

LESSON 15: RHYTHM AND REPETITION

MATERIALS

- Student notebooks
- Student anthology books
- “November Cotton Flower” by Jean Toomer (available at: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46406/november-cotton-flower>)
- “Love That Boy” by Walter Dean Meyers (available at <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/love-that-boy/>)
- Copy of “Granny Is” by Valerie Bloom (available in text and audio format at the Children’s Poetry Archive website: <https://childrens.poetryarchive.org/poem/granny-is/>)
- “Dirge in Woods” by George Meredith (available at <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/dirge-in-woods/>)



Poetry helps readers see the extraordinary in the ordinary.

The structure of a poem often contributes to its meaning.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will identify literary devices, including **rhyme** and **rhythm**.
- Students will identify poetry structures
- Students will know and use complex word families when reading (e.g., *-ight*) to decode unfamiliar words



Important Vocabulary:

- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Repetition

SEQUENCE

TEACHER NOTES

Poetry for Appreciation...



Invite students to find a comfortable place for listening. Remind students to enjoy the way the poem sounds and to listen for some of the imagery and details used by the poet.

Read “November Cotton Flower” by Jean Toomer. Have students turn to the person next to them and share one image or phrase that stuck in their minds while listening to the poem.

Finding rhythm...**CLASS**

- Ask: Did the poem by Jean Toomer rhyme? (yes)
- Tell students you will read “November Cotton Flower” for a second time. This time, you want them to listen not to the *words*, but to the *sound* of the poem. You want them to listen for its rhythm or beat. Read the poem again.

**PATTERNS**

- Ask: Do you think you could clap along to the poem? Do you know where you would put the claps? Read the poem for a third time, and invite students to clap along. (They should clap at the stressed syllables; there are four in every line.)

**TOOLS**

- Explain to students that you can figure out where to clap along in Toomer’s poem because the author has created a rhythm. Rhythm is the pattern of sound or the beat of a poem. It is important in both poetry and music. Ask whether you have any students who have taken dance or music lessons who can explain more about beat.
- Now read “Love That Boy” by Walter Dean Myers, and ask students to listen for rhythm and repetition. Read the poem a second time and invite students to clap along. Now ask: Which words are repeated in the first verse (“Love that boy...”). Why do you think the poet has chosen to repeat these words? Reinforce the idea that structure, or the way the poem is put together, including its rhyme, rhythm, and repetition, often contribute to the meaning of the poem (and therefore the author’s purpose).
- Now read “Granny Is” by Valerie Worth. (You can also play the clip of Worth reading the poem, available on the website linked above.) Ask: What words are repeated in this poem? (The poet begins each of the first 4 stanzas with “Granny is.”) Ask why the poet might have structured the poem in this way (perhaps to emphasize that Granny is so many different things to the speaker). It is also worth commenting on the imagery in this poem.

There is a terrific book for children by Sharon Creech titled Love That Dog, which follows one boy’s introduction to poetry. This book includes a poem titled “Love That Dog” that is modeled after Walter Dean Myers’ poem, and also contains other great poems for this age group. Well worth a look!

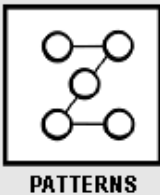
The Talking Drum



- Hand out copies of “Dirge in Woods” by George Meredith. Ask students whether they have ever heard been in the woods during winter. If not, explain that winter changes both the appearance of the woods and the life of the animals and insects that live in the woods. Play the audio of the poem for the students and ask them to read along silently.



- Instruct students to underline repeated words or phrases as they read silently along with the audio.



- Invite all students to read along; read the poem as a group.
- Discuss the use of rhythm and repetition in this poem. Explain that these contribute to the meaning of the poem. Emphasize the way the poet has used the sounds and rhythms of drums in the poem. That is, the poet has made the poem sound like what it is about.

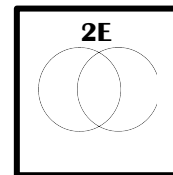
Writing rhythm



- Model writing a short rhyming poem on the board, then give students time to construct their own poetry incorporating a strong rhythm and repetition to emphasize meaning. What are some things in the community or around where they live that repeat? (windshield wipers, machinery, bird song...) Write the following options on the board and discuss them with students before they make their choices and begin working:

1. Continue working on your rhyming poem (started in the previous lesson) and incorporate rhythm and repetition into this poem.
2. Start a new poem with rhythm and repetition.
3. Write a “Love that...” poem (modeled after “Love That Boy” but choosing a different subject).
4. Write a “Granny Is...” poem using something or someone other than Granny as the subject of the poem.

As students work on their poems, encourage them to clap out the rhythm and to read their work aloud to determine its rhythm.



Some students with attention and/or sensory difficulties may find this clapping activity to be distracting or overwhelming due to the noise from so many students clapping. If possible, provide those students with earphones or ask the class to clap out their rhythm using only their index fingers.