

# Poetry Performance

*Fourth Grade + ELA and Music*

Adapted by Cristi Clark

## CORE SUBJECT AREA

ELA

## ART FORM + ELEMENTS

Music

Rhythm

## MSCCR STANDARDS

RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.5, RL.4.3, RL.4.10, RF.4.4, RF.4.4a, RF.4.4b, RF.4.4c, W.4.9, W.4.9a, W.4.10, SL.4.1, SL.4.1a, SL.4.1b, SL.4.1c, SL.4.6, L.4.3, L.4.3c, L.4.4, L.4.4a, L.4.6,

## MSCCR CREATIVE ARTS STANDARDS

MU: Cr1.1.4a Improvise rhythmic, melodic, harmonic ideas, and explain connection to specific purpose and context.

MU: Cr2.1.4 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

MU: Cr3.1.4 Refine and complete artistic work.

MU: Cr3.2.4a Present the final version of personal created music to others, and explain connection to expressive content.

MU: Pr4.2.4a Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music in music for selected performance (rhythm).

## DURATION

Six 30-minute sessions

## VOCABULARY

Rhythm, Poetry

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Printouts

Poetry list

Websites

Giggle Poetry

Poetry for kids

## OBJECTIVES

Students will...

Acquire knowledge and appreciation for beat and meter in poetry by listening to poems that are read aloud and discussing them as a class.

Learn about the structure of poetry using an online tool to explore line breaks.

Practice critical thinking by looking for poems that can be appropriately performed using musical instruments to emphasize rhythm.

Apply the knowledge they have acquired about rhythm in poetry to their own poetry compositions.

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of music in enhancing the rhythm in poetry by using music to perform both their own poems and those written by others.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY:

Rhythm instruments

Computers with Internet access

LCD display monitor (optional)

STUDENT INTERACTIVES:

Line Break Explorer Grades 3 – 8

Student Interactive

Writing Poetry

[Line Break Explorer](#)

*The interactive explores the ways poets choose line breaks in their writing. After viewing the demonstration, students are invited to experiment with line breaks themselves.*

## LESSON SEQUENCE

### SESSION 1

1. Read aloud two or three poems to the class. As you finish each one, encourage discussion using questions such as the following:

- What do you see in your mind when you listen to this poem?
- What kind of sounds do you hear?
- Can you hear a beat in the words of the poem? (You might read a line from the poem and tap your hand on your leg to the rhythm of the words to show students what you mean here.)
- Why do you think the poet wrote the poem this way?

2. When you finish reading the poems, ask students to compare them using questions such as the following:

- How are these poems the same? How are they different?
- Which poems have the strongest rhythm? How can you tell?
- Which is your favorite poem? Why?

3. Choose a student to demonstrate the main beat by clapping his or her hands while you read a poem with a strong rhythm. Have the rest of the students join in by clapping their hands or tapping their feet. Tell students that they should not clap so loudly that their clapping drowns out the words.

4. Ask students the question, "What else could you use besides your hands to keep the beat?" List different kinds of rhythm instruments on the board.

5. Demonstrate using different voices to read one of the students' favorite poems. Ask students the following questions: Which ways of reading this poem do you like best? (Tell students that no one answer is right or wrong and that they might not all agree.)

How is tone or volume of voice used to express feeling? How does a loud voice make you feel? How does a crabby voice sound?

Would any of the poems sound better if they were sung, or if perhaps one word or phrase were sung instead of read?

### SESSION 2

Note: In between Sessions 1 and 2, choose one of the poems students especially liked and make copies for the entire class.

1. Distribute copies of the poem from Session 1 and the rhythm instruments you made or borrowed. Divide the class into groups of two to four students and have them plan how to read the poem using musical instruments and different sounding voices.

2. Give students time to practice. Then have them read and perform their poems for the class.

### SESSION 3

1. Have students search for poems in print or online that they think will read well with the help of music.

Demonstrate how to look for poems on [Giggle Poetry](#) and [Poetry for Kids](#) and give them the opportunity to look

at the various anthologies you have collected.

2. Once each student has found and printed or copied a poem that he or she would like to read using music, allow time for experimentation with different rhythm instruments and different sounding voices.
3. Have students take turns helping each other read and perform their poems for the class.

#### SESSION 4

1. Display the Line Break Explorer on an LCD screen as a whole-class demonstration or allow students to work in pairs at individual computers. Encourage students to answer the questions asked as the tool is used and focus students' attention on how different patterns of line breaks make a difference in how a poem is read.
2. If students are working in pairs, ask them to print the poems they have modified using the tool and have a few volunteers read them aloud to the class.
3. Discuss what students have discovered about line breaks in poems. Questions for discussion include:
  - What difference does it make where lines in a poem break?
  - How do line breaks affect the rhythm of a poem?
  - Do different line breaks make different meanings and sounds?

#### SESSION 5

1. Have students write their own poems. If they have trouble thinking of an idea, provide a list of suitable topics, such as holidays, sports, recess, and friendship.
2. Once students have written a first draft, ask them to arrange the words in different ways. Tell them they want to find the most pleasing pattern and rhythm.
3. Have students share their revised poems in pairs, telling them to give each other feedback on the rhythm and pattern of their poems.

#### SESSION 6

1. Have students determine how to accompany the poems they wrote in Session 5 using instruments and voices. If you have a CD player available in your classroom, you might also allow them to choose music to accompany their poems.
2. Give students time to practice performing their poems in small groups. Then have students share their poems with the class.

### EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Read lyrics of popular children's songs. Discuss what the lyrics mean and how the music enhances the lyrics.

Work with music teachers to help students record their poem rhythms.

Ask students who play instruments to bring them to school and accompany poetry readings.

### SOURCES



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
MERIDIAN



## TIPS + FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### PREPARATION

1. Collect poetry books and choose specific poems from them to share with the class (the Poetry List offers suggested books). Pick three or four poems with a strong rhythm to read aloud to students; practice reading them.
2. Collect rhythm instruments, such as rhythm sticks, shakers, drums, and tambourines. You can borrow instruments from the music teacher or make simple shakers with rice and dried beans in metal canisters.
3. Make sure that students have permission to use the Internet, following your school policy. If you need to, reserve two 30-minute sessions in your school's computer lab. These do not need to be on consecutive days (see Sessions 3).
4. Familiarize yourself with the [Giggle Poetry](#) and [Poetry for Kids](#) websites. Go through the steps of Line Break Explorer, jotting down answers to the questions. Bookmark all three websites on your classroom or lab computers.