

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 454 540

CS 217 606

TITLE Play with Words: Rhyme & Verse. [Lesson Plan].  
SPONS AGENCY National Endowment for the Humanities (NFAH), Washington, DC.; MCI WorldCom, Arlington, VA.; Council of the Great City Schools, Washington, DC.  
PUB DATE 2001-00-00  
NOTE 25p.  
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans.html>.  
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Creative Writing; Curriculum Enrichment; \*Language Arts; Language Usage; Learning Activities; Lesson Plans; National Standards; \*Poetry; Primary Education; \*Rhyme; Skill Development; Student Educational Objectives  
IDENTIFIERS Poetic Forms

## ABSTRACT

Children enjoy listening to bouncy rhythms and reciting catchy rhymes. Poetry provides a rich vehicle for helping children explore how language sounds and works. Such exploration helps develop skills related to language usage, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and auditory memory, while also fostering an understanding of thematically related concepts. Most important, a study of poetry helps promote a warm, relaxed classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning. With this lesson plan, students can use their senses to experience poetry--they will listen to poems and rhymes, clap out syllables, and sing along with familiar tunes, as well as use puppets and crafts to help recall and retell favorite poems, and finally, experience the joy of crafting their own original poems. The lesson plan contains guiding questions and material on how to prepare to teach the lesson. It also contains the following suggested activities for lessons: Complete the Rhymes; Syllable Clap; Word Family Rhyme Charts; Silly Sounds and Ridiculous Rhymes; Discovering Nursery Rhymes; and Exploring Haiku. The lesson plan provides information and ideas for teaching each lesson; cites learning objectives; lists materials needed; gives appropriate grade levels (Grades K-2) and time required for each lesson; and outlines national standards for English/language arts covered in the lesson plan. Contains an "Extending the Lesson" section. Lists several helpful Web sites. (NKA)

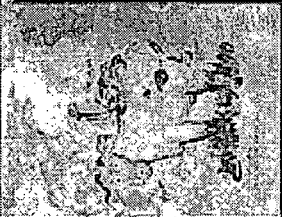
## Play with Words: Rhyme & Verse. [Lesson Plan]

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## Play with Words: Rhyme & Verse



The Cat Went Moo  
and the Cow Meow,  
By Anne Elizabeth Eaves



### Introduction

Children of all ages enjoy listening to bouncy rhythms and reciting catchy rhymes. Poetry provides us with a rich vehicle for helping children explore how language sounds and works. Such exploration helps develop skills related to language usage, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and auditory memory, while also fostering an understanding of thematically related concepts. Most important, a study of poetry helps promote a warm, relaxed classroom atmosphere that's conducive to learning.

In this lesson, students will use their senses to experience poetry. Students will listen to poems and rhymes, clap out syllables, and sing along with familiar tunes. They will also use puppets and crafts to help recall and retell favorite poems. Finally, students will experience the joy of crafting their own original poems.

Guiding Question: What is a poem? Have you ever heard a poem? Has anyone ever shared a poem with you? Do you have a favorite poem? Can you name or recite your favorite poem? What do you like about that poem? How can you tell the difference between a poem and a story? Can stories be poems?



### Learning Objectives

#### SUBJECT AREAS ▶

Literature & Language  
Arts: Poetry

Art and Culture

History and Social  
Studies

#### GRADE LEVELS ▶

K-2

#### TIME REQUIRED ▶

**Complete the Rhymes**  
—One or more 35-minute  
class periods per book

**Syllable Clap**—One or  
more 35-minute class  
periods

**Word Family Rhyme  
Charts**—One 35-minute  
class period to introduce;  
ongoing long-term  
development

**Silly Sounds and  
Ridiculous Rhymes**—One  
35-minute class period for

After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to:

- verbalize an understanding of the themes, subjects, speakers, and inferences in the poems they hear.
- use verbal and physical signals to show that they recognize rhyming words and word family endings.
- define what a syllable is and learn to count syllabic beats.
- learn that there are different kinds of poems, including those that rhyme and Japanese haiku.
- demonstrate knowledge of what a haiku is by writing or dictating an original haiku using descriptive words.
- memorize a favorite short poem or nursery rhyme, and act it out to display understanding of its meaning.

### Preparing to Teach This Lesson

This lesson will require you to access various poems through EDSITEMent-reviewed web sites. You may share these poems with students in several different ways: at individual computer stations; by assigning small groups to share a number of computers; by means of computer-projected images displayed to the whole class; or by printing out the images and distributing copies of them to students. You will need to decide which format will work best for you depending on the availability of computers and Internet access in your classroom. Directions for accessing poems that do not have direct links are provided throughout the lesson.

For a list of materials you will need to teach this lesson, plus a selection of books of poetry not available online, [click here](#).

