

Middle Grades 6-8 Grade (Division 3)

Lesson Plan: Diving into Poetry

Grade Level: 6th–8th Grade

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Objective: Students will analyze, interpret, and create poetry, focusing on themes, structure, and personal expression.

Standard: RL.6.10 – By the end of grade 6, read and understand literature within the 6-8 text complexity band proficiently and independently for sustained periods of time. Connect prior knowledge and experiences to text.

Standard: RL.7.10 – By the end of grade 7, read and understand literature within the 6-8 text complexity band proficiently and independently for sustained periods of time. Connect prior knowledge and experiences to text.

Standard: RL.8.10 – By the end of grade 8, read and understand literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.



1. Warm-Up: Word Association (5–10 minutes)

- **What to Do:**

Write a word on the board (e.g., "freedom," "nature," or "dreams"). Ask students to write down the first 3–5 words that come to mind. Discuss their responses and connect them to how poets use imagery and emotion to explore ideas.

- **Discuss 'Poetry Tools'**

2. Read Aloud & Discuss (15–20 minutes)

Poem 1: "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou

Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>

- **Focus:** Themes of resilience and empowerment.
- **Activity:** Ask students:
 - What emotions does the poem evoke?

- How does repetition emphasize the poem's message?
- Identify examples of figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors).

Poem 2: "Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46565/ozymandias>

- **Focus:** Themes of legacy and impermanence.
- **Activity:** Discuss:
 - What imagery stands out?
 - How does the poem's structure support its message?
 - What can we learn from the statue's story?

Poem 3: "If—" by Rudyard Kipling

Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46473/if--->

- **Focus:** Advice and ideals.
- **Activity:**
 - How does the speaker define maturity and success?
 - Which lines resonate most with you? Why?

3. Writing Activity (20–25 minutes)

Option A: Found Poetry

What to Do:

Provide students with a short text (e.g., a magazine article, a news story, or a textbook excerpt). Ask them to create a poem by highlighting or rearranging words and phrases from the text. Encourage them to focus on a theme or mood.

Why It Works:

Introduces poetry in a low-pressure way, showing that inspiration can come from unexpected places.

Option B: Free Verse Poems

What to Do:

Ask students to write a free verse poem inspired by one of the read-aloud poems. Encourage them to explore personal experiences, emotions, or ideas. Provide a guiding prompt, such as:

- "Write about a time you overcame a challenge."
- "Imagine a moment frozen in time—what do you see, hear, and feel?"

Why It Works:

Allows students to explore personal expression without worrying about rhyme or strict structure.

Option C: Collaborative Group Poem

What to Do:

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group a stanza to contribute to a class-wide poem on a shared theme (e.g., “Hope,” “Change,” or “The Future”). Compile the stanzas into one cohesive piece.

Why It Works:

Fosters teamwork while giving students ownership over part of the creative process.

4. Share & Reflect (5–10 minutes)

- **What to Do:**

Invite students to read their poems aloud or display them in the classroom. Reflect on the themes and emotions expressed in their work.

- **Why It Works:**

Builds confidence and creates a sense of community through shared creativity.

Optional Homework or Extension Activity

- **Personal Anthology:**

Ask students to collect 3–5 poems they enjoy (from class or their own discovery) and write a short reflection on why they chose each poem.

- **Illustrate a Poem:**

Choose one of the read-aloud poems and create a visual representation of its themes and imagery.

Other Poetry Teaching Resources

- [Get Outstanding Poetry from Kids With 4 Simple Skills](#)
- Explore more poems at [Poetry for Kids by Kenn Nesbitt](#).