

How to Teach Poetry without Teaching Poetry

Children have an innate love for poetry, and this genre does not have to be taught with any strict guidelines or lesson plans.

If you try the following in your classroom, you will find that a natural love of poetry will light up your students' lives without any formal lessons at all.

Fill your classroom bookshelves with poetry books

My friend, Tricia, felt children must "soak in" poetry before they can even begin to write it.

Read Poems Every Single Day

If we want our children to fall in love with this genre, we must love it ourselves. Share your favorite poems with joy and enthusiasm every single day.

Dramatize Poems

Have children work in groups to dramatize poetry. They can bring in props and toys to bring the poems to life. This is a form of old-fashioned playtime that builds literacy skills through play. It is also a great stress reliever for children, and brings celebration and joy into your classroom.

Write a Poem

This is the BIG one to get children writing poetry! The teacher must write poems about shared classroom experiences. It is wonderful to include students in these poems. Here are three examples:

Flowers and Sunshine

Maria brought me
yellow flowers
from her garden.

I love my flowers.

They spread sunshine
all over my desk
and into my heart.

Squishy Running Shoe (a true story)

Joe could not put on
one of his running shoes
for gym.

His foot did not fit,
and something
felt squishy in there.

Joe reached inside!

AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

A FROG!

A REAL LIVE FROG.

How did it get in his shoe?

**Then Joe had to choose
what to do.**

**He opened the classroom window
and let the frog go free.**

The BEST!

**You are my students
and you are the best!
You are my stars
that outshine the rest!**

The poems do not have to be great works of art. As long as they are about you and your students, they are artistic gold. They will encourage your children to look for the special moments in their lives and to celebrate them in poetry.

When you write and share a poem about your own class, you are modeling the work of a poet and children will experience the true beauty and magic of this genre.