[Download a sample of criteria for assessing student performance is included](#)

each section

**Discovering Nursery Rhymes**—One 35-minute class period for each section

**Exploring Haiku**—One 35-minute class period for each section

### Skills

understanding poetry

auditory perception and discrimination  
oral language  
vocabulary  
development  
spelling patterns

creative writing

literature exploration

cross-cultural connections  
artistic expression

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

**NCTE/IRA List of Standards for the English Language Arts**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of

with this lesson.

## Suggested Activities

- Complete the Rhymes
- Syllable Clap
- Word Family Rhyme Charts
- Silly Sounds and Ridiculous Rhymes
- Discovering Nursery Rhymes
- Exploring Haiku

## LESSON 1

Warm-Up Activity: Complete the Rhymes

Most youngsters are familiar with authors Dr. Seuss, Shel Silverstein, Bill Martin Jr., and John Archambault. Even if they don't know these authors' names, they are probably familiar with their books, stories, and poems. Their children's classics, like *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, and *Green Eggs and Ham*, are perennial favorites. Choose two or three books from the list below to read aloud. Also, invite children to bring in their favorite rhyming books and poems. When you have finished reading, reread the same selection again. This time, as you come to a word that rhymes with one that's already been read, pause long enough to allow children to supply the correct rhyming word.

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, written by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle (Henry Holt Books for Young Readers, 1998)

*Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*, written by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle (Henry Holt & Company, LLC, 1997)

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by John Archambault, Lois Ehlert (Illustrator), and Bill Martin Jr.

*A Giraffe and a Half*, written by Shel Silverstein et al. (Harper Collins Children's Book Group, 1964)

*Green Eggs and Ham*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001)

*Hop on Pop*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House, Inc., 1994)

- texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

*One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001)

*The Cat in the Hat*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1999)

*Fox in Socks* by Dr. Seuss, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1966)

To explore an interactive book with music and illustrations online, visit [The Cat Went Moo & the Cow Meow](#) by Ann Elizabeth Eaves, illustrated by Patti Buxton. It can be accessed through EDSTTEment and the [Internet Public Library youth division](#).

## LESSON 2

Warm-Up Activity: Syllable Clap

This activity will strengthen students' auditory perception and discrimination skills, while readying them for the poetic activities that follow. Begin by telling students that while some words rhyme, *all* words have one or more beats, depending on how many word parts they contain. Demonstrate how to clap out the beats, or syllables, in your first name. Clap your name out a second time, but this time ask students to count the number of times you clap. Tell students that the number of claps they counted is the number of beats, or syllables, in your name. Invite students to join you in clapping out the beats in each of their first names. Repeat the activity using their last names. Another time, have children use rhythm instruments or body parts (such as thigh slapping or feet stomping) to beat out the number of syllables in a favorite rhyming poetry selection.

Variation: Tell students you are going to read some word pairs, and they should decide if the words rhyme or not. Provide each student with an index card that has the word *YES* printed in green on one side, and the red *NO* printed in red on the other. Explain to students that if the word pairs you read rhyme, like *bat* and *cat*, they should place their cards on the table with the green *YES* facing up. If the word pairs you read do not rhyme, like *bat* and *dog*, they should place their cards on the table with the red *NO* facing up. Then read aloud the following three-letter rhyming and non-rhyming word pairs:

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
8. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
9. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

**View your state's standards**



sat/cat	(YES)
cat/bin	(NO)
man/can	(YES)
lot/map	(NO)
hot/not	(YES)
hit/bit	(YES)
fan/rip	(NO)
pot/rot	(YES)

Watch to see which children hesitate or guess incorrectly. Make a note to repeat this activity with these children. If children can do this activity easily, try choosing nonrhyming words that begin and/or end with the same consonant letter or sound, for example, *bit/bat* and *mop/map*.

### LESSON 3

#### Activity: Word Family Rhyme Charts

Poetry is an excellent way to introduce and teach word families. Begin the lesson by reading a poem, such as, "[Catch a Little Rhyme](#)" by Eve Merriam (available on EDSITEMENT through [The Academy of American Poets website](#)). Copy the poem onto a piece of chart paper. Have students take turns using a contrasting color marker to circle each set of rhyming words. For example, for "Catch a Little Rhyme," students would circle rhyming word poems that include *time/rhyme*, *door/floor*, *bicycle/icycle*, etc.

Use a separate piece of chart paper to write each pair of rhyming words. Have students use markers to underline the word endings that rhyme in each pair. Guide students to notice that sometimes word endings that rhyme are spelled the same and other times they are spelled differently. Encourage the discovery that word endings that look different sometimes sound the same.

Repeat this activity with other poems and stories that rhyme. As you discover more rhyming words, add them to the list of words that share the same word ending sound. (If you wish, you may use a separate piece of chart paper for each family of word endings.) Use the lists of rhyming words you generate to help students write their own rhyming poems.

