students to enjoy poetry at the start of the school year is the key. Read poems aloud in class and encourage active listening. Before beginning the lessons, get ready to teach poetry by making these simple preparations:

Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom

- Show Students What Is Expected
- Display Student Poems
- Create A Safe Environment
- Organize Student Work in Folders
- Provide Access to Essential Resources

Tailoring Your Approach

- Have Reasonable Expectations
- Provide Examples
- Be Gentle With Creativity
- Include Positive Encouragement
- Offer Alternatives
- Read Every Word
- Be Compassionate
- Preserve Student Confidentiality
- Make It Interesting

Making a Poetry-Writing Classroom

Structure the classroom to make students feel comfortable when writing poetry. Students need easy access to tools, and they need to feel safe writing about personal issues.

Show Students What Is Expected

Grading

Grading assignments is one of the most difficult tasks a teacher faces. Language Arts teachers, in particular, give so many assignments that it is hard to know which ones to grade to make the process run efficiently.

If a teacher tries to grade all student assignments, he or she is grading every day and every night. If that is acceptable, then HAVE FUN!!! Otherwise, follow these suggestions to grade papers efficiently and effectively in a short amount of time.



Divide the students' work into smaller categories:

1. **Very Important**—assignments graded with extra care
 These assignments are usually given only once each quarter and count as a large percentage of the student's overall grade. Guide students through this type of assignment. Advise students ahead of time how grades are determined and explain that students are going to be completing the assignments at home, at their own pace.
2. **Important**—assignments graded for following specific instructions
 Important assignments deserve detailed grading since students take several days to complete this type of assignment.
3. **Pass/Fail**—assignments that are marked as complete or incomplete
 These assignments are exercises meant to spark creativity and/or fill a requirement for a greater assignment and do not require review.

Rubrics

Rubrics are a key element in successful grading. A rubric provides students a clear explanation of the teacher's expectations. It also helps a teacher keep on track during the grading process. Follow the suggestions below when creating rubrics.

Point Value

Include a point value for all sections of the rubric. This gives students a goal at which to aim. Make the total point value either 20, 50, or 100 points, making the final percentage easy to calculate.

Specifics

Be as specific as possible in the rubric. The more specific the guidelines, the easier it is to determine a student's grade.

Consistency

Be as consistent as possible with rubrics. Consistency means fewer changes for future assignments.

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide				
Format Poem Rubric 1		Student name: _____		
Format assigned: _____		Date: _____		
	<i>Originality</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. 5 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 5 points	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 5 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 5 points
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. 4 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 4 points	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 4 points
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. 3 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 3 points	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 3 points
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. 2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 2 points	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 2 points	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 2 points
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points /20

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide
Format Poem Rubric 2 Student name: _____
 Format assigned: _____ Date: _____

	<i>Originality and Meaning</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. <i>10-12 points</i>	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. <i>4 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. <i>4 points</i>	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. <i>7-9 points</i>	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. <i>3 points</i>	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. <i>3 points</i>	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. <i>3-6 points</i>	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. <i>2 points</i>	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. <i>2 points</i>	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. <i>1-2 points</i>	Poem is not written in the assigned format. <i>1 point</i>	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. <i>1 point</i>	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.			<i>Total Points</i>	<i>/20</i>

Display Student Poems

Display student poems around the classroom. Include both good and not-so-good efforts. This rewards the best students and at the same time encourages others who are working hard but still struggling.

Some poems are too intimate to display; get permission before displaying any poems that could be embarrassing to the student. Since intimacy is a matter of interpretation, it is best to get permission before displaying any poem.

Create a Safe Environment

Teach students to listen to each other respectfully. Before student read their poems, remind the class to stay quiet during the reading, maintain eye contact, and applaud once the reading is finished. Reprimand students for not displaying respectful listening behavior and review proper listening skills to create a good listening environment.

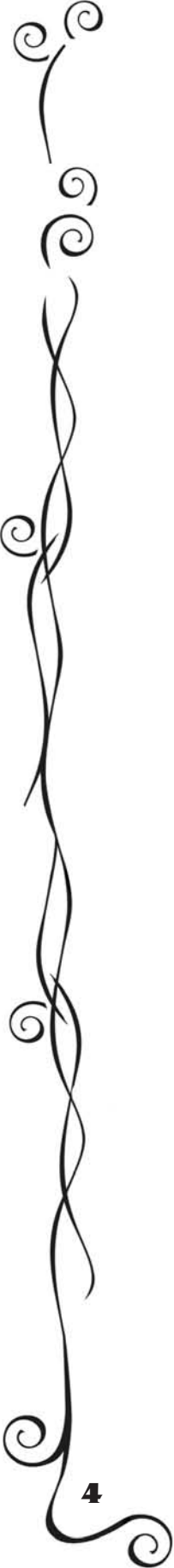
It is imperative for the teacher to demonstrate good listening skills as well. Students need to see an example of expected behavior. Find a time other than class time to grade papers or write lesson plans.

Teach students that what is said in the classroom stays in the classroom. Make it a hard-and-fast rule so students are more comfortable revealing emotions. This is especially true if they know there are consequences for any student revealing what has been shared in the classroom. It is important to emphasize emotional safety as often as possible.

Share a small amount of personal information (nothing too revealing) with the students. Even inconsequential things like a favorite food or television show make students feel at ease.

Organize Student Work in Folders

Require each student to keep a poetry folder in the classroom. Include a copy of every completed poem assignment, as well as poem rough drafts. Keep all work in progress in one pocket of the folder and all completed, graded drafts in the other pocket. Store the folders in a closet or file cabinet.



Keeping a complete record avoids excuses like “I lost it” or “I left it at home.” This is especially important when students are working on a group poem or display. In addition, writing folders keep the students’ work organized and help track progress throughout the year, making it easy for the teacher, student, and parents to see improvement. If portfolios are part of the school’s year-end requirements, poetry folders provide easy access to a student’s best work.

Provide Access to Essential Resources

Print Resources

Provide students access to both a dictionary and a thesaurus while they complete their poems. In addition, actual published compilations and poetry collections are excellent resources to have handy. Research and reading prior to and upon completing an assignment are two great reasons for providing a designated poetry bookshelf in the classroom.

Internet Resources

Computer-savvy teachers and students know that websites like Dictionary.com and its sister site Thesaurus.com. are fantastic writing aids. Consider using Encyclopedia.com when addressing historical figures as a topic for formats such as the Biographical Poem. Wondering how else the Internet can be helpful in writing poetry? Search “words that rhyme with [insert a word or word ending]” and see the web pages that result. Review all sites first for appropriate content.

Classroom Compilations

Create a poetry binder of student and teacher favorites. Assign yourself and your students the mission of locating one or more poems that speak to you personally. Find published poems that have special meaning or appeal, photocopy the poems, and place them in the binder. Share one of the poems as a class warm-up or to introduce a unit.

Tailoring Your Approach

Have Reasonable Expectations

It takes time to get ideas written down on paper. Asking students to come up with a poem in twenty minutes, or telling them to “hurry up and write,” does not encourage the creative process to flourish. In order to determine an assignment’s level of difficulty and the amount of time it takes to complete it, do it yourself beforehand.

Provide Examples

It is easier for students to understand how to write a poem if they are given a good example. Provide examples of the completed assignment and go over the examples in class, showing why each poem is a good solution for the assignment. Invite students to analyze the examples as well, stating specific reasons why the poem is good. Even though students are not experts, they begin to exercise their critical skills by analyzing poems, which aids in the creative process. If a student’s reasoning is faulty, ask the student if there is another way to look at the poem; this makes the student more receptive to other points of view, as well as more open to learning.

Be Gentle with Creativity

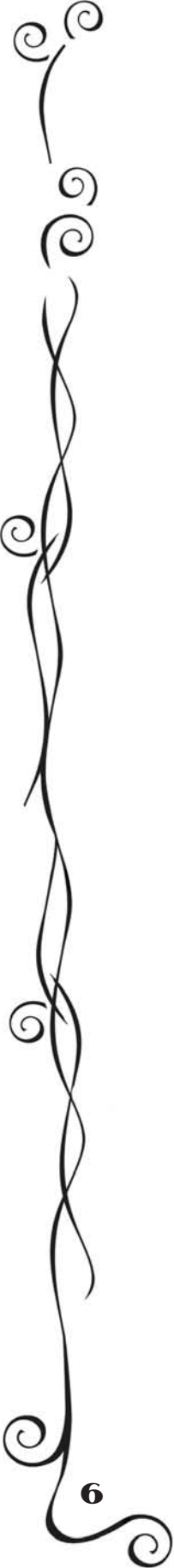
Students come from all kinds of backgrounds, and writing often brings out very personal issues. A teacher who picks apart a poem that has meaning to a student discourages further student effort instead of exciting the student about writing poetry. Even if the subject matter, style, or tone seems to be lacking, refrain from criticizing the student for any perceived lack of creativity. Student work need not match a teacher’s personal tastes. The teacher’s primary concern is that the student completes the assignment. For example, when students write a free-verse poem (one without “rules”), the grade reflects completion of the assignment, not choice of subject matter. And it is not necessary to grade every single poem; sometimes a simple word of encouragement does wonders for a student’s esteem, especially a student unsuccessful in other areas.

Encourage Student Writers

Teachers have the ability to inspire writers, build self-esteem, and encourage creativity. Unfortunately, they also have the ability to make a student feel incapable of ever writing anything worthwhile. Some students are reluctant to write poetry because they feel they have no talent. Teachers must do whatever is necessary to create a comfortable writing environment and instill in each student the confidence to write a terrific poem. Most students have latent abilities and succeed in at least one form of poetry. Introduce a format poem such as the biographical or “I am” poem, and find an honest compliment to give even the least impressive. This encourages students to write more complex poems in the future.

Offer Alternatives

Sometimes a student refuses to do an assignment because of the topic. A student comes to school with many problems, often too personal to discuss. Providing an alternative topic that is less personal, but equally difficult, lets the student complete the assignment without revealing things



too painful to share. Later, the student may feel comfortable enough to express painful feelings in a poem; if not, the student's privacy must be respected. Be especially cognizant of this when working on projects about family, as there are many family situations about which students feel sad or embarrassed. Instead of an assignment to "write a poem to your mother," instruct the class to "write a poem to someone who cares about you." This helps students find positive ways to complete the assigned poem.

Read Every Word

Avoid being in the position of the teacher who didn't bother to read the completed assignment and gave a good grade to a chili recipe! Read every word of each completed assignment. In addition to reading completed poems, spend time during class walking around and reading poems in progress; this decreases the amount of time spent grading each night. If a student has questions, discuss the issue quietly while the other students are still writing. If possible, offer a positive comment on every poem. Tell students specifically what they are doing right, not just what they're doing wrong.

Be Compassionate

Imagine what it feels like to share creative ideas with others. Is the primary emotion fear of what others might think? Embarrassment? Or hope? These are some of the things students feel when sharing their poems. Be compassionate and understanding when offering advice or suggesting ways to improve students' poems; be careful with criticism and extravagant with praise. If possible, avoid changing students' words, deleting them, or moving them around. (At times a graded poem looks like it bled to death on the page because of all the red marks.) When words are changed or deleted, when lines are moved, it makes the student feel the poem is no longer his or hers, and it invites discouragement. Remember, it is not the teacher's job to turn students into the greatest poets of all time; rather it is to get them excited about writing and interested in learning more. When a teacher succeeds in this, everything else falls into place.

Preserve Student Confidentiality

Tell students up front (and remind them often) that the poems they write in class are between them and the teacher (unless the poem indicates they are thinking about hurting themselves or someone else). Poems are never to be shown to anyone without students' permission, not even other teachers or students' parents. It's important that the teacher gain the students' trust; even more important is that the teacher never break that trust. Trust lets students reach inside to create meaningful poems.

Make It Interesting

Teach poetry at the level of the students' understanding. There are hundreds of resources from the local or school library that make learning about poetry fun. A list of such poems, divided by subject matter, begins on page 63. Each of these poems has a unique quality, making it easy for students to relate to the words and imagery. The more a student relates to a poem and understands its meaning, the more open he or she is to more complex works.

Format Poems

Introduction

Format poems are a great way to begin teaching poetry. Format poems provide students with specific rules for correctly creating poems. Having specific rules alleviates initial student resistance and eases anxiety, because students often don't realize they are writing poetry!

Tailor assignments to the skill level and interest of the students to make poetry writing an enjoyable challenge. Many students have probably written haiku, limericks, and diamantés since the third grade, so try to add a twist on the poems by selecting a specific topic or incorporating the assignment as part of an interdisciplinary unit.

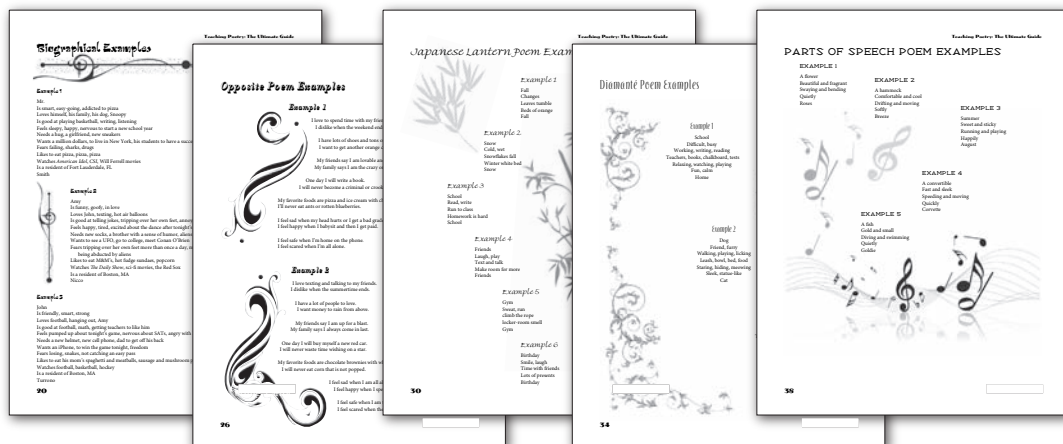
Time needed: One class period per format-poem worksheet for simple or short poems. Grant more time, as needed, for longer and more complex poems.

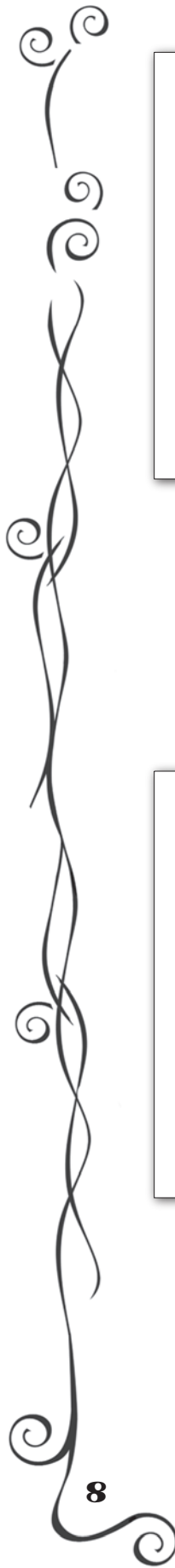
Steps to using the Format Poems

1. Display the format-poem worksheet on the board for students to see.
2. Distribute photocopies of the poem examples and worksheet.
3. Explain the format, read the examples aloud to the students, and discuss them.
4. Create one poem together as a class.
5. Brainstorm about topics for the students' poems and suggest several alternatives.
6. Display and explain the rubric being used to grade the format poem.
7. Give students adequate time to write their own poems.
8. Write your own format poem and share it with the class.
9. Ask students to volunteer to share their poems (with respect to student privacy).
10. Collect and grade the poems using the selected rubric.

Option: Have students refine their poems, and consider the format-poem worksheets as their rough drafts. Instruct students to complete a final typed version and grade it using the selected rubric.

The format poems all follow the above instructions. For additional information about a particular format, review the next nine pages. The reproducible rubrics are located on pages 17 and 18, followed by the format-poem worksheets and examples.





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Student name: _____ Date: _____

Biographical Poem Directions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested.

