

NAME: _____

OUR CLASS POETRY UNIT

Poetry can be described or defined in many ways. A good way to put it is "poetry is the art of language." Another good description of poetry is "the best words in the best order."

If you compare a poem to a painting, you can say:

- the page is the canvas (what the painter paints on)
- the words are the paints
- the poet is the painter
- the reader is the viewer of the painting

When you look at a painting you can notice lots of different things:

- the size of the painting
- the types of paint used: oil, water color, etc
- the colors used in the painting
- the brush strokes: thick and bold, delicate and thin
- what is in the painting: a portrait, still-life, a scene, something abstract (not anything particular, just colors or shapes)
- what the painting is meant to do: show a scene, express an idea, make you think about something in particular

When you read a poem you can notice and ask lots of different things as well. You can think about:

- The word choice
 - Verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs
 - What specific thoughts do the words bring?
 - Are they abstract words (words that don't give you a picture) or concrete (words that do give you a picture)?

- The sounds of words
 - the consonants, like hard "k" or soft "s"
 - the vowels, like long vowels (ooo) or short vowels (ah)
 - the rhyme or slant rhyme (almost rhyme)
- The rhythm of the words
 - What syllables are emphasized?
 - What ones are not?
- The pattern of the words
 - they could be in a formal way, like a haiku or limerick
 - they could have a pattern but not in a particular form
 - or they could be in free verse with no particular rhyming, rhythm or pattern
- How it looks on the page
 - Notice how it is different from stories because instead of sentences, it has lines. The lines do not go across the page continuously, but stop and begin below the previous line.
 - Does it have long lines or short lines?
 - Where are the line breaks (where one line ends and another begins)?
 - Where are the stanza breaks?
 - Does the poet use capital letters?
 - Does he or she use conventional (usual)punctuation?
- The meaning of the words: they could
 - describe an image
 - tell a story
 - make a collage of thoughts or scenes
 - send a message
 - play with words and sounds

Think about some of the writing and literary words you have learned this year and how you can use that knowledge in

writing your poem. You have learned about:

- Mental imaging - "drawing" a picture with words Using strong verbs - words that describe an action
Describing words - using specific, strong adjectives and adverbs
- Simile - a comparison of two things not usually compared using "like" or "as." EXAMPLE: "That sandwich is as big as a house!"

You Will Be a Published Poet

Your final assignment will be to write poems inspired by a type of science that interests you, from space to bugs to robots (you'll choose). You will write many different poems and then choose your favorite among them to publish in a class book.

We will use many resources to help us with writing our poems. We will each keep a Commonplace Book. A commonplace book is a notebook filled with items of every kind: quotes, letters, poems, photographs, drawings, excerpts of other books...and also filled with your own notes, journal entries, drawings and poems. It's a place to let your creativity flow and to help you be inspired.

For the science inspiration, we have many resources. To start, the science curriculum teacher has given us a list of all the Science Units including sheets with vocabulary to help us think of ideas. We will also be using many non-fiction science books and texts to help us with inspiration.

Just like Emily Dickinson's poems inspired by flowers and nature, and Ms. M's poem about the planet Jupiter, think of how science words help make perfect pictures in the minds of your readers.

There are many types of poems to write. Here are some ideas:

- the lines of the poem DO NOT have to rhyme. Write at least one poem that doesn't have rhyming lines. Some people feel more creative when trying to rhyme. Others like when they don't have to rhyme.
 - describe an image or several images
 - tell a story, real or imagined
 - write the lyrics to a song
 - use a particular form, like an acrostic or haiku
 - write about one thing and describe it in detail
 - make a found poem: look through a non-fiction book and pick out your favorite words and use them in your poem
 - make a list poems, that starts with "I wish" or "I dreamed"
 - other ideas?
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Here's some guidelines for writing a poem. We will go into more detail later:

DRAFT your poem - be open to **making mistakes**--that's how you learn. Experiment, play, cross out, **make a mess!** Later you can clean it up. (See "REVISING").

REVISE your poem - Re-read it on your own several times. Make sure you are saying what the poem wants you to say. Share it with a friend. Be open to suggestions and questions. Make sure you have read it aloud to yourself and your friend.

EDIT - for correct spelling, usage, punctuation and grammar