

Poetry in the Classroom:

Writing poetry is great fun but most people say they just aren't poets. Here is a simple formula I first came across during a school visit. It proves that anyone can be a poet.

A Noun preceded by an Article
Two Adjectives interrupted by a Conjunction
A Verb
Two Adverbs, Conjunction optional
A Noun that is somehow related to the first noun – Article optional

Example:

The Kite
Silken and scarlet
Darts
Eagerly, daringly
Fire

Is this the greatest of poems? Certainly not! However, I can no longer say that I am not a poet. Place the formula on the board and have the children each write a poem. Not only are they poets but they are mastering Parts of Speech as well.

If you are doing this as a group activity,

Let students work for a bit, then inquire if anyone is having trouble. Most students have trouble identifying adverbs. The simple clue that many adverbs end with "ly" usually does the trick. As for conjunctions, I just have children list them out loud.

If people are still having trouble, go through the formula asking, "Does everyone have a noun?" "Does everyone have an adjective?" If someone is stuck on the adjectives, have the person who is stuck say their noun and encourage the group to make suggestions then let the person who is stuck choose one. The same approach works if someone is stuck on an adverb. Have the person who is stuck say the verb and let your group pose suggestions.

Follow Ups: Other instant formulas

Noun, Conjunction, Article, Adjective, Adjective Noun
Preposition Article Adjective, Adjective Noun
Adverb Verb
Pronoun Verb
Pronoun Verb
Pronoun Verb
Pronoun Verb
Pronoun Verb Adverb
Pronoun Verb Adverb

Adjective Noun

Two Examples:

Friends

Bob and the neighbor's old mutt
After a vigorous morning romp
Eagerly swam
He dove.
She dove.
She stroked
He stroked
He shook carefully
She shook wildly
New Chums

Bob and an old dear companion
On a sweaty dull day
Argued loudly
He yelled.
She winced.
He giggled.
She bellowed.
They roared loudly.
They laughed louder.
Old Friends

More Patterns

- You can take poems apart and list the parts of speech and try to create a poem in the same format.
- You can post a format on the board or on a piece of paper and call for entries.

ACTIVITY: The Poet's Corner

You will need: A poet type chapeau (A hat of any kind)
 A dressed up stool
 Several collections of poetry

The rules are simple: just follow the story. Everyone gets a chance. Now, if you are in need of some measure of control (Not all of us are wild men), you might limit the readings to one per day. You may also request that students tell you if they want to read and you can select a time. However, letting it just happen can lead to magic.

The Library Variation:

Librarians, you may wish to set up a Poet's Corner. In this case people are allowed to do a reading any time. I have seen this done and some people like to sit in the chair and do a reading even when no one is there. However, if someone is in the mood, they might let you know and readers have the option of stopping by to hear a reading. The rule: no one is allowed to sit in the chair unless they are reading poetry out loud.