(First name) _____

Is _____ (Show traits that best describe you)

Loves _____ (Show people/people you love)

Is good at _____ (Show things you do well)

Feels _____ (Show things you feel)

Needs _____ (Show things you need)

Wants _____ (Show things you want)

Fears _____ (Show things you fear)

Likes to eat _____ (Show foods you like)

Watches _____ (Show TV shows/movies you like)

Is a resident of _____ (City, state where you live)

(Last name) _____

Permission to share this poem with the class? Check YES or NO. **19**

Biographical Format Poem (page 19)

Suggestions:

During the first week of class, assign the Biographical Poem as a meet-and-greet exercise. Then display the poems around the classroom to help students get to know one another.

Ask students to find similarities between themselves and other student poets in the class, and invite them to share their observations during a class discussion.

Additional Project: Ask each student to make a display using the final draft of the Biographical Poem: paste the poem on construction paper or poster board, decorate it with drawings or a collage, and add a picture of himself or herself. (Instruct students to bring in photographs or draw self-portraits as their first homework assignment.)

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

Student name: _____ Date: _____

i am POEM Directions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested below. You do not need to fill in all of the blanks, except for the first and last lines, which you complete on your own.

I am _____ (Use special characteristics that you have)

I consider _____ (Something that you are actually worried about)

I hear _____ (Use imaginary sounds)

I see _____ (Use imaginary sight)

I smell _____ (Use natural scents)

I am _____ (Repeat the first line of the poem)

I pretend _____ (Something that you actually pretend to do)

I feel _____ (A feeling that you have)

I touch _____ (Use imaginary touches)

I carry _____ (Something that makes you)

I cry _____ (Something that makes you cry out)

I am _____ (Repeat the first line of the poem)

I understand _____ (Something that you know is true)

I say _____ (Something that you believe in)

I dream _____ (Something that you dream about)

I try _____ (Something that you make an effort to do)

I hope _____ (Something that you hope for)

I am _____ (Repeat the first line of the poem)

Permission to share this poem with the class? Check YES or NO. **21**

I AM Format Poem (page 21)

Additional Instructions: Tell students that their answers need to be phrases, not single words—with the exception of the “I AM” line. Ask them to be as creative as possible.

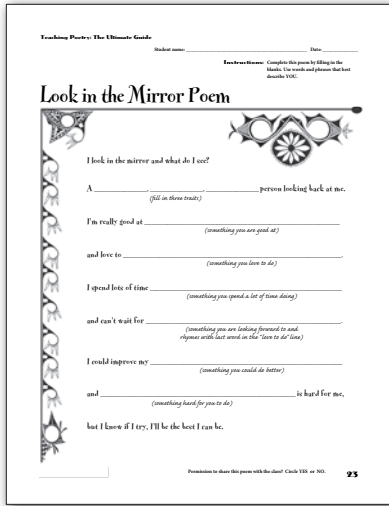
Suggestions:

Use this poem at the beginning of an autobiography unit.

Revisit this poem at a later date and instruct students to write the “I AM” poem about a specific person. For example:

- Someone for whom they are thankful (at Thanksgiving)
- A male family member or role model (for Father’s Day)
- A favorite teacher (for Teacher Appreciation Day)
- The main character from a cherished story or book

Additional Project: Instruct students to make a frame for this poem. Use poster board or construction paper, or create a frame using image-making software. Decorate the frame with words and/or pictures (from magazines or online sites) relating to the poem. Place a final draft of the poem in the frame.

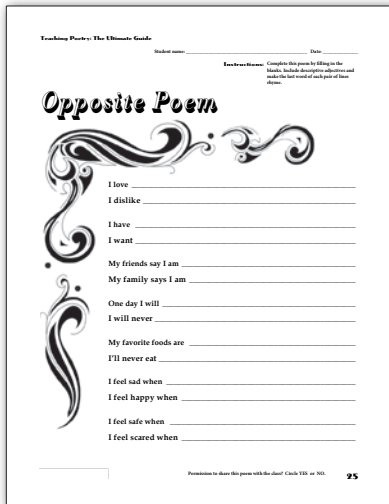


Look In the Mirror Format Poem (page 23)

Additional Instructions: Instruct students to fill in the blanks of this poem in a way that reflects them.

Suggestion: Revisit this poem later in the year and ask students to write this poem about a character from a book they are reading.

Additional Project: Ask students to create a “mirror.” Glue a piece of aluminum foil to the front of a poster board or piece of construction paper. Write the poem on the back.

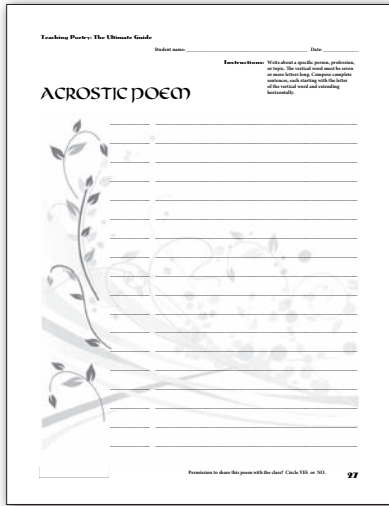
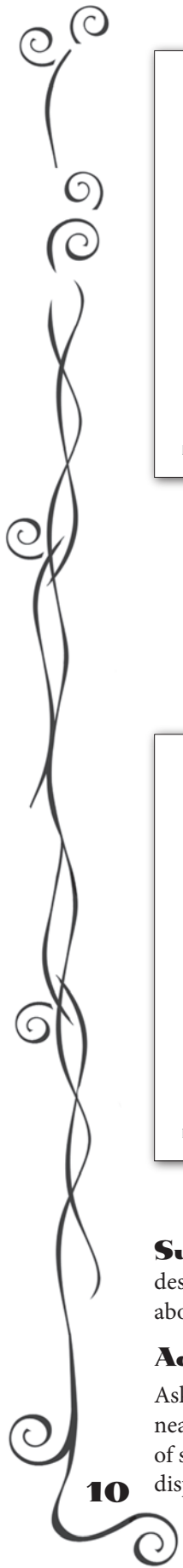


Opposite Format Poem (page 25)

Suggestion: Ask students to make each pair rhyme as an additional challenge.

Additional Project: Create a collage illustrating the opposites described in this poem. Use drawings or find pictures in magazines or on the Internet.





Acrostic Format Poem (page 27)

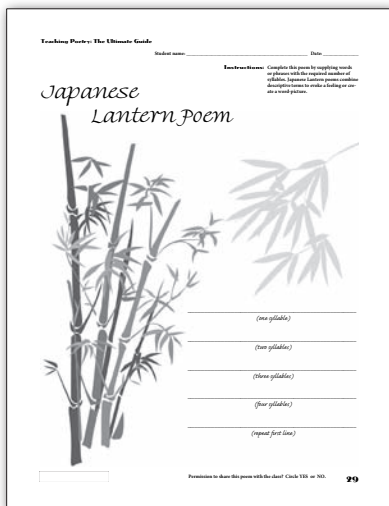
Additional Instructions: Emphasize to the students that the vertical word must be seven or more letters long, and to write complete sentences, each starting with a letter of the vertical word. Sentences extend horizontally.

Suggestion: Write about a specific person, profession, or topic. For example: best friend, desired career, current event, family member, holiday, movie character.

Additional Projects:

Ask students to create an acrostic poem as a gift for a friend or family member by writing the poem on a piece of paper, trimming, then framing it. Give extra credit if the students bring a note from the recipient verifying that the poem was received as a gift.

Have students make a collage, with the poem as a centerpiece surrounded with descriptive pictures and words found online or in magazines.



Japanese Lantern Format Poem (page 29)

Additional Supplies: Scissors, markers or colored pencils, enough string to span the room.

Additional Instructions:

1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. When everyone is done, display the lantern poems on a string hanging across the room.

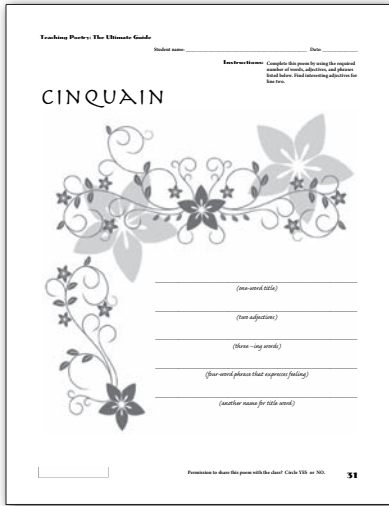
Format:

- Line 1:** one syllable
- Line 2:** two syllables
- Line 3:** three syllables
- Line 4:** four syllables
- Line 5:** same as line one

Suggestions: Use the Japanese lantern poem to introduce a lesson about different forms of description. Introduce an interdisciplinary unit about seasons with a Japanese lantern poem, as many are about nature.

Additional Project:

Ask the students to write the final draft of this poem on paper cut into the shape of a lantern. Cut a hole near the top of the lantern and thread a short piece of string or yarn through the hole. Stretch a long piece of string or yarn across the room and attach it close to the ceiling. Tie students' lanterns to the string as a display.



Cinquain Format Poem (page 31)

Additional Supplies: A thesaurus for each student

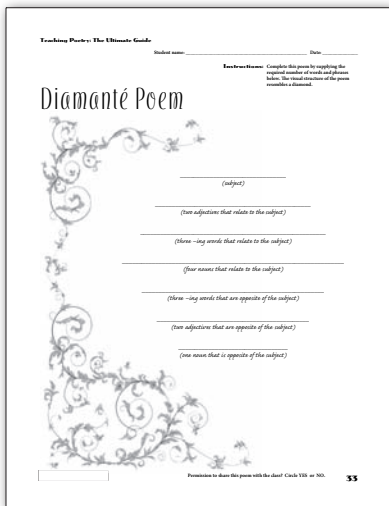
Additional Instructions: Review how to use a thesaurus to find interesting adjectives for line two.

Format:

- Line 1:** one-word title
- Line 2:** two adjectives
- Line 3:** three *-ing* words
- Line 4:** four-word phrase expressing a feeling
- Line 5:** another word for the title word

Suggestion: Use the cinquain poem when introducing adjectives.

Additional Project: Instruct students to create displays based on their poems, using pictures found in magazines or online to illustrate each poem. Place poems with similar imagery near each other, forming groups. Divide the class into groups based on the similarities of their poems. Ask each group to write a new poem as a collaborative effort.



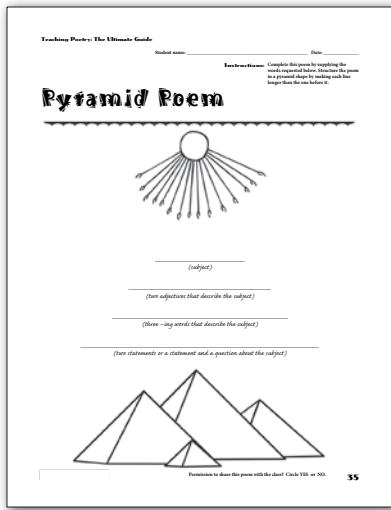
Diamanté Format Poem (page 33)

Format:

- Line 1:** the subject
- Line 2:** two adjectives relating to the subject
- Line 3:** three *-ing* words relating to the subject
- Line 4:** four nouns relating to the subject
- Line 5:** three *-ing* words that are the opposite of the subject
- Line 6:** two adjectives that are the opposite of the subject
- Line 7:** a noun that is the opposite of the subject

Suggestion: Revisit the poem at a later date and assign a specific topic: family. Start the poem with a female relative such as mother, sister, or grandmother, and end the poem with a male figure such as father, brother, or grandfather. Offer as much interpretive leeway to the students as possible, since some families have nontraditional structures.

Additional Project: Tell each student to write the final draft of his or her diamanté poem on a piece of paper cut in the shape of a diamond. Hang a long piece of string or yarn from the ceiling, letting the end reach the floor. Staple or tape the students' poems down the length of the yarn, with an inch or two separating the poems. Repeat in all four corners of the room, if necessary.



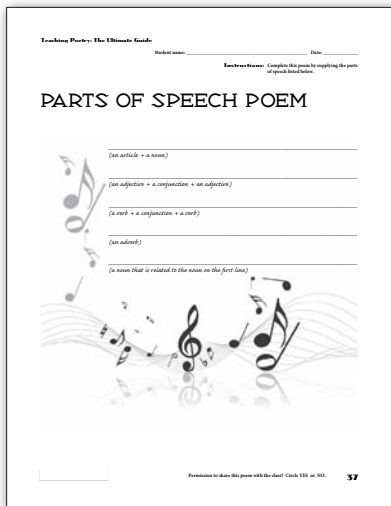
Pyramid Format Poem (page 35)

Additional Instructions: Tell students that the first line is the shortest and each subsequent line must be longer than the one before it.

Format:

- Line 1:** the subject
- Line 2:** two adjectives that describe the subject
- Line 3:** three *-ing* words that describe the subject
- Line 4:** two statements or a statement and a question about the subject

Suggestion: Display poems in a pyramid shape on one of the classroom walls.

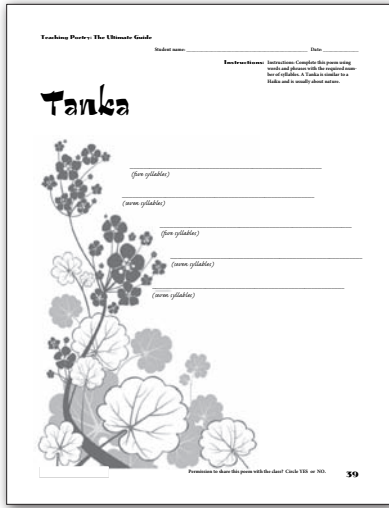


Parts of Speech Format Poem (page 37)

Format:

- Line 1:** an article plus a noun
- Line 2:** an adjective plus a conjunction plus an adjective
- Line 3:** a verb plus a conjunction plus a verb
- Line 4:** an adverb
- Line 5:** a noun related to line 1

Suggestions: Use a parts of speech poem as the introduction to a parts-of-speech unit.



Tanka Format Poem (page 39)

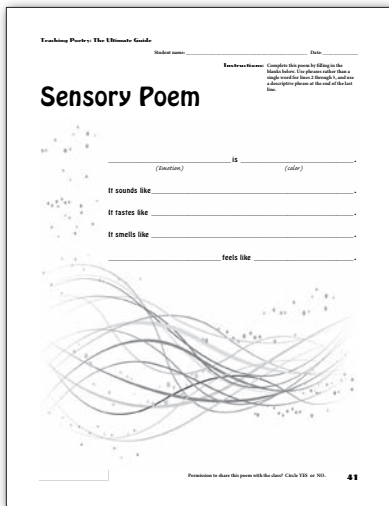
Additional Instructions:

1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. Explain to students that a Tanka is usually about nature—similar to a Haiku.

Format:

- Line 1:** five syllables
- Line 2:** seven syllables
- Line 3:** five syllables
- Line 4:** seven syllables
- Line 5:** seven syllables

Additional Project: Give the class sheets of paper in colors that represent each season (winter is blue or white; summer is yellow or orange; spring is green or yellow; fall is brown, orange, or red). Instruct students to choose the season that most closely matches their poems and write a final draft of the poem on paper of the corresponding color. Display the poems according to the season and ask students to compare and contrast different ways to describe the time of year.

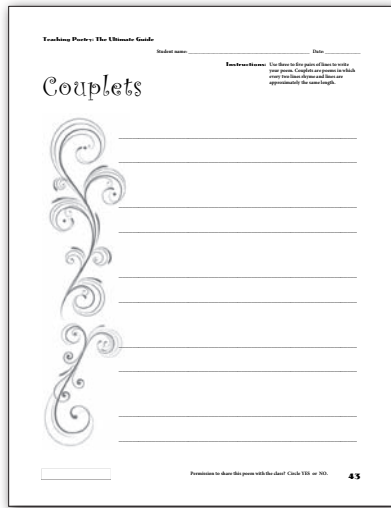
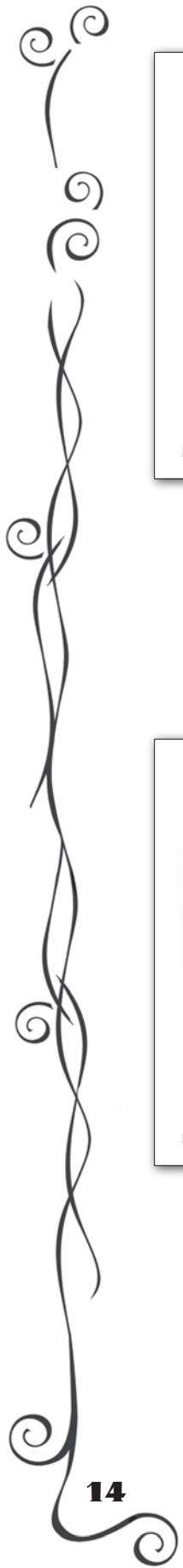


Sensory Format Poem (page 41)

Additional Instructions:

1. Brainstorm with the class about all the different emotions a person has. Do this prior to assigning the poem for writing.
2. Instruct students to write sentences rather than single words for lines 2 through 5 and to use a descriptive phrase at the end of line 6.
3. Tell students to be specific with color choices and other details (not *blue*, but *sky blue* or *turquoise* or *cobalt*).

