

Unit Plan for African American Registry
Poetry. Early Childhood. Age 3- 7

Title: Poetry

Overall goal: To help children understand that real people create poetry and that they can create poetry too.

Minnesota Standards: Minnesota Indicators of Progress.

AL11.8 Begins to use print as a tool to express thoughts, ideas and to intentionally communicate

K 0.8.6.6 Speaks audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly, and responds to poems, rhymes and songs

L3.16 Shares information about experiences, people, places and things in sequence.

A3.5 Elects to spend time in artistic expression with purpose and analyzes their work.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

Remember familiar poems (nursery rhymes) they have heard in the past.

Understand that poems are written by people.

Experiment with different kinds of poems.

Create (through dictation) and illustrate their own poem or story.

Materials:

Paper

Drawing tools.

3 ring binder or ribbon to attach poems together.

Copies of pictures of poets from the African American Registry site.

Day 1:

Read a favorite nursery rhyme. Act it out with your children. Ask children if they have other favorite rhymes. Act out one or two other rhymes if you have time. Explain that those rhymes are poems. Poems are a way to play with words.

Ask if they know where poems come from.

After children have discussed where it might have come from- tell them that people write poems. We probably don't know who wrote their favorite nursery rhyme, but we do know where some other poems came from.

Days 2 and 3.

Bring in a few poems from the AA registry that you think your children might enjoy. We've listed some possibilities below. You may want to consider reading just one verse. For example in the Melvin B Tolson poem "*The birth of John Henry*" you might read the first verse. Print out the author's picture and show it to the children, telling them a little about the author.

<https://aaregistry.org/poem/the-birth-of-john-henry-by-melvin-b-tolson/>

About Melvin B Tolson <https://aaregistry.org/story/melvin-tolson-a-post-renaissance-poet/>
<https://aaregistry.org/poem/praise-song-for-the-day-by-elizabeth-alexander/>

About Elizabeth Alexander <https://aaregistry.org/story/elizabeth-alexander-one-of-harlems-best/>

<https://aaregistry.org/poem/the-hill-we-climb-by-amanda-gorman/>

<https://aaregistry.org/poem/to-satch-by-samuel-allen/>

<https://aaregistry.org/poem/ears-have-not-heardnor-eyes-have-seen-by-rosa-bogar/>

<https://aaregistry.org/poem/makin-jump-shots-by-michael-s-harper/>

About Michael S Harper

<https://aaregistry.org/story/michael-s-harper-poet-and-promoter-of-verse/>

Explain that some poems rhyme and some don't. Tell them they can be poets too. Explain that each of them will have an opportunity to write their own poem in the next few days.

Days 3 and 4

Invite the children to do their own writing. One at a time, invite each child to dictate a story or poem. (A story would be written as a single paragraph, while a poem is written with one sentence fragment on each line. Many of the stories' children tell us work well as freeform poems) Don't force children to participate. Write it down and then invite them to draw a picture to go with it. Explain that a picture to go with something that someone has written is called an illustration.

Days 5 and 6

Using a 3-ring binder or a hole punch and ribbons, make your children's poetry collection into a book. Consider putting a photocopy of each child's picture with their story or poem. Put any poems from the registry that your children responded to in the book as well. Read a few of the children's poems from the book out loud at circle time each day, showing the group the illustration each time. Be sure to put the book out on your bookcase for children to look at.

Closing: Is there a short interview with a poet that is age appropriate?