

Patterns in Poetry -- Rhythm

Student/Class Goal

To prepare for the Language Arts section of the GED test, students will want to listen, read, and understand a variety of poems by recognized poets. They will want to practice comprehension through listening and reading.

Outcome *(lesson objective)*

Students will recognize the link between music and poetry, repeating patterns in poetry—meter, feet, line, and stanza, how rhythm helps organize stressed and unstressed syllables into lines of poetry and how listening for patterns contributes to understanding poetry.

Time Frame

Approximately 1 hour

Standard *Listen Actively*

NRS EFL 1-6

COPs

Attend to oral information.

Activity Addresses Components of Performance

Students will have the opportunity to listen to and understand a variety of poems being read aloud.

Clarify purpose for listening and use listening strategies appropriate to that purpose.

As they apply what they have brainstormed about patterns, students will listen first for repetitions and later for rhythms while listening to the teacher read poems aloud.

Monitor comprehension, adjusting listening strategies to overcome barriers to comprehension.

After listening to the poems, students will read them aloud together to check, expand, and reinforce their listening skills. Reading aloud together removes pressure on low-level readers.

Integrate information from listening with prior knowledge to address listening purpose.

After listening, then reading, learners will discuss how the sound patterns contribute to understanding the poems. Small groups of learners will read a poem aloud to the class, applying what they have learned to help their classmates comprehend through listening. They, in turn, will have the opportunity to listen to a variety of poems being read aloud by their peers.

Materials

List of Poems for handouts
Teacher Information Sheet

Learner Prior Knowledge

This is the first of a three-part sequence on patterns in poetry. This part focuses on patterns of rhythm. Part 2 deals with sound patterns such as rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. Part 3 emphasizes images and the metaphors and symbols that grow out of them. Most students will have some life experience with rhythm through music and childhood rhymes to build upon.

Instructional Activities

Step 1 - Discuss what is meant by a *pattern*. Brainstorm a list of patterns that occur in the world around us: snowflakes, foot prints in snow, ripples in water, symmetry of body parts, cross-section of fruit, windows in a skyscraper, rows in a plowed field etc. Repetition is the key. See the web site [Patterns in Poetry](#) for more information.

Step 2 - Ask students if they remember any jump rope or nursery rhymes. Recite a couple nursery rhymes together. (Hickory, Dickory, Dock, Old Mother Hubbard, Ol' King Cole). Talk about why they are easy to remember (rhyme and regular beat or meter). In ancient times, storytellers recited very long tales using music accompaniment and rhyme to help them remember. See the above web site.

Step 3 - From the attached list of poems, choose at least 5-6 to read aloud. Select poems that emphasize rhythm, sound, and image. Ask learners to listen carefully for the kinds of patterns that they hear. Begin to record a list of patterns on newsprint so that you can save it for another lesson.

Hand out print copies of the poems and read them aloud together. Add to the list of patterns. Discuss how the patterns make the poems more pleasurable and easier to remember. Were there any surprises? How do the patterns emphasize what the poem is about? The list should include the following (in some form or other):

- repeated rhythm or beat
- repeated lines, phrases or words
- repeated sounds at the end of lines (rhyme)

- lines with the same number of beats
- repeated sounds of letters within the lines (both vowels and consonants)
- repeated pictures or images
- grouping of lines (stanzas)
- visual patterns created by placement of words

Step 4 - In poetry rhythms develop from stressed (/), that is a strong beat, and unstressed (u) syllables called **meter**. One stressed and one or two unstressed syllables form a **foot**, like a measure in music. Each line has a certain number of **feet**. Some feet begin with a stressed syllable and some with unstressed. English speech tends to have a pattern of one unstressed syllable followed by stressed one, which is called **iambic meter**. Ask students to listen for stressed and unstressed syllables in a simple sentence, such as "Today I went to see my mother." Read aloud *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer* by Walt Whitman to hear a poem that attempts to sound like everyday speech mostly in iambic meter. In traditional poetry, lines tend to have the same number of beats or feet. Read aloud *Annabel Lee* by Edgar Allan Poe, exaggerating the stressed syllables. Now read *Piping Down the Valleys Wild* by William Blake. How do the meters differ? (Poe uses a pattern of unstressed/stressed u / while Blake employs a stress/unstressed / u.) How do the number of feet in a line vary? What different effects do the meters create for the reader? (Both are regular and song-like but Blake is more optimistic or upbeat and Poe is melancholy.) For advanced students, teachers may want to introduce more specific information about feet and meter. See [Perspectives in American Literature](#) .