Suggestion: Use this poem to introduce students to similes.



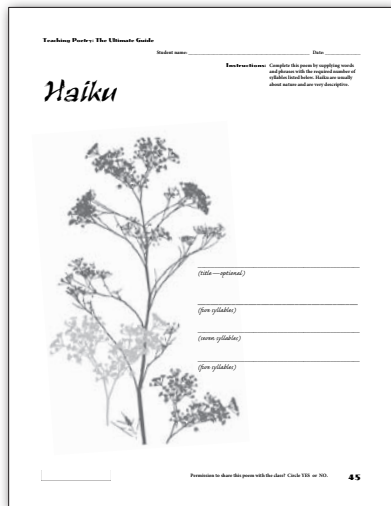
Couplet Format Poem (page 43)

Additional Instructions: Tell students to have fun with the poem. Couplets are sometimes humorous, and they are written about any topic.

Format: A couplet is a poem in which every two lines rhyme and are of approximately the same length.

Additional Project: Give the students the option of creating a booklet as the final. Instructions are below:

1. Fold a piece of paper into fourths.
2. Cut the bottom of the paper so that it opens as a booklet.
3. Staple the inside edge.
4. Write one or two lines from the poem on each page.
5. Illustrate each page (optional).



Haiku Format Poem (page 45)

Additional Instructions:

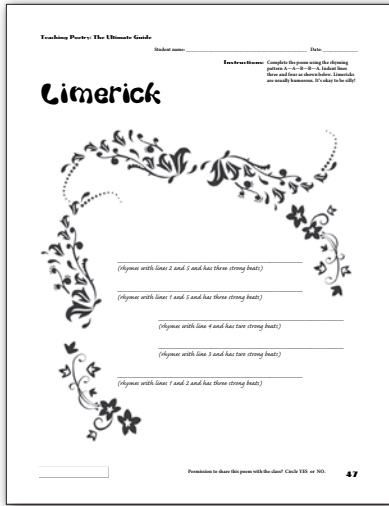
1. Review syllabication to assist in understanding of format.
2. Tell students to be as imaginative as possible. Haiku are usually about nature and are very descriptive.

Format:

Title is optional (usually consisting of a single word or short phrase)

- Line 1:** five syllables
- Line 2:** seven syllables
- Line 3:** five syllables

Suggestion: Share Sokka's Story in the episode "Tales from Ba Sing Se" from the animated television program *Avatar*. Sokka's Story is about a young man who accidentally lands in a poetry class and engages in a haiku slam with the students there. It's entertaining and is an opportunity to connect with the haiku form in a new way.



Limerick Format Poem (page 47)

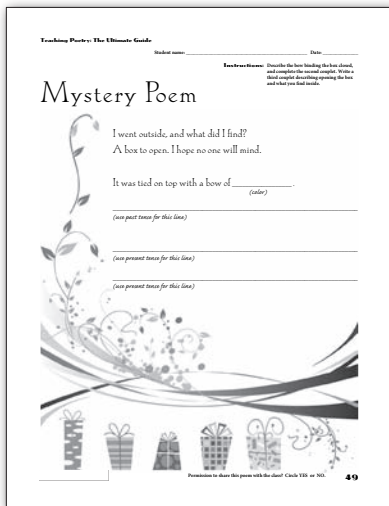
Additional Instructions: Explain to students that limericks are often humorous. It's okay for the students to have fun and be silly!

Format:

Rhyming pattern A—A—B—B—A

Indent lines three and four

- Line 1:** rhymes with lines 2 and 5 and has three strong beats (often starts with “There once was ...”)
- Line 2:** rhymes with lines 1 and 5 and has three strong beats
- Line 3:** rhymes with line 4 and has two strong beats
- Line 4:** rhymes with line 3 and has two strong beats
- Line 5:** rhymes with lines 1 and 2 and has three strong beats



Mystery Format Poem (page 49)

Additional Instructions: Tell students to close their eyes and imagine a mysterious box that is closed with a ribbon. Is the box a gift, an old cardboard box, or something in-between? Now, have them imagine opening that box. What do they find? Is it funny? Scary? Good? Bad? Tell them to explore the possibilities.

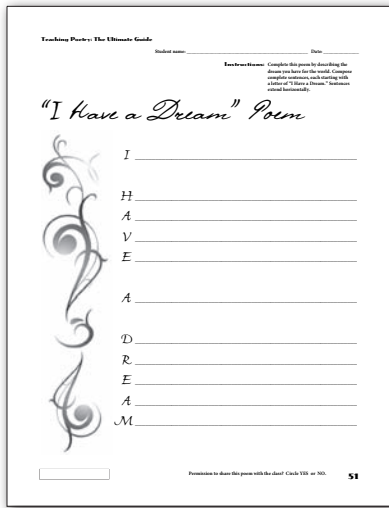
Format:

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of ...
(Complete the sentence above and then write the second line of this couplet)

(Write a third couplet, using present tense, describing what is found when the box is opened.)

Additional Project: Instruct students to bring a box from home, with something to tie it closed (string, ribbon, etc.). Ask the students to write the first two couplets on the outside of the box. On the inside of the box, have students write the third couplet and include a photo, collage, drawing, or sculpture to illustrate the poem.



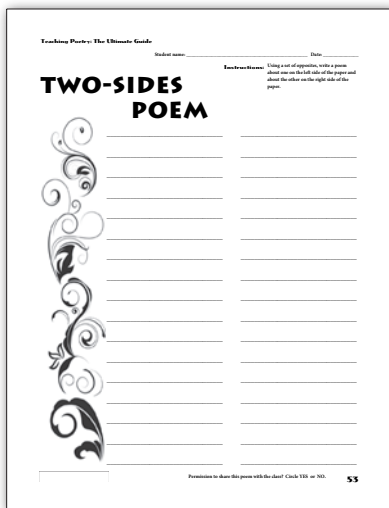
“I Have a Dream” Poem Format (page 51)

Additional Instructions: Ask students to describe the dreams they have for the world.

Suggestions:

Assign this poem at the beginning of Black History Month or when teaching the class about Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

Challenge students by requiring them to make the poem rhyme.



Two-sides Poem Format (page 53)

Additional Instructions:

1. Brainstorm with students about opposites and write them on the boards (people, things, feelings, foods, seasons, etc.).
2. Assign each student a set of opposites with which to work.

Additional Project: Ask students to write each poem on a separate piece of paper and illustrate the poems with drawings or with pictures found in magazines or on the Internet. Display the poems side by side.



Format Poem Rubric 1

Student name: _____

Format assigned: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Originality</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. 5 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 5 points	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 5 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 5 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. 4 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 4 points	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. 3 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 3 points	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 3 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. 2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 2 points	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 2 points	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 2 points	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points	/20

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

Format Poem Rubric 1

Student name: _____

Format assigned: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Originality</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. 5 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 5 points	Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 5 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 5 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. 4 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 4 points	Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. 3 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 3 points	Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 3 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. 2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 2 points	Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 2 points	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 2 points	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.				Total Points	/20

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

Format Poem Rubric 2

Student name: _____

Format assigned: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Originality and Meaning</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 10-12 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 7-9 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 3 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 3 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3-6 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 2 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 2 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 1-2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 1 point	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 1 point	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.			Total Points	/20

Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

Format Poem Rubric 2

Student name: _____

Format assigned: _____


Date: _____

	<i>Originality and Meaning</i>	<i>Format</i>	<i>Spelling/Grammar</i>	
<i>Excellent</i>	Poem shows much thought was put into word choices and originality. Ideas and emotions are very clearly communicated. 10-12 points	Poem is complete and accurately follows the assigned format. 4 points	Spelling and grammar are correct throughout. 4 points	
<i>Good</i>	Poem shows some thought was put into word choices. Ideas and emotions are clearly communicated with some room for improvement. 7-9 points	Poem is written in the assigned format with some mistakes. 3 points	Spelling and grammar are mostly correct throughout. 3 points	
<i>Fair</i>	Poem is creative but could have shown more thought. Communication is not always clear, but effort is shown. 3-6 points	Poem somewhat follows the assigned format. 2 points	Some spelling and grammar mistakes are present. 2 points	
<i>Poor</i>	Poem appears rushed and did not explore word choices. Poem is unclear. It appears little effort was made. 1-2 points	Poem is not written in the assigned format. 1 point	There are many spelling and/or grammar mistakes throughout. 1 point	
Write/Read additional comments on the back.			Total Points	/20

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the requested information.

Biographical Poem



(first name)

Is _____, _____, _____

(three traits that best describe you)

Loves _____, _____, _____

(three people/things you love)

Is good at _____, _____, _____

(three things you do well)

Feels _____, _____, _____

(three things you feel)

Needs _____, _____, _____

(three things you need)

Wants _____, _____, _____

(three things you want)

Fears _____, _____, _____

(three things you fear)

Likes to eat _____, _____, _____

(three foods you like)

Watches _____, _____, _____

(three TV shows/movies you like)

Is a resident of _____, _____, _____

(city, state where you live)

(last name)

Biographical Examples

Example 1

Mr.
 Is smart, easy-going, addicted to pizza
 Loves himself, his family, his dog, Snoopy
 Is good at playing basketball, writing, listening
 Feels sleepy, happy, nervous to start a new school year
 Needs a hug, a girlfriend, new sneakers
 Wants a million dollars, to live in New York, his students to have a successful year
 Fears failing, sharks, drugs
 Likes to eat pizza, pizza, pizza
 Watches *American Idol*, *CSI*, Will Ferrell movies
 Is a resident of Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Smith

Example 2

Amy
 Is funny, goofy, in love
 Loves John, texting, hot air balloons
 Is good at telling jokes, tripping over her own feet, annoying her big brother
 Feels happy, tired, excited about the dance after tonight's game
 Needs new socks, a brother with a sense of humor, aliens to abduct her brother
 Wants to see a UFO, go to college, meet Conan O'Brien
 Fears tripping over her own feet more than once a day, making a lame joke,
 being abducted by aliens
 Likes to eat M&M's, hot fudge sundaes, popcorn
 Watches *The Daily Show*, sci-fi movies, the Red Sox
 Is a resident of Boston, MA
 Nicco

Example 3

John
 Is friendly, smart, strong
 Loves football, hanging out, Amy
 Is good at football, math, getting teachers to like him
 Feels pumped up about tonight's game, nervous about SATs, angry with Dad
 Needs a new helmet, new cell phone, dad to get off his back
 Wants an iPhone, to win the game tonight, freedom
 Fears losing, snakes, not catching an easy pass
 Likes to eat his mom's spaghetti and meatballs, sausage and mushroom pizza, doughnuts
 Watches football, basketball, hockey
 Is a resident of Boston, MA
 Turrono

Student name: _____ Date: _____

i am POEM

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the information requested below. Use phrases to fill in all of the blanks, except for the first and last lines, on which you can use single words.



I am _____
(two special characteristics that you have)

I wonder _____
(something that you are actually curious about)

I hear _____
(an imaginary sound)

I see _____
(an imaginary sight)

I want _____
(an actual desire)

I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)

I pretend _____
(something that you actually pretend to do)

I feel _____
(a feeling that you have)

I touch _____
(an imaginary touch)

I worry _____
(something that bothers you)

I cry _____
(something that makes you very sad)

I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)

I understand _____
(something that you know is true)

I say _____
(something that you believe in)

I dream _____
(something that you dream about)

I try _____
(something that you make an effort to do)

I hope _____
(something that you hope for)

I am _____
(repeat the first line of the poem)

Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

i am POEM Examples

Example 1

I am caring and loving.
I wonder if I am reaching any of my students.
I hear my name being called even when I'm alone.
I see a bright, hopeful future for our world.
I want my students to stay away from drugs and gangs.
I am caring and loving.
I pretend that I can make a difference.
I feel sad that my students won't all graduate.
I touch the sky with my imagination.
I worry that some of my students will turn to drugs.
I cry when I get frustrated.
I am caring and loving.

I understand that you can't save everyone.
I say that you can be anything you choose to be.
I dream that I will reach all of my students.
I try to be thankful and happy every day.
I hope that I will be lucky in my life.
I am caring and loving.

Example 2

I am silly and goofy
I wonder if anyone takes me seriously
I hear my teachers saying "sit down"
I see my future on a stage
I want to be famous
I am silly and goofy

I pretend that I don't understand
I feel that people like me this way
I touch the handle of the microphone
I worry that I won't make it
I cry beneath my smile
I am silly and goofy

I understand fame is hard to reach
I say "go for it"
I dream about accepting my Emmy
I try to make you laugh
I hope that you see the person behind the smile
I am silly and goofy



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Use words and phrases that best describe YOU.

Look in the Mirror Poem



I look in the mirror and what do I see?

A _____, _____, _____ person looking back at me.
(fill in three traits)

I'm really good at _____
(something you are good at)

and love to _____
(something you love to do)

I spend lots of time _____
(something you spend a lot of time doing)

and can't wait for _____
(something you are looking forward to and rhymes with last word in the "love to do" line)

I could improve my _____
(something you could do better)

and _____ is hard for me,
(something hard for you to do)

but I know if I try, I'll be the best I can be.

Look in the Mirror Poem Examples

Example 1

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
An average, fun, kind person looking back at me.
I'm really good at swimming
and love to dance.
I spend lots of time reading
and can't wait for romance.
I could improve my math skills
and algebra is hard for me,
but I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.



Example 2

I look in the mirror and what do I see?
A serious, quiet, smart person looking back at me.
I'm really good at writing
And I love to sing.
I spend lots of time studying
And can't wait for spring.
I could improve my math skills
And talking to others is hard for me,
But I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.

Example 3

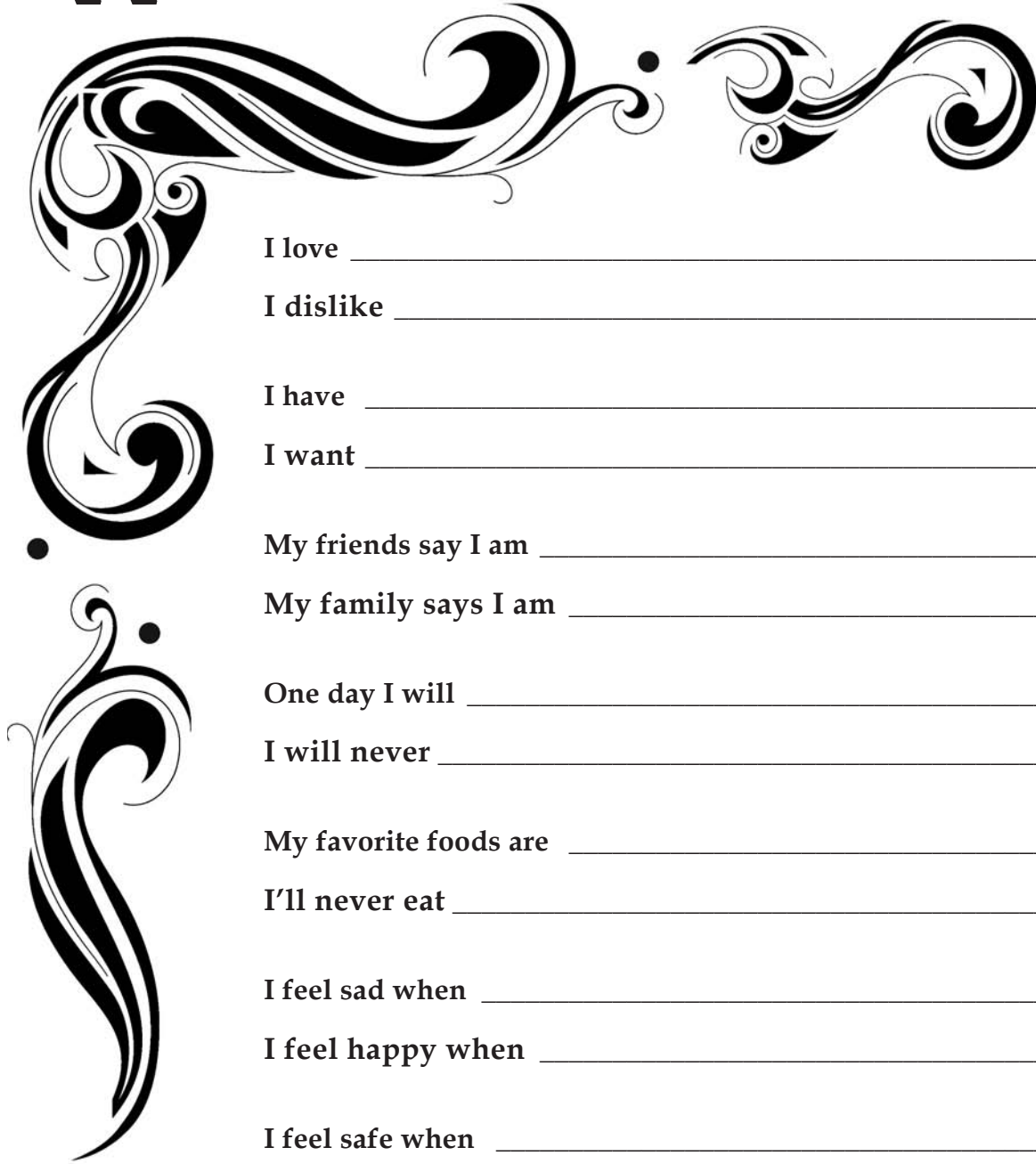
I look in the mirror and what do I see?
A funny, pretty, sweet person looking back at me.
I'm really good at listening
And I love to write.
I spend lots of time texting
And can't wait for Prom Night.
I could improve my posture
And accepting myself is hard for me,
But I know, if I try, I'll be the best I can be.



