

Oral Language: Lesson Outline - Poetry

LEARNING OUTCOMES

To develop children's concepts, dispositions and skills in relation to:

- Engagement, listening and attention
- Social conventions and awareness of others
- Sentence structure and grammar
- Acquisition and use of oral vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Requests and questions
- Categorisation
- Retelling and elaborating
- Playful and creative use of language
- Information giving, explanation and justification
- Description, prediction and reflection

- To encounter interesting language presented through poetry
- To become familiar with poetic devices
- To elicit oral **vocabulary (semantics)** (known) based

on the topic generated by the poem

- To introduce new oral vocabulary (tier 1,2,3)
- To embed vocabulary in increasingly complex utterances, linking utterances coherently
- To encourage the children to **use language (language function: pragmatics)** creatively, e.g., to create a poem, story, illustration or word play

Listen and Think

Brainstorm

Question and Answer

Discuss and Consider

Imagine - Independent Talk

Introduction to the Poem

- Begin with a short discussion based on the theme of the poem.
- Set a purpose question for listening to the poem.
- Organise the children to listen to the poem.

Poetry Presentation

Read the poem aloud to the class, using vocal and facial expression and making plenty of eye contact.

Read aloud at least twice before asking the children to respond.

Let the children hear the poem first. Encourage them to listen carefully to the poem.



Oral Language: Lesson Outline - Poetry

Development (I)

First Encounters

Encourage children to respond to the initial encounter with the poem.

Ask children for

- their initial **thoughts** on the poem
- a favourite **image** from the poem
- an interesting **word** or combination of words they heard in the poem
- a **memory** evoked by the poem
- an interesting thought or **idea** in the poem
- a **feeling** in the poem
- a **sound** from the poem
- a **repetition** or pattern in the poem.

Speaking the Poem

Encourage children to speak the poem aloud. Children love to get their tongues around the sounds and rhythm of poetry.

Use a **group speaking** approach to keep the presentation of the poem lively and interesting each time it is spoken.

Exploring the Poem

The teacher leads whole-class discussion based on the poem.



- Look for the thrust of the poem.
- Distinguish the deeper meaning of the poem.
- Appreciate how words are used to achieve particular effects.
- Appreciate the effects of rhythm and rhyme.
- Examine the impact of repetition.
- Recognise the effects of simile and metaphor.
- Examine the power of alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia.

Oral Language: Lesson Outline - Poetry



The language learning focus is:

1. To draw children's attention to interesting language and language use encountered through in the poem
2. To elicit and encourage children to use the most complex and interesting language possible in their discussion of and response to the poem (understanding the content and structure of language).

When exploring the poem, focus on the subject matter, style and structure of the poem.

Development (2)

Responding to the Poem

The teacher facilitates pair/group talking tasks where the children respond imaginatively to the poetry experience (exploring and using language/developing communicative relationships through language).

Engagement activities based on the poem can include:

- whole class and pair work (*indicate roles assigned*)
- drama
- creative story
- poetry making
- illustration
- talking activities where language is used for a variety of purposes, using a range of styles.

For children, the main life of a poem is its spoken life.

Conclusion

Children share their responses to the engagement activities.

The teacher recaps on interesting words heard in the story and used throughout the lesson, and reviews children's language use.

Sample Poetry Lesson

Poetry (*Surprises* by Jean Conder Soule)



Target Oral Language Learning:

- That the children enjoy the poem
- That their listening, speaking skills, and powers of imagination are enhanced
- That the children's ability to *describe* is enhanced
- To encourage a creative response to the poem by supporting the children to create a poem of their own – a Cinquain

Resources: Guess what surprise is in the parcel!

Introduction

Stimulus: Use an interesting shaped parcel as a stimulus for the lesson.

Initiate a short *discussion* based on theme of poem.

Explore the concept of a 'surprise'.

Encourage the children to tell you how they *feel* about getting a surprise (e.g., *happy, delighted, excited, glad, thrilled, amazed, satisfied, pleased ...*).

Set a *purpose question* – What do we learn about surprises from the poem?

Organise the children to *listen* to the poem.

Presentation

(Encountering the poem)

Encourage children to *listen* carefully to the poem.

Read the poem aloud to the class, using *vocal and facial expression* and making plenty of *eye contact*.

Read aloud at least twice before asking the children to respond.

(*Understanding the Content and Structure of Language*).

Sample Poetry Lesson

Development (I)

(Responding to the poem/Oral Vocabulary Development – known/new: *Understanding the Content and Structure of Language*)

First Encounters

Ask the children about their favourite *type of surprise* that was mentioned in the poem or a *word* that they particularly liked in the poem, e.g., a *feeling* that they get from listening to the poem. Encourage the children to share their responses with a partner. Facilitate the children to **expand on their responses** to one another, justifying their choice.

Speaking the Poem

Give the children an opportunity to speak the poem aloud.

All the class speak the poem together the first time. Then give different groups one verse each to speak together. One group might speak the word *surprises* each time it comes up in the poem. Alternate groups and speak the poem aloud a few times.



Exploring the Poem – the thrust of the poem

Question the children on what the poem is about and on the impact of getting and giving surprises, e.g.,

- Who is speaking in the poem?
- Why do you think the poet is thinking about surprises?
- How does the poet feel about surprises?
- Which kind are his/her favourites?
- Why, do you think?

Sample Poetry Lesson

Exploring the Poem – the deeper meaning in the poem

- What do we learn about surprises from the poem?
- Can you remember the words the poet uses to describe what surprises might look like?
- What word does the poet repeat? Why is this, do you think?
- What words in the poem suggest that surprises are mysterious? (*wrapped, hidden, secret*)
- What words in the poem suggest that surprises are nice things? (*good, treat, interesting*)
- What words describe what a surprise might look like? (*round, long, tallish, square, flat, smallish*)
- What do you notice about the way the poem is arranged on the page?
- Why do you think it is arranged like this?
- Why do you think the poet wrote this poem?
- Have you questions you would like to ask the poet?
- Which one of these surprises would you most like to get? Why?

- Can you describe a surprise that you really liked?
- When do you get/give surprises?
- How do you think surprises make us feel?
- When would be a good time to give a surprise, to whom, in what form?
- Does a surprise always have to be a thing? Can it come in any other form?

(Understanding the Content and Structure of Language)

Development (2)

(Exploring and Using language/Developing communicative relationships through language)

Responding to the Poem

Let's Whisper a Secret

Play a game of *Chinese Whispers*.

Whisper a secret and pass it on in your group.

See how it changes as it goes around the group!

(Language Function: Listen and inform)

Sample Poetry Lesson



Let's make a poem of our own about surprises!

Cinquain on the topic of Surprises

Decide on a:

- 1-word title – *Surprises*
- 2-word phrase to describe topic – *Heart races*
- 3-word phrase telling something about the topic (e.g., something it can do) – *Smiling, delighted faces*
- 4-word phrase describing a feeling about the topic – *Jumping, shrieking, tearing, staring*
- 1-word which refers back to the title – *Prizes!*

The teacher models and scaffolds the creation of a cinquain on the whiteboard with the children.

(Language Function: To use Language imaginatively and creatively)

Let's play a game: Guess what's in the parcel

The teacher invites children to look at a range of interestingly-shaped parcels: describe what you see, explain what you think might be in them and why, comment on which one of these surprises you would most like to open, and why.

(Language Function: To describe, explain, comment)

Conclusion

Children speak the poem again.

References

Souls, J. (1983). The Random House Book of Poetry for Children. Random House Books for Young Readers.