Step 5 - In the poem *We Real Cool*, Gwendolyn Brooks uses very few words and all stressed syllables. Look at the way she breaks the line in surprising places. Cut up a copy of the poem into individual words. Keep the order but move the words around to create different line lengths. Why do you think she organized the poem the way she did? How does her organization help you understand the poem? (The "we" is emphasized until it disappears in the last line posing the question of what will happen to the speakers.)

Step 6 - Ask small groups to choose a poem from the list, from an Internet site, or from a book from a text set from the OLRC [Poetry Matrix](#). After reading the poem through together and talking about the meter, each group will read their poem aloud.

Assessment/Evidence *(based on outcome)*

Marked reading "scripts" and audiotapes can be included in individual portfolios

Teacher Reflection/Lesson Evaluation

Not yet completed.

Next Steps

Teachers may want to expand the concept of patterns to include mathematics lessons in number sequences, number relationships, and calculator activities. See the Teacher Information Sheet for web sites. Patterns in Poetry: Part 2—Sounds is designed to follow this lesson plan.

Technology Integration

Patterns in Poetry www.cranberrydesigns.com/poetry/intro.htm

Perspectives in American Literature <http://web.csustan.edu/English/reuben/pal/append/AXF.HTML>

OLRC Poetry Matrix <http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Resc/Trade/MatrixPoetry.doc>

Purposeful/Transparent

Listening and then reading poetry will help students focus on the senses that contribute to enjoyment and understanding of poetry. Since understanding poems will be tested on the Language Arts Section of the GED test, students will have experience listening and reading poetry.

Contextual

Students can apply their experience with patterns, especially rhythm, to poems. Recognizing patterns is also a critical thinking skill that has applications in everyday life. Listening skills also have application in everyday living.

Building Expertise

By first listening to a poem and then reading it aloud together, learners reinforce their listening comprehension skills. They develop them further by reading new material aloud to their peers and listening to their peers read aloud to them.

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET

The following resources supplement the three sequential lesson plans on Patterns in Poetry which also can be used individually: Part 1—Rhythm explores patterns in general and the meter in poetry in particular; Part 2—Sound builds on the first by introducing rhyme, alliteration, and assonance; and Part 3 focuses the use of images, metaphors, and symbols. Lesson plan materials include a list of poems with web addresses (be sure to include some of your favorites), a copy of the Eureka Poetry Collection for selecting text sets of poetry, and this sheet of additional resources.

Images

<http://images.google.com/>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html>

Poetry

www.cranberrydesigns.com/poetry/intro.htm

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/general/gl_patvar.html

www.42explore2.com/patterns.htm

<http://web.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/append/AXF.html>

<http://brainstorm-services.com/wcu-lit/craft-of-poetry.html>

www.infoplease.com/spot/pmglossary1.html

<http://shoga.wva.com/%7ergs/glossary.html>

<http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/0300-26.pdf>

Poetry Archives

www.poets.org/academy

www.bartelby.com/verse/

www.infoplease.com/spot/pmsites1.html

<http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Literature/Poetry/Anthologies>

www.etext.lib.virginia.edu/britpro.html

www.americanpoems.com

www.classic-romantic-love-poems.com

Math

www.learner.org/teacherslab/math/patterns

www.standards.nctm.org/document/eexamples/chap4/4.5/index.htm

www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00000622.shtml

www.archtech.org/java/patterns/patterns_j.shtml

www.col-ed.org/cur/math/math06.txt

Media and Advertising

www.media-

awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/elementary/alcohol/upload/understand_brands_1k.pdf

www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson97/advert.pdf

www.pbs.org/teachersource/media_lit/gettingstarted.shtml

Print Resources

Enriching Our Lives: Poetry Lessons for Adult Literacy Teachers and Tutors, Francis E. Kazemak & Pat Rigg

Finding What You Didn't Lose, John Fox

Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures in Reading and Writing Poetry, Kenneth Koch

Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry, Laurence Perrine

Wishes, Lies, and Dreams: Teaching Children to Write Poetry, Kenneth Koch

PATTERNS IN POETRY PART I, 2 AND 3
LIST OF POEMS

POEM	POET	WEB SITE/BOOK	EMPHASIS
A Narrow Fellow in the Grass	Dickinson, Emily	www.online-literature.com/dickinson/824/	Rhythm Image
Annabel Lee	Poe, Edgar Allan	http://bau2.uibk.ac.at/sg/poe/works/poetry/annabel.html	Rhythm Sounds
In a Station of the Metro	Pound, Ezra	www.bartleby.com/104/106.html	Rhythm Image
In Just	cummings, e.e.	www.web-books.com/classics/Poetry/anthology/cummings/InJust.htm	Rhythm
Pied Beauty	Hopkins, Gerard Manly	www.bartleby.com/122/13.html	Rhythm Sounds
Piping Down the Valleys Wild	Blake, William	http://quotations.about.com/od/poemlyrics/a/blakepoem14.htm	Rhythm Sounds
Remember	Rossetti, Christina	www.sitemappro.com/examples/prossetti.html	Rhythm Sounds
Richard Cory	Robinson, Edwin Arlington	www.bartleby.com/104/45.html	Rhythm Sounds
Skipper Sailing	Rudder, Carol	Beginnings Vol. VIII, p. 109 http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Pubs/Beginnings8/pleasure.pdf	Rhythm
Sonnet LXXI (71)	Shakespeare, William	www.everypoet.com/Archive/Poetry/William_Shakespeare/william_shakespeare_sonnet_71.htm	Rhythm Sounds Image
Sonnet LXXIII (73)	Shakespeare, William	www.geocities.com/Athens/Troy/4081/73.html	Rhythm Sounds Image
Spring and All	Williams, William Carlos	www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15536	Rhythm Image
The Aim Was Song	Frost, Robert	http://poetry.poetryx.com/poems/249/	Rhythm
The Charge of the Light Brigade	Alfred, Lord Tennyson	www.nationalcenter.org/ChargeoftheLightBrigade.html	Rhythm Image
The Morning Is Full	Neruda, Pablo	www.geocities.com/nerudapoet/lovepoems/themorning.htm?200730	Rhythm Image
The Term	Williams, William Carlos	www.americanpoems.com/poets/williams/7788	Rhythm
The Wild Swans at Coole	Yeats, William Butler	www.online-literature.com/yeats/803/	Rhythm Image
We Real Cool	Brooks, Gwendolyn	www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15433	Sounds
When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer	Whitman, Walt	www.bartleby.com/142/180.html	Rhythm
Winter Morning	Smith, William Jay	New and Select Poems, Delacorte Press, 1970	Image

LOVE CALLS US TO THINGS OF THIS WORLD

The eyes open to a cry of pulleys
And spirited from sleep, the astounded soul
Hangs for a moment bodiless and simple
As false dawn.
Outside the open window
The morning air is all awash with angels.

Some are in bed-sheet, some are in blouses,
Some are in smocks: but truly there they are.
Now they are rising in calm swells
Of halcyon feeling, filling whatever they wear
With deep joy of their personal feeling.

Now they are flying in place, convey in
The terrible speed of their omnipresence, moving
And staying like white water: and now of a sudden
They swoon down to so rapt a quiet
That nobody seems to be there.
The soul shrinks

From all that it is about to remember,
From the punctual rape of every blessed day,
And cries, "Oh, let there be nothing on earth but laundry,
Nothing but rosey hands in the rising steam
And clear dances done in the sight of heaven.

Yet, as the sun acknowledges
With a warm look at the world's hunks and colors,
The soul descends once more in bitter love
To accept the waking body, saying how
In a changed voice as the man yawns and rises,

"Bring them down from their ruddy gallows.
Let there be clean linen for the backs of thieves;
Let lovers go fresh and sweet to be undone,
And the heaviest nuns walk in a pure floating
Of dark habits, keeping their difficult balance.

Richard Wilbur

WINTER MORNING

All night the wind swept over the house
And through our dream
Swirling snow up through the pines,
Ruffling the white, ice-capped clapboards,
Rattling the windows,
Rustling around and below our bed
So that we rode
Over wild water
In a white ship breasting the waves.
We rode through the night
On green, marbled
Water, and, half-waking, watched
The white, eroded peaks of icebergs
Sail past our window;
Rode out the night in the north country,
And awake, the house buried in snow,
Perched on a
Chill promontory, a
Giant's tooth
In the mouth of the cold valley
Its white tongue looped frozen around us,
The trunks of tall birches
Revealing the rib cage of a whale
Stranded by a still stream;
And saw through the motionless baleen of their branches,
As if through time
A light that shone
On a landscape of ivory
A harbor of stone.

William Jay Smith