

# Teacher Lesson Plan

## Objectives:

- identify ways that poetry can be a form of self-expression
- explore characteristics of spoken word poetry

**Materials:** student-friendly spoken word poetry video, chart paper, **Express Yourself** Student Worksheet, classroom poster (included)

**Time:** one 45-minute class period

**Essential Question:** How can poetry help me to express myself?

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Brainstorm** what students already know about poetry.
- 2 Ask** students if they have heard of spoken word poetry. Explain that spoken word poetry is a powerful form that is meant to be performed.
- 3 Show** students a video example of spoken word poetry. (Due to the content and language of many spoken word performances, be sure to preview any video examples to ensure they are appropriate for your students.)
- 4 Invite** students to share their impressions of this art form and what made the performance powerful.
- 5** As a class, **create** a “Looks Like” and “Sounds Like” chart for the spoken word poetry performance. (For example, the “Looks Like” column might include gestures, facial expressions, body language, and posture. The “Sounds Like” column might include sharing personal experiences, changing tone of voice, speed, and volume.) Refer to the poem *Crisscross* on the poster for a poem the class can analyze together. For additional lessons about analyzing and writing poetry, visit [scholastic.com/poetryismypower](http://scholastic.com/poetryismypower).
- 6 Pose** this question to your class: “How do you express yourself?” Allow students to share their responses with a partner, then invite students to share them with the entire class. As a class, write categories on the board showing how the students expressed themselves, such as through physical activity, creativity, and humor.
- 7 Explain** to students that they will now have a chance to write a poem about how they express themselves. Direct students to write a draft of a poem for homework, review it in class with their peers, and then write and decorate the final draft in the space provided on the accompanying activity sheet. (In order to generate ideas, some students may want to start by making a list of special qualities that they have.)
- 8 Invite** students to perform their poems in front of the class. Allow students to practice ahead of time, referring to the “Looks Like” and “Sounds Like” chart for support.
- 9 To help** your students’ poems reach a larger audience, consider entering their poems into the **Express Yourself Poetry Contest**.



Also visit [scholastic.com/american-girl](http://scholastic.com/american-girl) to check out the Gabriela™ book.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

# Express Yourself THROUGH POETRY!

Writing **poetry** is a way to share what is really on your mind.

There is no wrong way to write a **poem**!

Write a **poem** that answers this question: How do you **express** yourself?

After you write and edit a draft of your poem, write and decorate your **poem** in the space below.



# poetry is my power

Poetry is a powerful type  
of writing that helps us  
express ourselves freely.

## Crisscross

My mind spins 'round

Feet fly forward one, two, three  
Five, six, seven, **here comes eight**  
I'm flying, flipping, floating free

Do you feel that?

Can you hear that?

**Two dozen hands**  
**Two dozen feet**

Two dozen shoulders, knees, eyebrows, and toes  
Silently shouting what my heart has always known

### STRUCTURE

Do you know  
why we call this  
"free verse"?

### SOUND PATTERNS

Can you spot the  
alliteration?

### MEANING

What examples  
of strong **figurative**  
**language** can you  
find here?

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# Teacher Lesson Plan 1

## Objectives:

- identify common devices used in poetry
- write poems using common poetic devices

## Materials: Poetic Devices

Student Resource Sheet, poetic device examples to display, teacher-selected artwork

**Time:** one to two 40-minute class period(s)

**Essential Question:** How can poetic devices add meaning to a poem?

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Define** “poetic device” as a tool that can give shape to a poem, add to its meaning, or intensify its mood.
- 2 Display** an example of each poetic device (either the example from the Student Resource Sheet or a teacher-selected example). A student or the teacher will identify the device and explain the definition.
- 3 Distribute** the Student Resource Sheet. Ask students to put a check mark next to any of the terms they already know well and an X next to any of the terms that are unfamiliar.
- 4** Students can **record** their own examples of each poetic device in the last column on the Student Resource Sheet.
- 5 Tell** students that they will now have a chance to practice using these devices in their own poetry. Display a work of art—for example, a famous painting such as *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh or a famous photograph such as *Migrant Mother* by Dorothea Lange.
- 6 Assign** each student a particular device from the list. Provide students with 1–2 minutes to describe the painting using that device.
- 7** Students can **share** their writing with the class. For additional practice, students could be asked to identify the device that their classmates used in their writing.
- 8 Repeat** steps 5 and 6, assigning different devices for students to use each time.
- 9** When students have had an opportunity to use and identify several of the devices, **explain** that they will now have a chance to write a full-length poem based on a work of art.