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks. Include descriptive adjectives and make the last word of each pair of lines rhyme.

Opposite Poem



I love _____

I dislike _____

I have _____

I want _____

My friends say I am _____

My family says I am _____

One day I will _____

I will never _____

My favorite foods are _____

I'll never eat _____

I feel sad when _____


I feel happy when _____

I feel safe when _____

I feel scared when _____

Opposite Poem Examples

Example 1



I love to spend time with my friends.
I dislike when the weekend ends.

I have lots of shoes and tons of hats.
I want to get another orange cat.

My friends say I am lovable and full of fun.
My family says I am the crazy one.

One day I will write a book.
I will never become a criminal or crook.

My favorite foods are pizza and ice cream with cherries.
I'll never eat ants or rotten blueberries.

I feel sad when my head hurts or I get a bad grade.
I feel happy when I babysit and then I get paid.

I feel safe when I'm home on the phone.
I feel scared when I'm all alone.

Example 2



I love texting and talking to my friends.
I dislike when the summertime ends.

I have a lot of people to love.
I want money to rain from above.

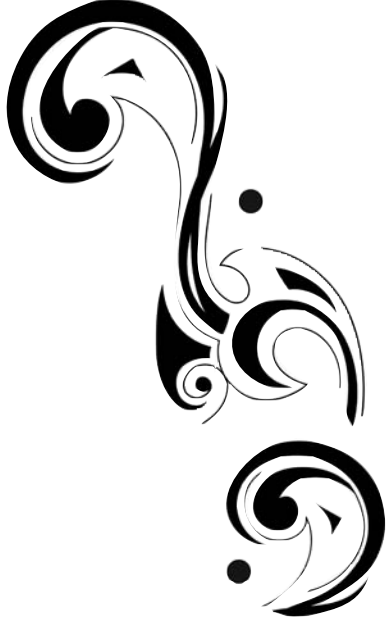
My friends say I am up for a blast.
My family says I always come in last.

One day I will buy myself a new red car.
I will never waste time wishing on a star.

My favorite foods are chocolate brownies with whipped cream on top.
I will never eat corn that is not popped.

I feel sad when I am all alone.
I feel happy when I spend hours on the phone.

I feel safe when I am tucked in my bed.
I feel scared when there is lightning overhead.



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Write about a specific person, profession, or topic. The vertical word must be seven or more letters long. Compose complete sentences, each starting with the letter of the vertical word and extending horizontally.

ACROSTIC POEM



A series of 18 horizontal lines for writing an acrostic poem. The lines are arranged in two columns of nine lines each. The left column is decorated with a vertical vine and leaves. The right column is plain.

ACROSTIC POEM EXAMPLES

A decorative illustration of a vine with leaves and small circular ornaments, winding across the page from the top left towards the bottom right. The vine is rendered in a light gray color with some darker gray accents for the leaves and ornaments.

EXAMPLE 1

Teaching is a way to change lives.
Each teacher has something special to bring to students.
All students are important and unique.
Caring is a necessity for teachers.
Help is right there when a teacher is near.
Education is the key to success.
Respect is essential in the classroom.

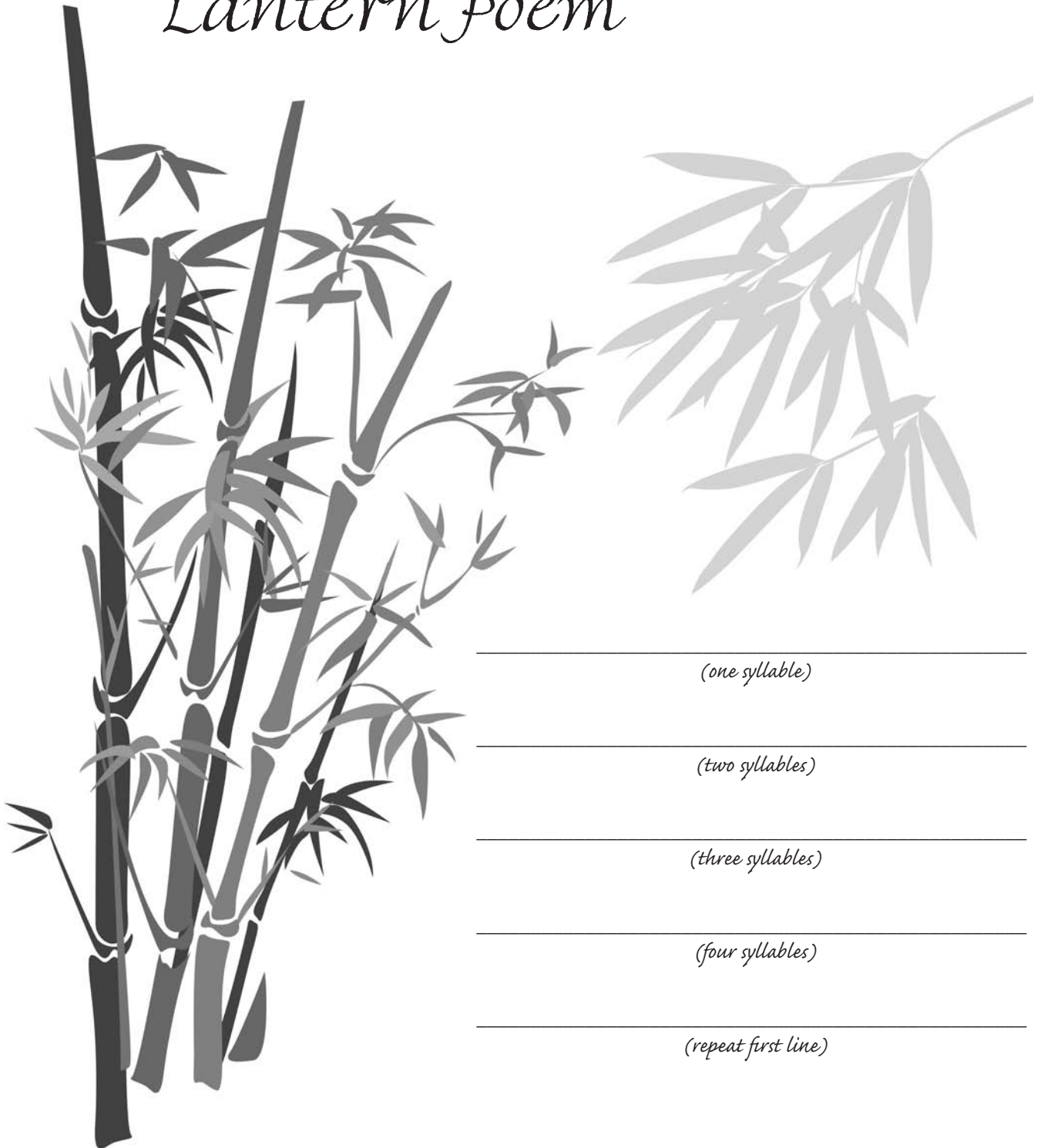
EXAMPLE 2

Can you believe how cruel her stepmother was?
I wish I had a fairy godmother!
Now hurry back before midnight!
Do you think they lived happily ever after?
Even the mice loved Cinderella!
Running down the steps made her lose her glass slipper!
Everyone thought Cinderella was the most beautiful girl at the ball!
Look at how lovely she was in her gorgeous gown.
Living in an attic would be very dusty!
All of the animals pitched in to make Cinderella's party dress.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words or phrases with the required number of syllables. Japanese Lantern poems combine descriptive terms to evoke a feeling or create a word-picture.

Japanese Lantern Poem



(one syllable)

(two syllables)

(three syllables)

(four syllables)

(repeat first line)

Japanese Lantern Poem Examples



Example 1

Fall
Changes
Leaves tumble
Beds of orange
Fall

Example 2

Snow
Cold, wet
Snowflakes fall
Winter white bed
Snow

Example 3

School
Read, write
Run to class
Homework is hard
School

Example 4

Friends
Laugh, play
Text and talk
Make room for more
Friends

Example 5

Gym
Sweat, run
climb the rope
locker-room smell
Gym

Example 6

Birthday
Smile, laugh
Time with friends
Lots of presents
Birthday



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by using the required number of words, adjectives, and phrases listed below. Find interesting adjectives for line two.

CINQUAIN



(one-word title)

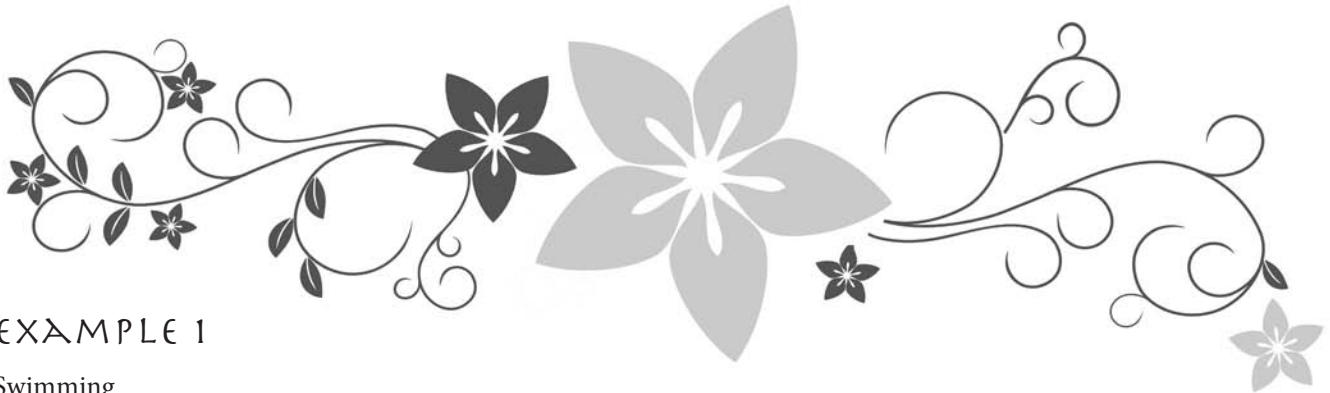
(two adjectives)

(three -ing words)

(four-word phrase that expresses feeling)

(another name for title word)

CINQUAIN EXAMPLES



EXAMPLE 1

Swimming
Wet, cool
Diving, splashing, invigorating
Hot days melt away
Butterfly stroke

EXAMPLE 2

Dancing
Birdlike, free
Spinning, twirling, leaping
Sadness fades from me
Ballet

EXAMPLE 3

Football
Tough, powerful
Pushing, plowing, succumbing
Hot knife through butter
Touchdown



EXAMPLE 4

Mom
Young, old
Nagging, worrying, talking
Looks out for me
Best friend

EXAMPLE 5

Florida
Hot, sticky
Flying, swimming, fanning
Shirt sticks to me
Vacation

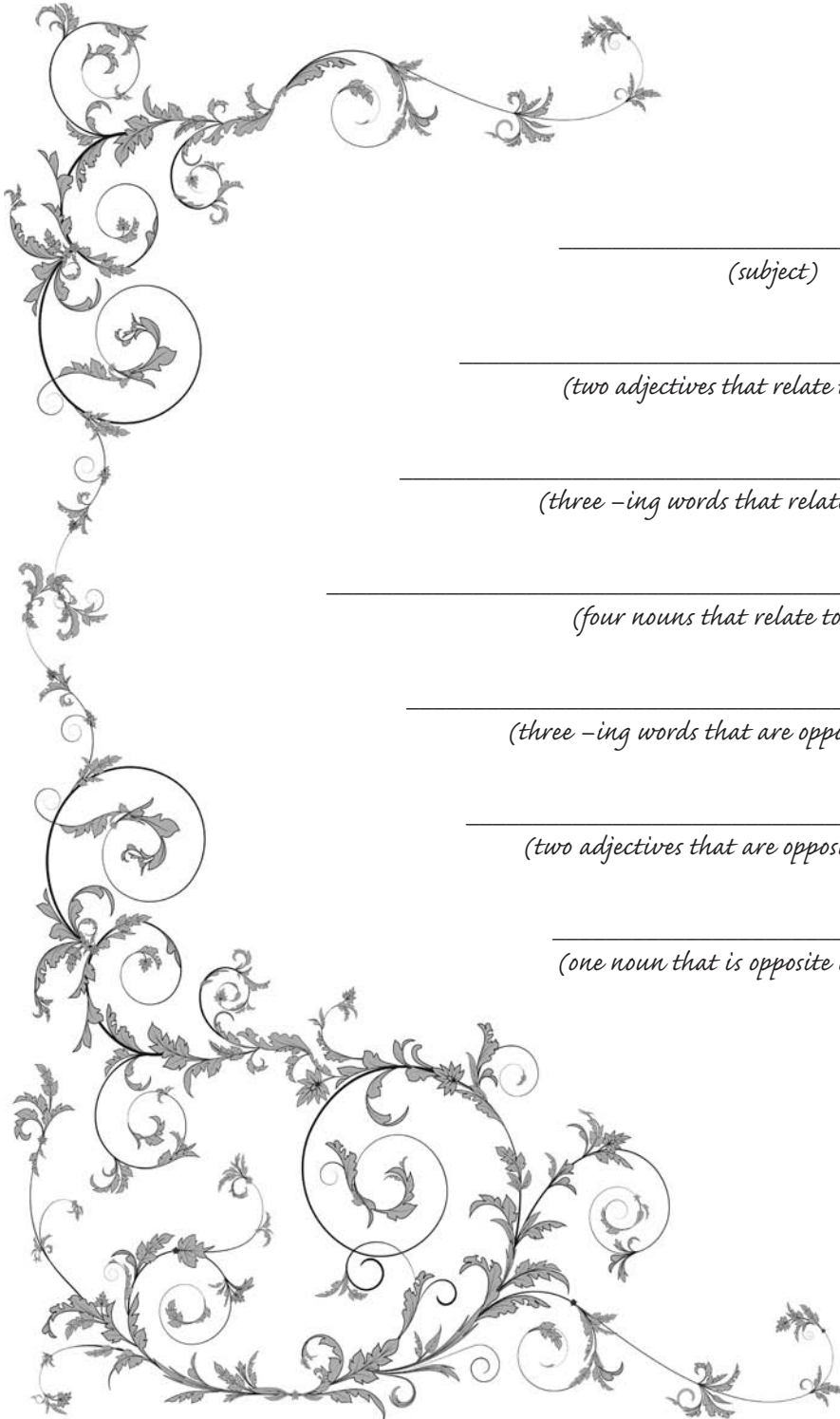
EXAMPLE 6

Oak tree
Magical, majestic
Bending, forming, rooting
A sculpture of wood
Shade

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the required number of words and phrases below. The visual structure of the poem resembles a diamond.

