

Animal Poetry

State Mandated Benchmarks and Standards

Grade Level: 5-8

Subject Areas: Language Arts

Key Terms: poetry, imagine

Objective

Students will recognize and experience the inspirational value of wildlife.

Method

Students take a tour through the Card Wildlife Education Center and imagine themselves as animals and then write poetry.

Materials

Writing materials: pens, pencils, paper

Background

Poetry is a form of imaginative literary expression that makes its effect by the sound and imagery of its language.

Poetry is one of the most ancient and widespread of the arts. Originally fused with music in song, poetry eventually gained an independent existence. Where poetry exists apart from music, it has substituted its own purely linguistic rhythms for musical rhythms. This rhythmic use of language most easily distinguishes poetry from imaginative prose.

Meter, the highly regular part of verse rhythm, depends, in some languages, on the different stresses on adjacent syllables and monosyllabic words. In some languages, poetic rhythm depends more on line length than on differences between syllables. Line length is determined by the total number of syllables in a line, by the number of stressed syllables in a line, or by some combination of number and stress.

Poetry may be divided into a number of types, including lyric; narrative such as epics, ballads, metrical romance, and verse tales; and dramatic (poetry as direct speech in specified circumstances). This activity develops the use of several forms of poetry: the Japanese Haiku, the Cinquain, and the Diamante.

Procedure

1. After touring the CWEC, ask the students to choose one of the animals for their poem. Ask them to examine the animal for a few minutes and imagine the animal living in its natural habitat.

2. For five minutes, have the students think about their animal. Imagine how long it lives, where it travels, and how other plants and animals look from its perspective. Afterward, ask the students to write a short poem about their animal. Poems can be free verse or rhyming. Cinquain and haiku are interesting forms of poetry and are explained below. Another form of poetry is a group poem. Everyone thinks of one animal and each person contributes one word. One or more students can combine the words together to form the poem while others discuss the animal.

Haiku A Japanese lyric verse form having three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Haikus traditionally invoke an aspect of nature or the seasons.

The hawk soared over
Spirit bird in my living
Guide to harmony.

Cinquain Comprised of five non-rhyming lines of, respectively, two, four, six, eight, and two syllables. Each line has a mandatory purpose and number of syllables or words. These are (1) the title in two syllables or words, (2) a description of the title in four syllables or words, (3) a description of action in six syllables or words, (4) a description of a feeling in eight syllables or words, and (5) another word for the title in two syllables or words.

Panther
Vital, quiet
Moving swiftly to live
Endangered by human patterns
Near lost

Diamante A poem shaped in the form of a diamond. It can be used to show that words are related through shades of meaning from one extreme to an opposite extreme,

following a pattern of parts of speech like this:

Noun
Adjective adjective
Participle participle participle
Noun noun noun noun
Participle participle participle
Adjective adjective
Noun

Egg
Light bright
Living stretching growing
Bird beak wing flight
Soaring seeing seeking
Feathered fluid
Raven

3. The completed poems can be typed or printed neatly and then displayed with a photograph or with a black-and-white pen and ink drawing of the animal.

Evaluation

1. Why do you think some people say that they would not want to live in a world without wildlife? Are you one of those people? Why or why not? Would you prefer to choose the types of wildlife you would like to live with? If so, which types would you want to live with, and why?



Adapted from: Project Wild. Houston: Council for Environmental Education. 2005
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