**Activity Extension:** As children explore poetry and rhyming selections, they are bound to encounter nonsense rhyming words. Use this as an opportunity to have students add their own nonsense words to each list of word family words. They should select a color marker different from they one used for the rest of

the list to record these nonsense words. That way, the nonsense words will be easily discernible from the real words on the lists. For now, let students enjoy the auditory sensation. Display the word charts around the classroom.

## LESSON 4

Activity: Silly Sounds and Ridiculous Rhymes

Review each of the word family lists that students have made (see [earlier activity](#)) and draw attention to the nonsense words. From experience, students should realize that silly, or made up, rhyming words are often used to construct poems. Next, read "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll and "Bleezer's Ice Cream" by Jack Prelutsky (both available on EDSITEment through [The Academy of American Poets website](#)).

You can also read a book by Dr. Seuss, such as *There's a Wocket in My Pocket!*; *Dr. Seuss's Book of Ridiculous Rhymes*. Have students explain the selections in their own words. Ask students to explain why—even though the authors used silly, meaningless words—we have no trouble figuring out the meaning of the story or poem.

Tell the students that they are going to write their own silly poem. Begin by writing a familiar poem on large chart paper. Leave out the rhyming words located at the line endings and replace each with a blank line. (Tip: If the poem includes more than one rhyming family, color-code the blank lines accordingly.) Next, tell the children they are going to use the nonsense words on the list to fill in the blanks. When the activity is finished, let the children read the poem in groups.

The poem should look something like this:

Diddle diddle dumpling, my son \_\_\_\_\_,  
Went to bed with his stockings \_\_\_\_\_.  
One shoe off, and one shoe \_\_\_\_\_;  
Diddle diddle dumpling, my son \_\_\_\_\_.

## LESSON 5

Activity: Discovering Nursery Rhymes

Most children are familiar with nursery rhymes, some of which have even been put to music. Almost every child can sing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* or *Baa, Baa, Black Sheep*.

Choose a few nursery rhymes to read to and sing with your students. You can



use a book from your school library for some of the better-known nursery rhymes and children's poems. You can also find selected Mother Goose nursery rhymes for students to listen to and sing along with ([Mother Goose, volume 1](#); [Mother Goose, volume 2](#)). Both sites are directly linked through EDSITEMent and the [Internet Public Library youth division](#).

Print each rhyme on chart paper and read it aloud, running your fingers beneath the print as you go. Then, sing each rhyme (making up a simple tune if none exists). As you did before, ask children to take turns using a contrasting color marker to circle each rhyming set of words. Transfer each to the word family charts as described in the activity above. Ask students to use a show of hands to vote for their favorite nursery rhyme from the ones you have shared. Help students memorize the one voted class favorite. (Repeated group recitations will aid memorization.) Be sure to use song, physical movement, or puppets to help students act out and learn the rhyme. Then, offer students an opportunity to perform their rhyme for other classes or class visitors.

## LESSON 6

Activity: Exploring Haiku

Explain to your students that a haiku is a traditional Japanese poem that usually describes something in nature. Three of the most famous Japanese haiku poets are Basho, Buson, and Issa. [For more on haiku see Teacher Resources.](#)

Select a few haiku to read to the children from those available at [Haiku by Basho](#) and [Haiku for People](#) Both sites are accessible through EDSITEMent's [AskAsia](#) web site.

Print each haiku on chart paper and read it aloud, running your fingers beneath the print as you go. Examine each poem as you explain that when writing haiku, there are a few easy-to-follow rules.

1. A haiku has three lines. Each line in a haiku has a certain number of syllables. The first line has five syllables, the second has seven syllables, and the third has five. (Once in a while, when a haiku is translated from Japanese to English, the number of syllables in a line will be different.) Have students clap out the syllables for each line of each haiku.
2. Each haiku has a "kigo," or a season word. This word helps the reader to figure out what season the author is writing about. It may be a very obvious word, like snow for winter, but other times it's less obvious.
3. Haiku focuses on nature. Very often, a haiku tells about an animal, such as a fly or a frog.

Re-read some haiku. This excerpt is taken from EDSITEMent's partner site,

ARTSEGE. For each haiku, guide students through the rules to show them how haiku works.

Practice and review syllables. Remind students that syllables are parts or pieces of words. An easy way to practice recognizing syllables is to have students clap when they hear a syllable. It works like this: Begin with single-syllable words. The teacher says the word. Students repeat the word and clap simultaneously. Next, move on to two-syllable words. Repeat this activity for three- and four-syllable words. To help students become proficient, practice by mixing one-, two-, and three-syllable words. For added interest, perform this activity like a game of "Simon Says."