- 10 Display** a new painting or photograph for students to examine. Provide 10–15 minutes for them to write their poems and encourage them to use as many of the new poetic devices as possible.
- 11** Finished poems can be displayed in the classroom, or students can swap poems and search for the poetic devices used.

## Express Yourself Poetry Contest

Your students could win a \$400 Scholastic Gift Card OR an American Girl® 2017 Girl of the Year™ Gabriela™ Collection—plus, you receive a \$100 Amex Gift Card!

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# Poetic DEVICES

TERM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES	MY EXAMPLE
<b>Rhyme</b>	words that end with the same sound	“I never saw a Purple Cow, I never hope to see one, But I can tell you, anyhow, I'd rather see than be one!” — <i>Gelett Burgess</i>	
<b>Onomatopoeia</b> (on-o-mat-o-pee-ah)	a word whose sound matches its meaning	Splat! Buzz!	
<b>Alliteration</b>	the same sound used at the beginning of words	Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.	
<b>Rhythm</b>	the beat of a poem	“Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary...” — <i>Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven”</i>	
<b>Repetition</b>	the same words or lines used in a poem again and again	“First I saw the white bear, then I saw the black; Then I saw the camel with a hump upon his back” — <i>William Makepeace Thackeray, “At the Zoo”</i>	
<b>Simile</b>	comparing two unlike things using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	“An emerald is as green as grass; A ruby red as blood” — <i>Christina Rossetti, “Flint”</i>	
<b>Metaphor</b>	comparing two unlike things without using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	“Fame is a bee. It has a song— It has a sting— Ah, too, it has a wing.” — <i>Emily Dickinson</i>	
<b>Personification</b>	giving human qualities (like feelings) to something that isn't human	“The mountain and the squirrel had a quarrel” — <i>Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Fable”</i>	
<b>Hyperbole</b>	creating an exaggerated version of reality	“Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear, And the rocks melt wi' the sun; I will love thee still, my dear, While the sands o' life shall run.” — <i>Robert Burns, “A Red, Red Rose”</i>	



# Teacher Lesson Plan 2

## Objectives:

- summarize a poem
- determine the theme of a poem

**Materials:** *What Does This Poem Mean?* Student Worksheet, teacher-selected poem for class analysis

## Possible poems:

- “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” by Maya Angelou
- “Your World” by Georgia Douglas Johnson

**Time:** one 40-minute class period

**Essential Question:** How does analyzing a poem help us to understand it better?

- 3 Read** the poem out loud once to model fluent reading, then have students read the poem out loud to a partner.
- 4 Explain** that understanding what happens in the poem is the first step in analyzing poetry. As a class, paraphrase the poem, either by assigning each stanza to a small group of students or by completing a think-aloud as a whole class.
- 5** If necessary, stop to **define** any terms in the poem that are unfamiliar to students.
- 6 Point out** that understanding the feeling of the poem is an important step in analyzing it. Reread the poem, focusing on the question “What type of feeling or mood does this poem have?” Use think-pair-share to collect students’ ideas. Invite students to circle the words or punctuation marks that helped create the mood of the poem.
- 7 Reread** the poem, focusing on the question “What message is this poem sending?” Use think-pair-share to collect students’ ideas, and mark the words and phrases that support the theme.



- 8 Have** students complete the *What Does This Poem Mean?* Student Worksheet to apply these skills to a new poem.

## Lesson Steps:

- 1 Explain** to students that poetry is a way that writers express themselves. We often understand poetry better if we read or hear it several times and analyze it, or look closely at the meaning.
- 2 Display** the selected poem, either written on chart paper or projected on a screen.

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## WHAT DOES THIS Poem MEAN?

Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was an American writer who used poetry to express herself. Read her poem “Autumn” and answer the questions about the meaning of the poem.

### “Autumn” by Emily Dickinson

The morns are **meeker** than they were,  
The **nuts** are getting brown;  
The berry's cheek is **plumper**,  
The **rose** is out of town.  
The maple wears a **gayer** scarf,  
The field a **scarlet** gown.  
Lest I should be **old-fashioned**,  
I'll put a **trinket** on.

- 1 Read the poem one time. What happens in this poem?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Read the poem again. Circle three descriptive words. What moods or feelings do these words give the poem?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Read the poem one more time. Put a star next to two details that gave you a clue about the person speaking. What do these clues tell you about the speaker and what she is speaking about?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What do you think is the message or theme of the poem? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_