Diamanté Poem



(subject)

(two adjectives that relate to the subject)

(three -ing words that relate to the subject)

(four nouns that relate to the subject)

(three -ing words that are opposite of the subject)

(two adjectives that are opposite of the subject)

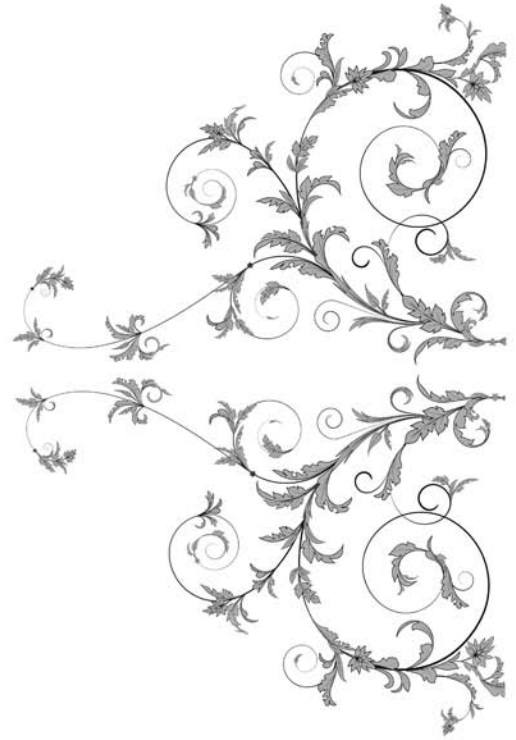
(one noun that is opposite of the subject)

Diamanté Poem Examples



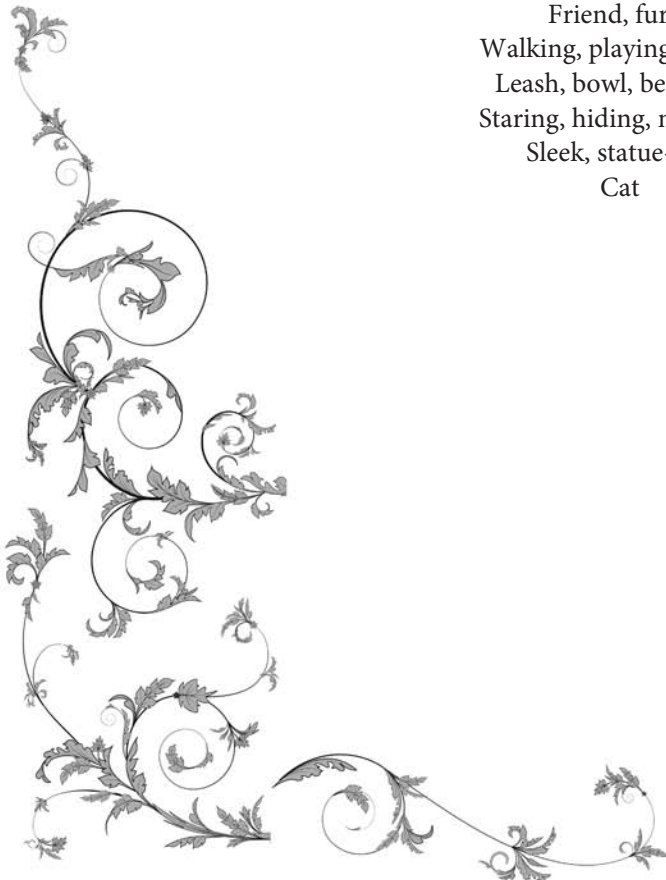
Example 1

School
Difficult, busy
Working, writing, reading
Teachers, books, chalkboard, tests
Relaxing, watching, playing
Fun, calm
Home



Example 2

Dog
Friend, furry
Walking, playing, licking
Leash, bowl, bed, food
Staring, hiding, meowing
Sleek, statue-like
Cat



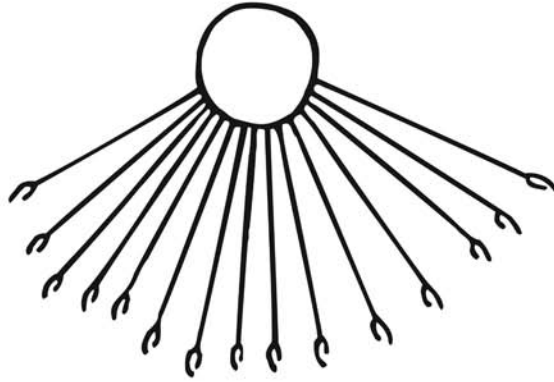
Example 3

Brother
Confidante, idol
Texting, learning, roughhousing
College, car, girlfriend, iPhone
Ignoring, annoying, reading
Unlikable, uncaring
Sister

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the words requested below. Structure the poem in a pyramid shape by making each line longer than the one before it.

Pyramid Poem

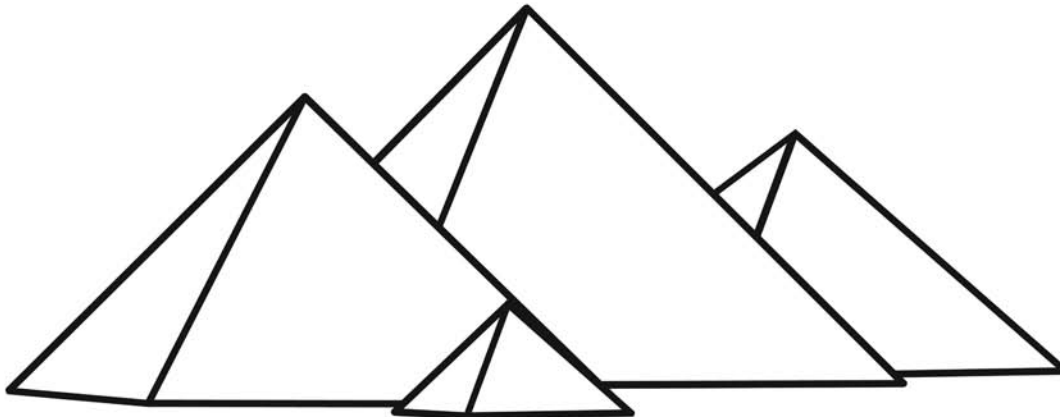


_____ *(subject)*

_____ *(two adjectives that describe the subject)*

_____ *(three -ing words that describe the subject)*

_____ *(two statements or a statement and a question about the subject)*



Pyramid Poem Examples



Example 1

Ice cream
Delicious, sweet
Tasting, refreshing, cooling
My favorite is Rocky Road. What's yours?

Example 2

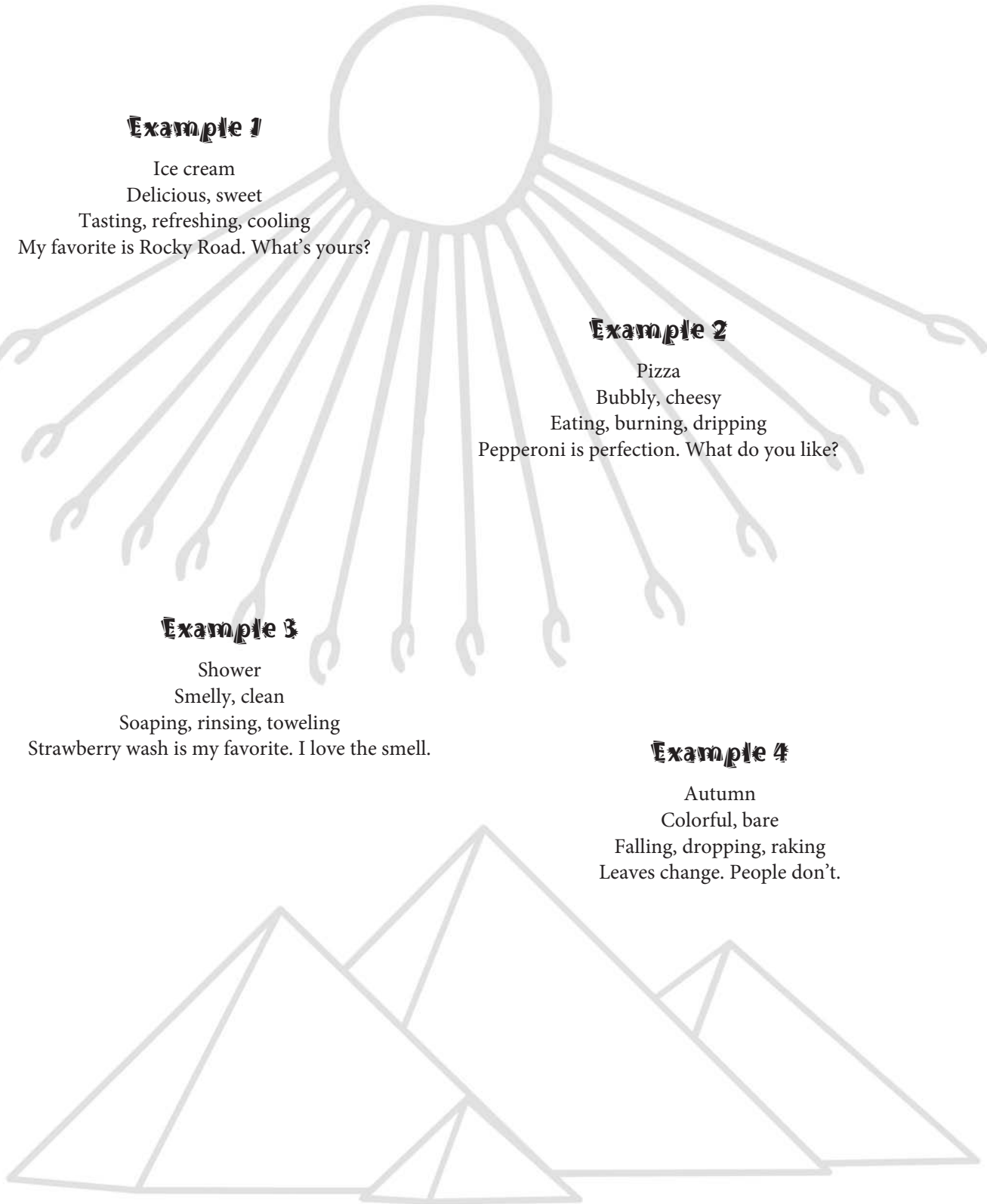
Pizza
Bubbly, cheesy
Eating, burning, dripping
Pepperoni is perfection. What do you like?

Example 3

Shower
Smelly, clean
Soaping, rinsing, toweling
Strawberry wash is my favorite. I love the smell.

Example 4

Autumn
Colorful, bare
Falling, dropping, raking
Leaves change. People don't.



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying the parts of speech listed below.

PARTS OF SPEECH POEM

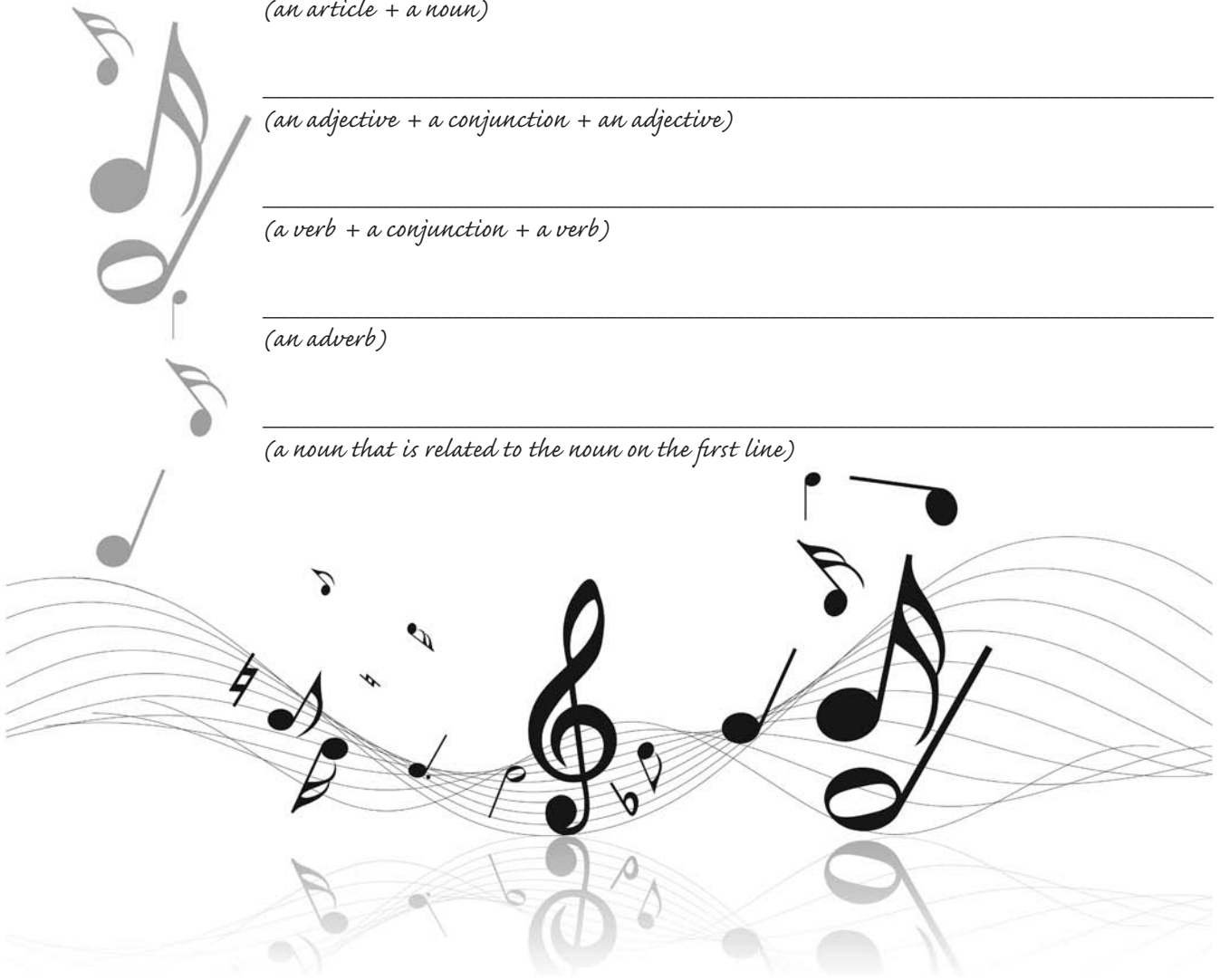
(an article + a noun)

(an adjective + a conjunction + an adjective)

(a verb + a conjunction + a verb)

(an adverb)

(a noun that is related to the noun on the first line)