Write a collaborative haiku. Follow the three basic rules. First, divide large chart paper into three boxes. Label each box with one of three categories: Season, Animal, and Habitat. Next, using free association, ask the children to supply words describing each season. The chart might look something like this:

Season	Animal	Habitat
Summer	Frog	Pond
Fall	Squirrel	Woods
Winter	Polar Bear	Glacier
Spring	Butterfly	Flowers

Have students choose a word from each category. On a new piece of chart paper write each word on a separate line. Have students fill in the rest. Your haiku may look something like this:

*Frog quietly sits  
Pond so cool shimmers blue  
Lazy summer days*

Have children draw pictures to illustrate their haiku.

Consider broadening students' poetic repertoire by reading poetry from other countries and cultures.

### Feedback

We are interested in your assessment of this lesson! Tell us how it worked for you. Add a suggestion or share an innovative way in which you used these activities. Send your comments to us at [edsitement@neh.gov](mailto:edsitement@neh.gov).

### Material List

Chart paper

Markers

Index cards

Drawing paper

Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Printed copies of the following books, if used (not available online):

*Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes*, illustrated by Shirley Holt (Shirlee Publications, 1991)

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, written by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle (Henry Holt Books for Young Readers, 1998)

*Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*, written by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle (Henry Holt & Company, LLC, 1997)

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by John Archambault, Lois Ehlert (Illustrator), and Bill Martin Jr.

*A Giraffe and a Half*, written by Shel Silverstein et al. (Harper Collins Children's Book Group, 1964)

*Falling Up*, written by Shel Silverstein et al. (Harper Collins Children's Book Group, 1996)

*Where the Sidewalk Ends*, written by Shel Silverstein (Harper Collins Publishers, 2000)

*A Light in the Attic*, written by Shel Silverstein et al (Harper Collins Publishers, 1981)

*Green Eggs and Ham*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001)

*Hop on Pop*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House, Inc., 1994)

*One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001)

*The Cat in the Hat*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1999)

*Fox in Socks* by Dr. Seuss, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1966)

*There's a Wocket in My Pocket!: Dr. Seuss's Book of Ridiculous Rhymes*, written by Dr. Seuss, Theodore Seuss Geisel (Random House, Inc., 1996)



### **Extending the Lesson**

You can reinforce rhyming-word concepts by playing a memory game with rhyming-word cards. Inspiration for these words can come from any of the recommended books of poetry listed in this lesson. For students who are ready to write poetry, ask them to write a brief poem using the five senses.

Additional EDSITeMent lesson plans on poetry:

[Can You Haiku](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/can_you_haiku.html) (3-5)

[[http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/can\\_you\\_haiku.html](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/can_you_haiku.html)]

Students learn the rules and conventions of haiku, study examples by Japanese masters, and create haiku of their own.

[The World of Haiku](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/world_of_haiku.html) (6-12)

[[http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/world\\_of\\_haiku.html](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lessonplans/world_of_haiku.html)]

Explore the traditions and conventions of haiku and compare this classic form of Japanese poetry to a related genre of Japanese visual art.



### **Links to EDSITeMent Participating Websites**

[Teaching \(and Learning\) About Japan](http://www.csuohio.edu/history/japan/index.html)

[<http://www.csuohio.edu/history/japan/index.html>]

- [Traditional Japanese crafts, origami, and traditional theater](http://www.csuohio.edu/history/japan/index.html)  
[<http://www.csuohio.edu/history/japan/index.html>]

**ArtsEdge**

[<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>]

- [Information on haiku and Japanese literature](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/nso/asian/culture/literature.html)  
[<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/nso/asian/culture/literature.html>]

### **Internet Public Library**

[<http://www.ipl.org>]

- [Gigglepoetry](http://www.gigglepoetry.com/PoemList.cfm?T=1) has a terrific list of silly poems from some well-known children's poets. Among the poets featured are Bruce Lansky and Bill Dodds.  
[<http://www.gigglepoetry.com/PoemList.cfm?T=1>]
- Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* is part of the Internet Public Library's Librarian's Resources section.  
[<http://metalab.unc.edu/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext94/child11.txt>]
- [Edward Lear nonsense poetry](http://edwardlear.tripod.com/ns/index.html)  
[<http://edwardlear.tripod.com/ns/index.html>]

### **The Academy of American Poets**

- Shel Silverstein's "[The Toy Eater](http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/051199obit-silverstein.html)"\* with audio clip of him reading his poem  
<http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/051199obit-silverstein.html>]
- Shel Silverstein Retrospective  
[<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/05/16/specials/silverstein.1.html>]  
Poems and images from *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *Light in the Attic*. \*

\*NOTE: *The New York Times* on the Web is free of charge, however it requires a password to access materials.

### **Victorian Women's Writers Project**

- *Enchanted Tulips and Other Verses for Children* by Annie Keary, et. al.  
[<http://www.indiana.edu/~lettrs/vwwp/keary/tulips.html#p1>]



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