PARTS OF SPEECH POEM EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

A flower
Beautiful and fragrant
Swaying and bending
Quietly
Roses

EXAMPLE 2

A hammock
Comfortable and cool
Drifting and moving
Softly
Breeze

EXAMPLE 3

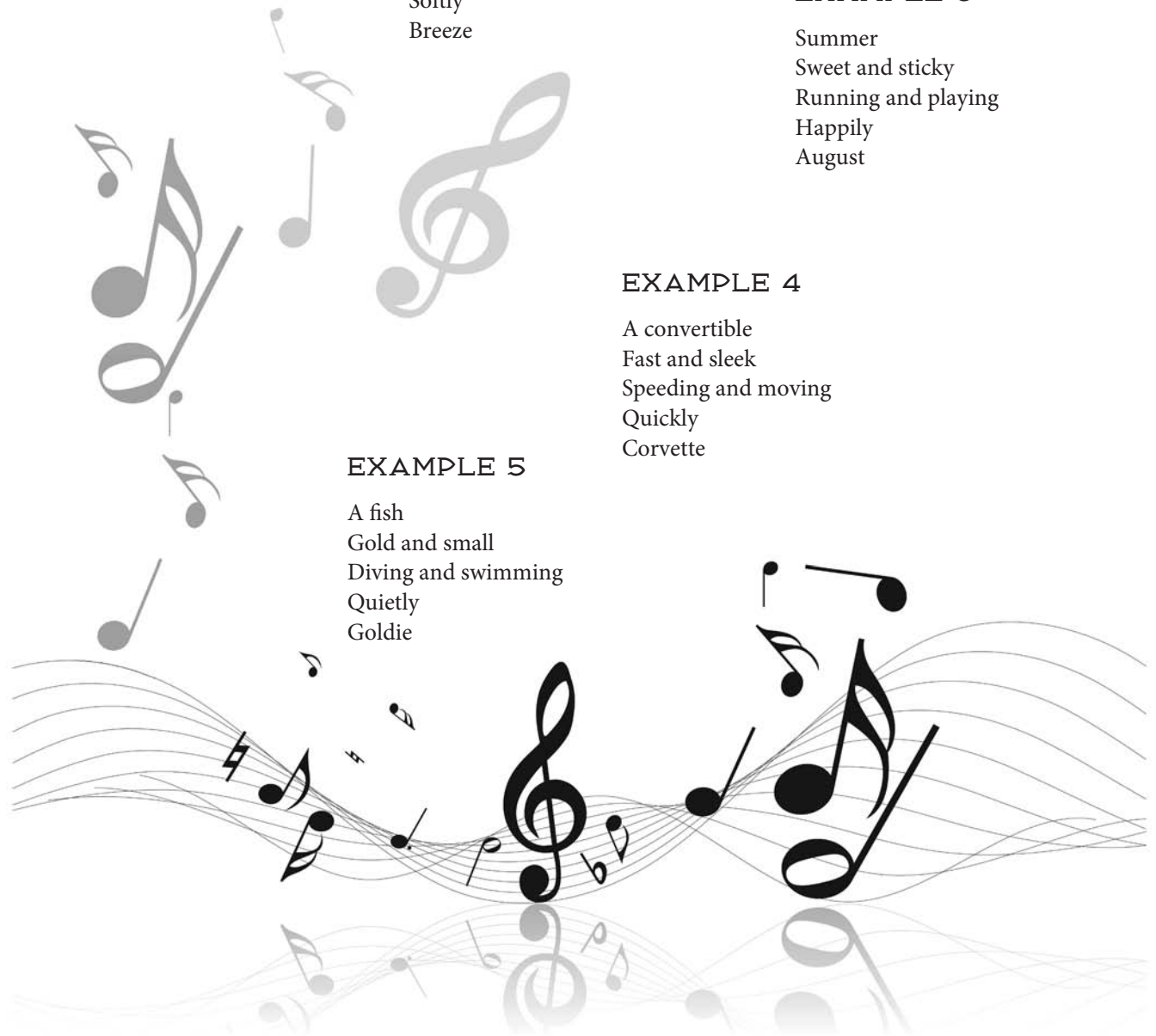
Summer
Sweet and sticky
Running and playing
Happily
August

EXAMPLE 4

A convertible
Fast and sleek
Speeding and moving
Quickly
Corvette

EXAMPLE 5

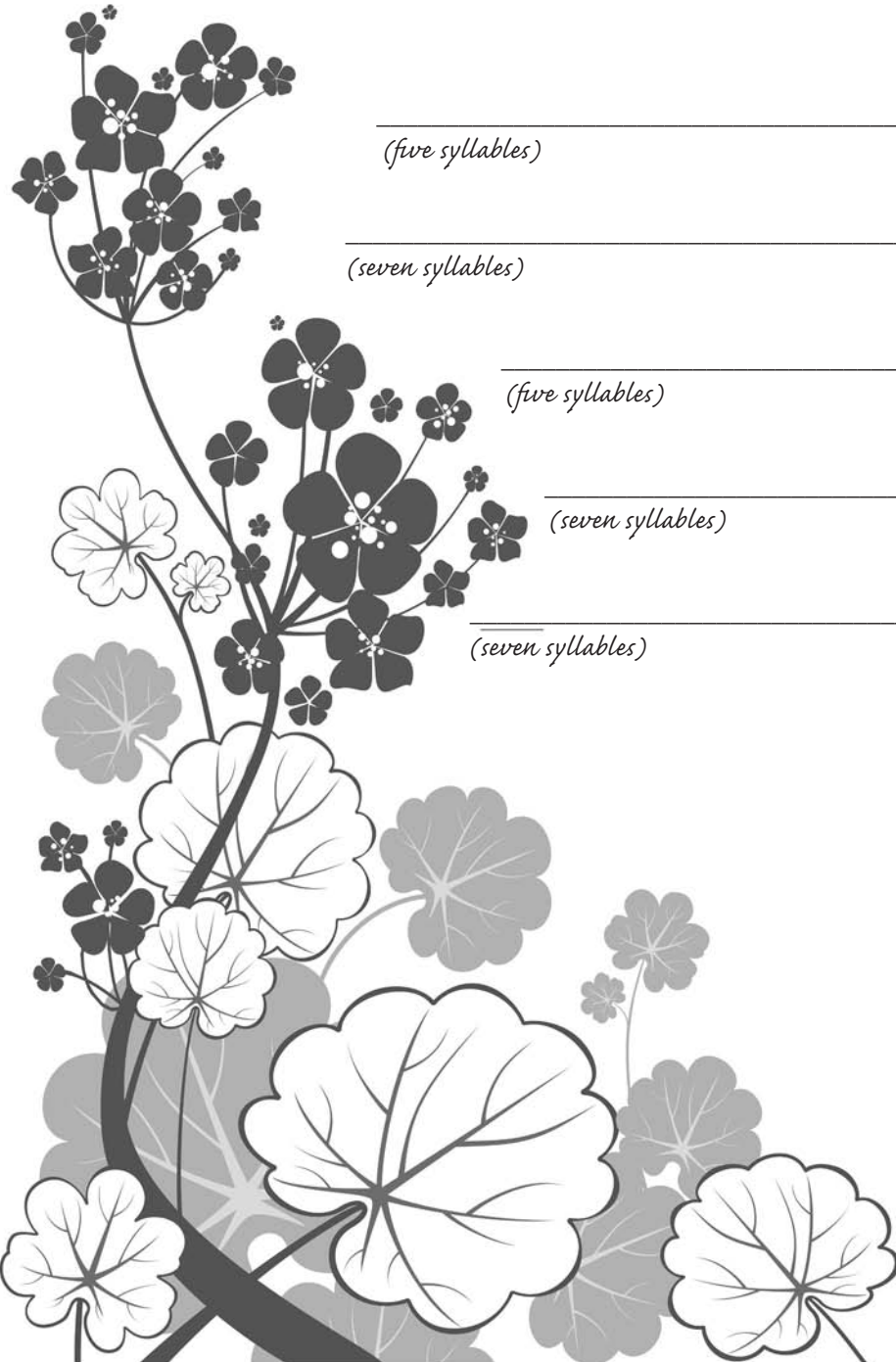
A fish
Gold and small
Diving and swimming
Quietly
Goldie



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Instructions: Complete this poem using words and phrases with the required number of syllables. A Tanka is similar to a Haiku and is usually about nature.

Tanka



(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

(seven syllables)

Tanka Examples

Example 1

The butterfly flew
Celebrating its freedom
A rainbow with wings
Whispering words about peace
As it traveled through the world

Example 2

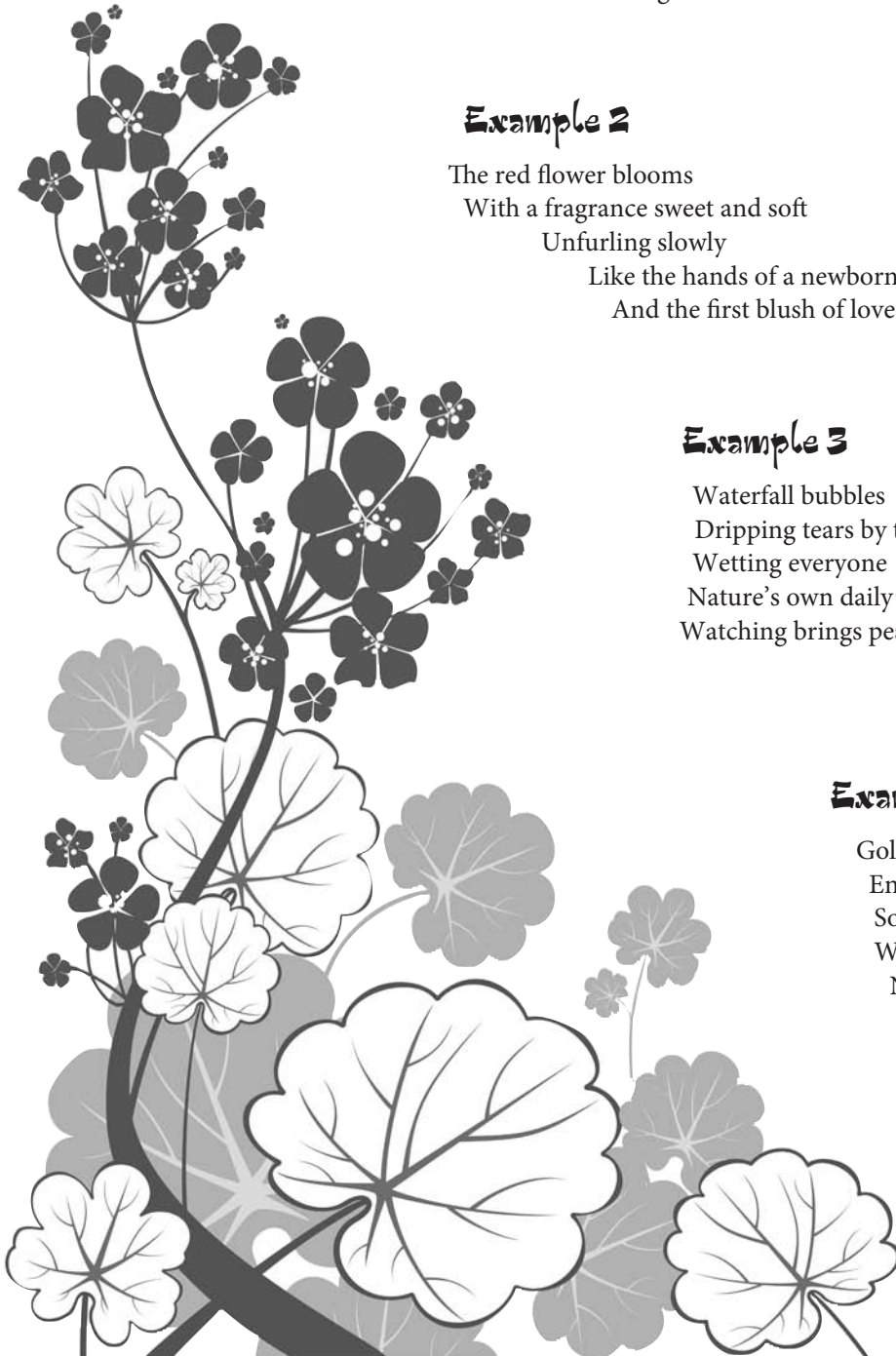
The red flower blooms
With a fragrance sweet and soft
Unfurling slowly
Like the hands of a newborn
And the first blush of love's smile

Example 3

Waterfall bubbles
Dripping tears by the gallons
Wetting everyone
Nature's own daily shower
Watching brings peace to mankind

Example 4

Gold hues paint the sky
Ending a hot, steamy day
Soft palette of light
Watercolor in the clouds
Nature's canvas up above



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by filling in the blanks below. Use phrases rather than a single word for lines 2 through 5, and use a descriptive phrase at the end of the last line.

Sensory Poem

_____ is _____ .
(Emotion) *(color)*

It sounds like _____ .

It tastes like _____ .

It smells like _____ .

_____ feels like _____ .

Sensory Poem Examples

Example 1

Love is magenta.
It sounds like children laughing while their parents push them on swings.
It tastes like hot apple pie straight from the oven with a side of vanilla ice cream.
It smells like the peach roses that make up a wedding bouquet.
Love feels like the hundreds of hugs at a family reunion.

Example 2

Happiness is yellow.
It sounds like thunderous applause after a recital.
It tastes like a giant birthday cake with one fork.
It smells like chocolate-chip cookies right out of the oven.
Happiness feels like warm sand between your toes on a cloudless day.

Example 3

Sad is blue.
It sounds like a broken-hearted girl crying alone.
It tastes like chocolate candy when there's none in the house.
It smells like the last bag of popcorn—burnt.
Sad feels like a pelican's wings after an oil spill.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Use three to five pairs of lines to write your poem. Couplets are poems in which every two lines rhyme and lines are approximately the same length.

Couplets



Couplet Examples



Example 1

I used to think school was a bore.
Homework was my most dreaded chore.

Now that I'm older I know what's true.
Your education is important to you.

I can be all that I choose to be.
The truth is, education is the key.



Example 2

Popcorn at the movies is my favorite treat,
Except for the times I want something sweet.

I could go to see movies all day or all night,
Swept into worlds of friendship or fights.

But my wallet won't let me go to more than a few.
I'll rent movies at home—what else can I do?



Example 3

I'm the oldest girl in a family with three.
My baby sisters are only as tall as my knee.

They whine and they cry and babble all day,
Unless I join them on the floor to play.

They climb on me till playtime is done.
Being a big sister is really kind of fun.

Example 4

Facebook is an interesting place to be.
I connect with friends I rarely see.

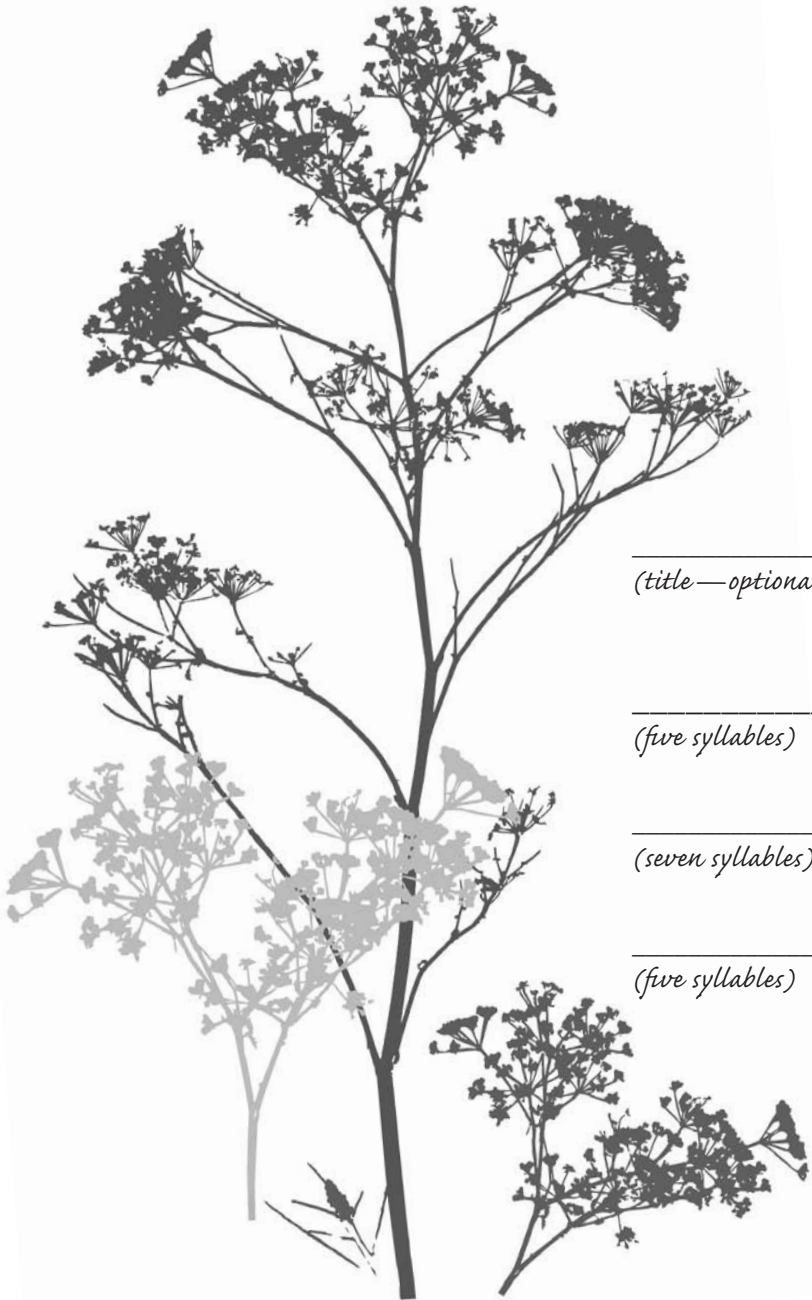
Posting pictures or writing on walls.
I'm often online until bedtime calls.

I'm careful to protect my privacy.
Post nothing that would embarrass me.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by supplying words and phrases with the required number of syllables listed below. Haiku are usually about nature and are very descriptive.

Haiku



(title—optional)

(five syllables)

(seven syllables)

(five syllables)

Haiku Examples

Example 1

Rainfall

Water crying down
Refreshing the summer day
Allows life to thrive

Example 2

The big lion roars
His large, white teeth glistening
He is behind bars

Example 3

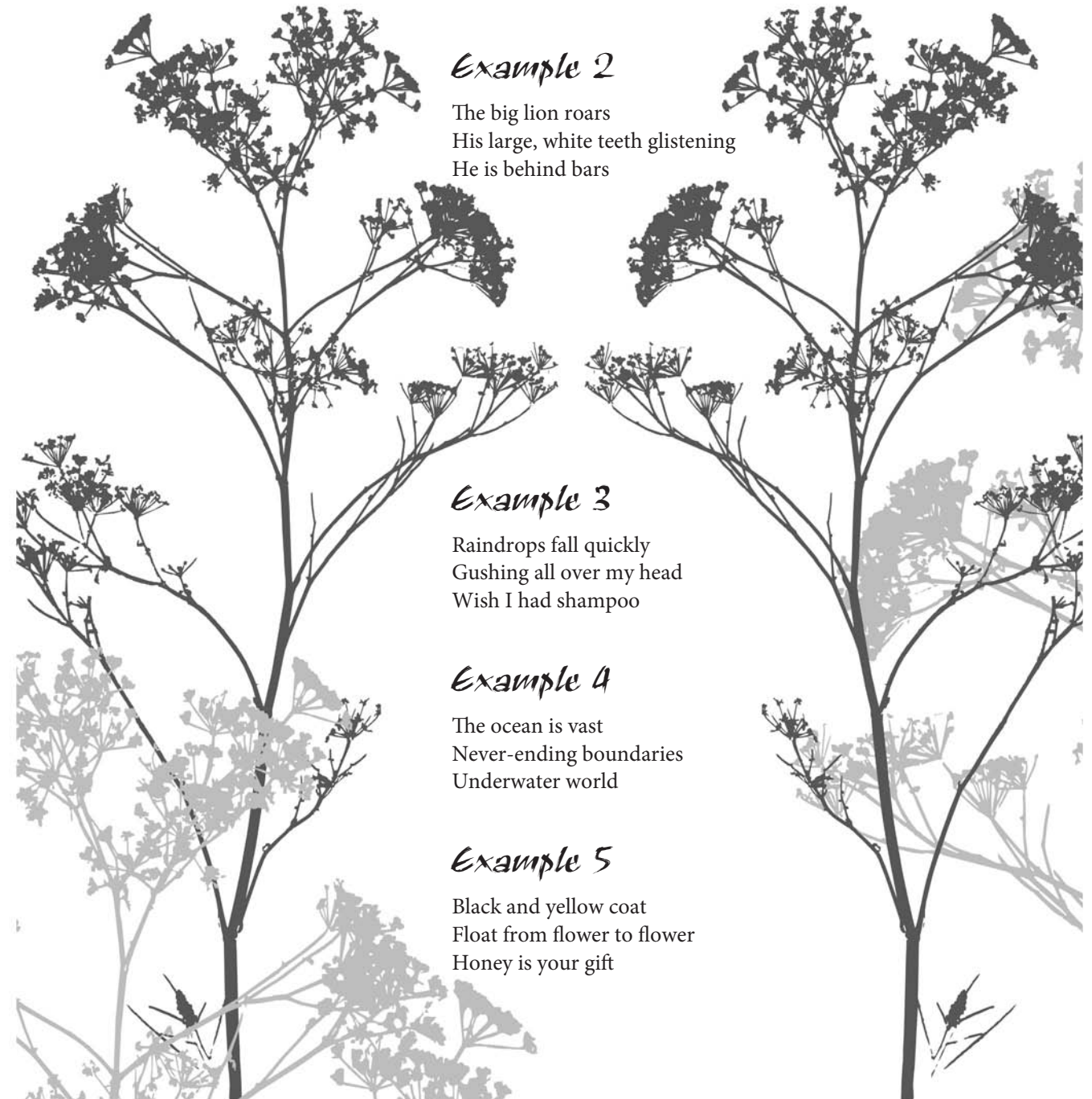
Raindrops fall quickly
Gushing all over my head
Wish I had shampoo

Example 4

The ocean is vast
Never-ending boundaries
Underwater world

Example 5

Black and yellow coat
Float from flower to flower
Honey is your gift



Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete the poem using the rhyming pattern A—A—B—B—A. Indent lines three and four as shown below. Limericks are usually humorous. It's okay to be silly!

Limerick



(rhymes with lines 2 and 5 and has three strong beats)

(rhymes with lines 1 and 5 and has three strong beats)

(rhymes with line 4 and has two strong beats)

(rhymes with line 3 and has two strong beats)

(rhymes with lines 1 and 2 and has three strong beats)

Limerick Examples

A large, decorative floral border in black ink, featuring various leaves, flowers, and vines, framing the text on the page.

Example 1

There once was a girl named Sue,
Who spoke only words that were true.
Her motto “No lies!”
Was bright as her eyes
When she turned her attention on you.

Example 2

There once was a boy named Tim,
Who began working out at the gym.
He exercised so long
And became so strong,
His classmates said, “Wow, look at him!”

Example 3

There once was a girl named May,
Who crossed paths with a skunk one day.
She washed with strong soap,
But there isn’t much hope
That the smell will soon go away.

Example 4

We once had a dog named Cat.
He liked to meow, how about that?
When he climbed up a tree
People gathered to see—
How he’d escape from the branch where he sat.

Example 5

There once was a family named Sun.
The kids loved to go outside and have fun.
In wind, rain, and snow,
Out they would go—
All weather is good when there’s Sun.

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Describe the bow binding the box closed, and complete the second couplet. Write a third couplet describing opening the box and what you find inside.

Mystery Poem

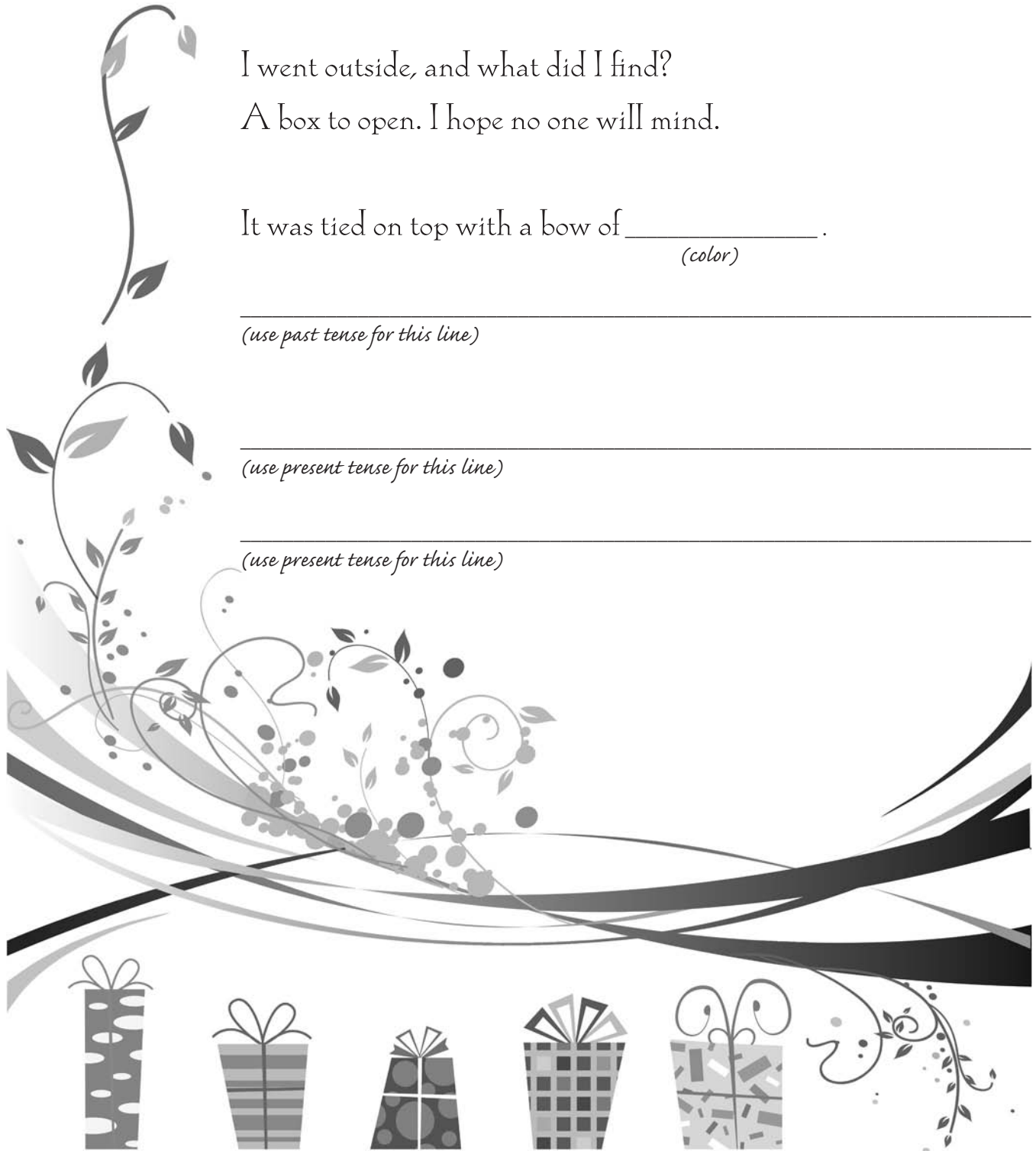
I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of _____ .
(color)

(use past tense for this line)

(use present tense for this line)

(use present tense for this line)



Permission to share this poem with the class? Circle YES or NO.

Mystery Poem Examples



Example 1

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of teal
I was so excited I gave out a squeal.

Inside the box I am surprised to see
My reflection in a mirror looking back at me.

Example 2

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of pitch black.
I turned the box around, examined front, sides, and back.

Opening it up, I find a fantastic surprise,
A friendly grasshopper jumping around inside.

Example 3

I went outside, and what did I find?
A box to open. I hope no one will mind.

It was tied on top with a bow of burlap.
At first I was cautious, in case of a trap.

Removing its lid proves to reveal
Welcome contents—an extra-value meal!

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Complete this poem by describing the dream you have for the world. Compose complete sentences, each starting with a letter of "I Have a Dream." Sentences extend horizontally.

"I Have a Dream" Poem



I _____

H _____

A _____

V _____

E _____

A _____

D _____

R _____



E _____

A _____

M _____


"I Have a Dream" Poem Examples

Example 1



I have a dream that there will be no more violence in schools.
*H*allways will be cleared of guns.
*A*nd students will follow all of the rules.
*V*iolence will no longer be acceptable in any form.
*E*very student will feel safe.
*A*ll teachers will respect the students, and all students will respect their teachers.
*D*isrespect and drugs will stay out of the class.
*R*espect and love will stay in the class.
*E*ach student will have a mentor to talk to when things get rough.
*A*nd teachers won't feel afraid to say "no" to a student.
*M*y dream is for school to be safe for us all.

Example 2



I have a dream that all children will be safe
*H*ands that hurt will now hold
*A*ll children will have someone to talk to
*V*iolence will never be directed at the young
*E*very person who hurts a child will go to jail
*A*nger and aggression will not be known to children
*D*isrespect will never occur
*R*ain will come from the sky—not from a child's eyes
*E*very child will have a happy, peaceful childhood
*A*buse will become a foreign word
*M*ankind will be just that ... KIND

Student name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Using a set of opposites, write a poem about one on the left side of the paper and about the other on the right side of the paper.

TWO-SIDES POEM



Two columns of horizontal lines for writing a poem. The left column is adjacent to the decorative scrollwork, and the right column is on the opposite side of the page.

TWO-SIDES POEM EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1

My brother	My sister
loves	hates
to pick on me.	being picked on.
He does it all the time, but	I don't do it much, and
he always gets caught.	I rarely get caught.
He could stop.	I can't help it.
He's annoying;	I'm fun;
He's mean;	I'm nice;
He's obnoxious;	I'm sweet;
Well, only sometimes.	Well, most of the time.
Other times	Other times
He's fun;	I'm annoying;
He's nice;	I'm mean;
He's sweet;	I'm obnoxious;
All of the time, he's my friend.	All of the time, I'm her friend.



EXAMPLE 2

The winter	The summer
is	was
Cold,	Hot,
Icy,	Sunny,
Boring.	Fun.
It's too cold to play outside	I played outside each day
No beach,	Beaches,
No swimming,	Swimming,
No volleyball.	Volleyball.
The still white coolness	The hot sticky sun
makes me shiver.	made me sweat.
I guess I should enjoy the	I miss enjoying the
Ice skating,	Ice skating,
snowmen,	snowmen,
hot chocolate.	hot chocolate.
I wish it were summer again.	I wish it were winter again.

Poetry Projects

Class Poetry Book

A poetry book for the whole class is a great deal of work, but it's also rewarding and fun! It helps students feel pride and excitement about their accomplishment and helps them care about their efforts. Students also see how much the teacher cares about them, which helps improve their attitude and behavior.

To make the Class Poetry Book the best it can be:

- Give students enough time to write and perfect the poems they plan to share.
- Ensure that every student has a poem in the book.
- Encourage students to do their best work.

Time required start to finish: Five class periods

Instructions:

1. Select a format poem already worked on and instruct students to hand in a final copy of that poem as a typed digital file. Have them email the file or load it to a folder on the school server.
2. Brainstorm with students about possible titles for the book and list all the suggestions on the board. After, work with the students to narrow the list down to five titles, and then have them vote for their favorite one.
3. Instruct students to each design a book cover incorporating the favored title, school's name, class, and year. Have a cover contest, much like the title selection process: narrow the candidates and vote. Scan the winning cover and save the file for layout.
4. Lay out the book pages using the student files and the cover file, then incorporate a contents page. Put two or more poems on each page to minimize the page count. (With luck, one or more student volunteers will do this part.)
5. Publish copies for each student, yourself, other ELA teachers at the school, the principal, the administrators, and the school media center. To defray printing costs, issue it as an online magazine, charge students for copy price, exchange advertising space with a local printer or vendors, appeal to the parent-teacher organization, and/or hold a fundraiser.
6. Ask the principal, administrators, and other teachers to write a note or come to the class to congratulate the students on their book.
7. As a portion of the unit grade:
 - Have students read their poems aloud to the class and explain why they wrote them.
 - Instruct students to select one of the poems from the book (not their own) and write a short letter to its author expressing why they selected it. Review the content of the notes prior to delivering them to the recipients.

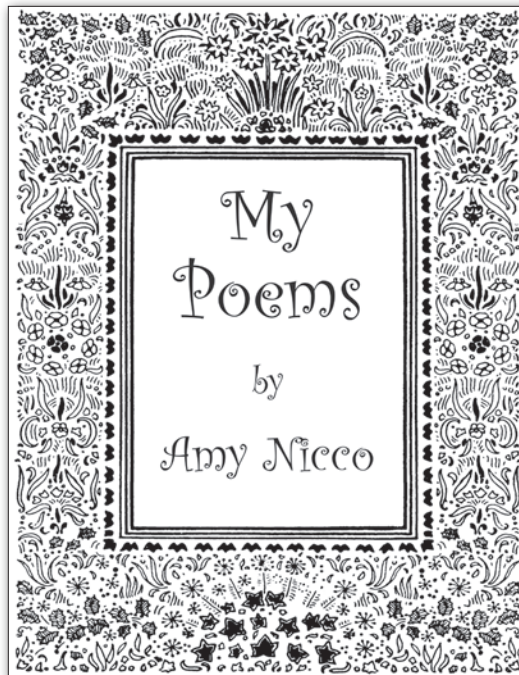
Individual Poetry Book

Individual poetry books broaden student exposure to different kinds of poems.

Time required start to finish: Seven weeks total. Students focus on two format poems a week (two class periods per week) for five weeks, then spend two final weeks (two class periods each) on final drafts, illustrations, and binding.

Instructions:

1. Select the ten format poems to present in class over the first five weeks and print and distribute those handouts to each student. Also distribute a copy of the Individual Poetry Book Rubric, located on the next page.
2. Require students to write two poems for each format poem. This requires that additional time be spent at home by the student. These are the rough drafts and are turned in for teacher feedback.
3. At the end of five weeks, instruct students to select one poem from each set of poems, resulting in one poem selected from each of the ten formats. These are the ten poems included in their final poetry books.
4. Explain that the final poetry books are to be typewritten with one poem per page, and each poem is to be illustrated. Illustration can be photo collages, drawings, paint, etc., but should pertain to the poem.
5. Advise students to use a report binder to hold their poems followed by the grading rubric. The cover must include a book title, the author's name, and a date.
6. Grade the book, in its entirety, as 20% of the final project grade (see rubric), judging the poems on format and coherence, not creativity.



Teaching Poetry: The Ultimate Guide

Individual Poetry Book Rubric Student name: _____
Date: _____

Poem Format	Does the poem follow format guidelines? (Is the poem coherent?)	Possible Points	Earned Points
Poem 1		X	
Poem 2		X	
Poem 3		X	
Poem 4		X	
Poem 5		X	
Poem 6		X	
Poem 7		X	
Poem 8		X	
Poem 9		X	
Poem 10		X	
Does the booklet illustrate? (Give one point for each illustration)		10	
Overall presentation (cover, condition, etc.)		10	
Total Points out of 100			
Additional comments:			

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Individual Poetry Book Rubric

Student name: _____

Date: _____

	<i>Poem Format</i>	<i>Does the poem follow format guidelines? Is the poem coherent?</i>	<i>Possible Points</i>	<i>Earned Points</i>
<i>Poem 1</i>			8	
<i>Poem 2</i>			8	
<i>Poem 3</i>			8	
<i>Poem 4</i>			8	
<i>Poem 5</i>			8	
<i>Poem 6</i>			8	
<i>Poem 7</i>			8	
<i>Poem 8</i>			8	
<i>Poem 9</i>			8	
<i>Poem 10</i>			8	
<i>Was the booklet illustrated? (Give one point for each illustration)</i>			10	
<i>Overall presentation (cover, condition, etc.)</i>			10	
			<i>Total Points out of 100</i>	
<i>Additional comments:</i>				

Poetry Reading

A poetry reading, or performance, is a large task to complete, and one that may require additional staff involvement. Consider speaking with the drama teacher and/or other members of the staff for assistance—even consider presenting it as a cross-curricular opportunity, depending on the focus.

Time Requirements: Plan on spending three to four weeks for the event from introduction to performance. Pre-planning may take longer.

Instructions:

1. Begin by getting permission and scheduling a date that doesn't conflict with other school events. Possibly, schedule the performance to occur during school: lunchtime or classtime. Location needs to be considered as well.
2. Select a theme for the reading around which the writing and performance are based. For example, peer pressure, family, recycling, yesterday and tomorrow, connects, etc. (If the reading is going to include a variety of topics and formats, present it as a showcase.)
3. When presenting the poetry reading project in class, ask which students are interested in doing the reading portion of the performance. Assign approximately two-thirds of the class as readers.
4. As a class, decide what is to be included as part of the event.
 - Are there any students who wish to perform music as a prelude to the readings?
 - Who sets up the performance space and decorates?
 - What kind of flyer or invitations are sent out?
 - Who will be invited?
 - Will there be refreshments?... and so on.
5. With the collected information, create committees and assign tasks. Involve students who are not reading as committee leaders.
6. With the theme in mind, create fifteen two-person teams to write the poems—each team gets a different format while focusing on the same theme.
7. Rehearse the performance/reading twice, at the least. Include running through who will do non-reading duties, too—just like a wedding rehearsal. Agree on a dress code for the day of the reading.
8. Take pictures and/or record the event and post it to the school website. In order to recoup expenses, consider providing a published version of the poems that students and family members can purchase.

Publishing Poetry

Publishing poetry is rewarding for both the teacher and the student. Students feel pride and higher self-esteem when their work is published. Even the most gruff or shy students carry themselves a little differently when they see others admiring their work. And when students know that some poems are going to be published—either in or out of class—they are more careful when crafting their final work.

The “Community Section” of a Local Newspaper

Contact a local newspaper and ask if there is a section where student work is printed. For example, the *Sun-Sentinel*, in Florida, publishes student artwork and poetry once each week. Nothing (except money—see below) motivates students more than seeing their names in the newspaper.

The Parent-Teacher Association/Organization

Request that the Parent-Teacher Association sponsor a poetry contest at the school. Cash awards (twenty dollars for 1st place, fifteen dollars for 2nd place, and ten dollars for 3rd place) are exciting for students and lead to an interest in writing. Include students, teachers, parents, or other volunteers in a small panel of judges to select the award winners. Encourage a local newspaper to publish the winning poems.

School Newspaper/Newsletter

Ask the editor of the school paper/newsletter to reserve a page in the paper for student poems. Find out if an issue of the paper focuses on a certain theme and ask students to write poems based on that theme.

Magazines

Locate magazines that publish exceptional student poems. Call or email the publishers to ask for a sample magazine and submission guidelines.

<i>Stone Soup</i>	www.stonesoup.com
<i>Creative Kids</i>	www.prufrock.com
<i>READ</i>	www.weeklyreader.com
<i>Teen Ink</i>	www.teenink.com

School Website

Create a page on the school’s website for student poems.

Library/Media Center

Speak with the head librarian at a local or school library and ask to display student poetry in the library. While not true publication, displaying student poems in a public setting is another form of acknowledgment for students.



Recommended Reading

Read poems aloud as an ice-breaking introduction for a difficult subject, or to begin or end a lesson. These books and poems are used successfully in many classrooms to foster a love of poetry. Some are funny, some are sad, but all are uniquely interesting and thought-provoking. The language and concepts are simple enough to understand, but intriguing enough to leave the students wanting more.

Assign poetry books as required reading; these books provide inspiration and examples for students to emulate. Enjoy!

Poetry Collections

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
American Poetry & Literacy Project; Academy of American Poets	“How to Eat a Poem: A Smorgasbord of Tasty and Delicious Poems for Young People”	Dover Publications, 2006
Angelou, Maya (Edwin Graves Wilson and Jerome Lagarrigue, editors)	“Poetry for Young People: Maya Angelou”	Sterling, 2007
Appelt, Kathi	“Poems from Homeroom: A Writer’s Place to Start”	Owlet Paperbacks, 2010
Aquado, Bill, and Richard Newirth	“Paint Me Like I Am: Teen Poems from WritersCorps”	HarperTeen, 2003
Brewbaker, James	“Poems by Adolescents and Adults: A Thematic Collection for Middle School and High School”	National Council of Teachers of English, 2002
Buscani, Lisa, Tracy Zeman and Johnpaul Higgins	“Hands-On Stanza Anthology of Poetry 2006-2007 (Poems by Students)”	The Poetry Center of Chicago, 2007
Cohen, Leonard	“The Lyrics of Leonard Cohen”	Omnibus Press, 2009
Dakos, Kalli	“Don’t Read This Book Whatever You Do: More Poems About School”	Aladdin, 1998
	“If You’re Not Here, Please Raise Your Hand”	Aladdin, 1995
DeDonato, Colette	“City of One: Young Writers Speak to the World”	Aunt Lute Books, 2004

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Dunning, Stephen	"Reflections on a Gift of a Watermelon Pickle"	HarperTeen, 1967
Feelings, Tom	"Soul Looks Back in Wonder"	Dial Books, 1993
George, Kristine O'Connell	"Swimming Upstream: Middle School Poems"	Clarion Books, 2002
Giovanni, Nikki	"Hip Hop Speaks to Children: A Celebration of Poetry with a Beat"	Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2008
	"Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Like My Sister Kate: Looking At The Harlem Renaissance Through Poems"	Henry Holt and Co., 1996
Glenn, Mel	"Back to Class"	Clarion Books, 1988
	"Class Dismissed! High School Poems"	Clarion Books, 1982
	"Class Dismissed! More High School Poems"	Clarion Books, 1986
	"My Friend's Got this Problem, Mr. Candler: High School Poems"	Clarion Books, 1991
Greenfield, Eloise	"Honey, I Love and Other Love Poems"	Crowell, 1978
	"In the Land of Words: New and Selected Poems"	Amistad, 2003
Holbrook, Sara	"I Never Said I Wasn't Difficult"	Boyd's Mills Press, 1997
	"More Than Friends: Poems from Him and Her"	Wordsong, 2008
	"Walking on the Boundaries of Change: Poems of Transition"	Boyd's Mills Press, 1998
Hughes, Langston (David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad, editors)	"Poetry for Young People: Langston Hughes"	Sterling, 2008
Janeczko, Paul	"A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms"	Candlewick, 2009
	"A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems"	Candlewick, 2005
	"Don't Forget to Fly: A Cycle of Modern Poems"	Bradbury Press, 1981



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<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Janeczko, Paul (continued)	"Going Over to Your Place"	Simon & Schuster, 1987
	"Preposterous: Poems of Youth"	Orchard Books, 1991
	"Wing Nuts: Screwy Haiku"	Little, Brown, 2006
Keeve, Mildred	"Black Ain't No Kiver"	Self-published, 1988
Keyes, Alicia	"Tears for Water: Songbook of Poems and Lyrics"	Berkley Trade, 2005
Knudson, R.R., and May Swenson	"American Sports Poems"	Orchard Books, 1995
Larrick, Nancy	"Crazy to be Alive in Such a Strange World"	Lippincott, 1977
Livingston, Cohn Myra	"Lots of Limericks"	McElderry, 1991
	"Cricket Never Does: A Collection of Haiku and Tanka"	McElderry, 1997
Michael, Pamela	"River of Words: Young Poets and Artists on the Nature of Things"	Milkweed Editions, 2008
Meltzer, Milton	"Hour of Freedom: American History in Poetry"	Wordsong, 2003
Mora, Pat	"My Own True Name: New and Selected Poems for Young Adults"	Arte Publico Press, 2000
Myers, Walter Dean	"Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices"	Holiday House, 2008
Nye, Naomi Shihab	"A Maze Me: Poems for Girls"	Greenwillow Books, 2005
Paschen, Elise, and Dominique Raccach	"Poetry Speaks / Who Am I: Poems of Discovery, Inspiration, Independence, and Everything Else in Your Amazing Future"	Sourcebooks Jabberwocky, 2010
Prelutsky, Jack	"A Pizza the Size of the Sun"	Greenwillow Books, 1996
	"It's Raining Pigs and Noodles"	Greenwillow Books, 2005
	"New Kid on the Block"	Greenwillow Books, 1984

<i>Author</i>	<i>Book Title</i>	<i>Publisher/Year</i>
Prelutsky, Jack (continued)	"Something Big Has Been Here"	Greenwillow Books, 1990
Shields, Carol	"Someone Used My Toothbrush!"	Dutton Juvenile, 2010
Serlio, John N.	"Poetry for Young People: The Seasons"	Sterling, 2005
Silverstein, Shel	"A Light In the Attic"	HarperCollins, 1981
	"Falling Up"	HarperCollins, 1996
	"Where the Sidewalk Ends"	HarperCollins, 1974
Viorst, Judith	"If I Were in Charge of the World and Other Worries: Poems for Children and Their Parents"	Athenium, 1984
	"Sad Underwear and Other Complications: More Poems for Children and Their Parents"	Athenium, 1995
WritersCorps	"Tell The World (Poems by Teenagers)"	HarperTeen, 2008
Yolen, Jane	"Color Me A Rhyme: Nature Poems for Young People"	Boyd's Mills Press, 2003

Poems by Type/Topic

<i>Type/Topic</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
<i>Couplets</i>	Prelutsky, Jack	"I'm The Single Most Wonderful Person I Know"
	Silverstein, Shel	"Deaf Donald"
		"Fancy Dive"
		"Homework Machine"
"Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take The Garbage Out"		
"Sick"		
Viorst, Judith	"Smart"	
	"It's A Wonderful World, But They Made A Few Mistakes"	
Wynne, Annette	"Excuse Us"	
	"Animals in the Zoo"	

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<i>Type/Topic</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
<i>Drugs</i>	Keeve, Mildred	“A Place to Run” “Just Say No!” “The ‘Rock’”
	Sexton, Anne	“The Addict”
<i>Family</i>	Glenn, Mel	“Dawn Weinberger” “Hildy Ross” “Justin Faust” “Rodney Whitaker”
	Hayden, Robert	“Those Winter Sundays”
	Hughes, Langston	“Mother to Son”
	Jenkins, Brooks	“Loneliness”
	Kunitz, Stanley	“The Portrait”
	Millay, Edna St. Vincent	“The Courage That My Mother Had”
	Mora, Pat	“Mothers and Daughters”
	Ortiz, Simon J.	“What My Uncle Tony Told My Sister, Angie, and Me”
	Roethke, Theodore	“My Papa’s Waltz”
	Viorst, Judith	“Our Mom’s a Real Nice Mom But She Can’t Cook” “What Dads Do”
Walker, Alice	“Women”	
<i>Feelings</i>	Glenn, Mel	“Ellen Winters” “Lauren Jones” “Lisa Goodman” “Susan Tulchin” “Thomas Kearns”
	Holbrook, Sara	“Disappointment” “I Never Said I Wasn’t Difficult” “What to Do When She Looks at You?”
	Mora, Pat	“First Love”
	Viorst, Judith	“If I Were In Charge of the World” “Short Love Poem”

<i>Type/Topic</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
<i>Friendship</i>	Glenn, Mel	“Brenda Stewart” “Phillip Zavala/Connie Morrison” (good example of opposite poem)
	Viorst, Judith	“See the Jolly Fat Boy”
<i>Future</i>	Angelou, Maya	“Alone”
	Silverstein, Shel	“What if”
<i>Inspirational</i>	Allen, Samuel	“To Satch”
	Angelou, Maya	“Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” “Still I Rise”
	Austin, Mary	“A Song Of Greatness”
	Driscoll, Louise	“Hold Fast Your Dreams”
	Hughes, Langston	“Dream Variations” “Dreams” “I Dream A World” “The Dream Keeper”
	King, Jr., Martin Luther	“I Have A Dream” “Raymond Richard Patterson”
	Silverstein, Shel	“Listen To The Mustn’ts”
<i>Limericks</i>	Ciardi, John	“Be Kind to Dumb Animals”
	Livingston, Myra Cohn	Untitled (“Said a restless ... ”)
	Mahy, Margaret	“My Sister”
<i>School</i>	Appelt, Kathi	“Notes Passed Back and Forth in United States History, Seventh Period”
<i>School</i>	Antler	“Raising My Hand”
	Glenn, Mel	“Mr. Henry Axhelm” “Ms. Marilyn Lindowsky”
	Robinson, Barbara B.	“Foreign Student”
	Silverstein, Shel	“Kidnapped”
	Stein, Dona Luongo	“Homework”
	Tsuboi, Shigeji	“Silent, But ...”



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<i>Type/Topic</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Poem Title</i>
<i>Sports</i>	Francis, Robert	“His Running My Running”
	Glenn, Mel	“Marvin Pickett”
	Mueller, Marnie	“Strategy for a Marathon”
	Scheele, Roy	“Nothing But Net”
<i>The World</i>	Coatsworth, Elizabeth	“Swift Things are Beautiful”
	Cullen, Countee	“Incident”
	George, Phil	“Battle Won is Lost”
	Glenn, Mel	“Kwang Chin Ho” “Song Vu Chin”
	Hughes, Langston	“Merry-Go-Round” “Troubled Woman”
	Jordan, Norman	“Feeding the Lions”
	Keeve, Mildred	“David Deal Family Play Day” “Soul Tears” “Too Little Time”
	Livingston, Myra Cohn	“Poor”
	Pollack, Felix	“Speaking: The Hero”
	Silverstein, Shel	“No Difference”
	Steiger, Anatoly	“Nobody Waits”
	Whitman, Walt	Untitled (“I sit... ”)
	Williams, William Carlos	“Young Woman at a Window”
	Yevtushenko, Yevgeny	“Lies”