

5 Spring Poetry Prompts & Techniques

This resource includes:

- ✓ Examples of literary & poetic techniques (simile, acrostic, POV, conveying feelings, hard-working verbs)
- ✓ Teaching guide with ideas and answers
- ✓ 2 bonus pages for deeper poetic analysis with usage notes
- ✓ Visit

<https://kimtharrison.ca/2024/04/28/5-spring-poetry-prompts-grades-6-8> for:
PowerPoint/ Google Slides versions



Grades 6-8

ELL, Grades 8+

ESL, Intermediate+

Teacher Guide, with ideas and answers

Hard-Working Verbs

To introduce the concept of hard-working verbs, ask SS which of the following 2 statements tells us more about the speaker's mood or how they do an action: 1. "I walked into the room"; 2. "I stomped into the room". A second example is: "I ate the cake."; "I gobbled down the cake."

"stomped" and "gobbled" are examples of hard-working verbs because they give us more information about the action (walking; eating) and provide clues as to how the speaker is feeling. In poetry hard-working verbs are important because poems are short, so every word counts and needs to earn its place in our poem.

Poetic Techniques: Simile

If SS already know metaphor, elicit prior knowledge before introducing simile. Ask SS which 2 things are being compared in the example. Answer: clouds are being compared to tourists in a hotel pool

Ask SS: when we look at clouds, do we usually think of tourists in a hotel pool (various answers, but note that clouds are in the sky and a pool is water/on the ground, so very different). How does the comparison of "tourists in a hotel pool" help us see the "clouds" in a specific way? What quality in the clouds is our attention being drawn to with this comparison? Prompt further if needed: do you think the clouds are moving quickly or slowly? Do you think it's a cold day or a warm day? What shape might the clouds be? (various answers; clouds might be moving slowly/lazily; there might be lots of smaller clouds moving together; warm day; helps the verb "float" work even harder as the clouds might look like they're floating in the sky, the way people float in/on water.

Poetic forms: acrostic poems

Optional:

Before showing the acrostic poems page, show students the poem only and ask: what do you notice about this poem?

Prompt as needed: Is there anything special about this poem? Anything hidden in it maybe? What is it about? What do you notice about the first letters of each line?

Answer: the first letters of each line spell out the word "POETRY"

Lead into the term "acrostic poem" and show next page.

Ask SS why poets might choose to make an acrostic poem? (various answers; to hide a meaning, to have fun with a word/expression, especially impactful when the body of the poem disagrees with the base word/expression; as a challenge to themselves)

Teacher Guide, with ideas and answers

Poetic Functions: Capturing and Conveying Feelings

Various answers to Q, Which one helps you better feel the sensation of loving winter: in poem on the right, senses are activated (touch – “tickle my face”; sight – “snow sparkles...”; smell – “sweet perfume”). Senses are a quick and powerful way to convey an experience to a reader because they can easily imagine what the experience/scene looks like, smells like, feels like. In the poem on the left, there is more “telling” – the speaker is saying they love winter but is not conveying the reasons they love winter to the reader in a way the reader can connect with. In the poem on the right, the speaker never says they love winter, but it is clear from the descriptions and word choice. For example, in the poem on the left, “sparkling” is used as an adjective but on the right it becomes a hard-working verb “sparkles” – as a verb, it is much more evocative. Similarly, the verb “tickle” is working hard and conveys positive, childlike, fun images.

Encourage SS to activate the senses in their own poems, and try to avoid saying “spring feels like ... to me”

Literary Techniques: POV

Ask SS to guess who the POV is in the poem.

Answer to POV Q: a cat. How do we know? Verb: “purr” and description “amber fur”

Remind SS that the “I” in both poetry and prose is not always the author/poet themselves – in prose, it is rarely the author (exception would be memoirs/personal essays).

Ask SS: Why might a poet choose to switch POV and write from the perspective of an animal, a different person, or an inanimate object? (various answers: increased empathy and understanding of that person; see the world differently to how we usually see it; can evoke stronger feelings – can be fun but also can evoke sadness more easily, depending on the POV choice)

Before SS start writing, remind them to really put themselves into the “shoes” of the animal/plant – for example, they’ll be physically smaller than they are, and will literally be looking at things from a different perspective (they would have to look up to see a child, for example, rather than down)

Optional: To explore POV further, ask SS: How would the reader experience the poem if the poet had used “cat” instead of “I”? (Can share “Poem 2” if you want SS to explore this difference in more detail)

Teacher Guide, with ideas and answers

Optional: POV deep dive analysis (Poem 1 & Poem 2)

What do you notice about the differences between these poems? How does changing the POV affect how the reader experiences the poem?

Various answers: it's not about one being the "right" choice for the subject matter – more about what the poet wants to convey to the reader. With the "I" the poet and reader are stepping into the paws of the cat and experiencing the scene through his eyes. Poem 1 also makes the reader work harder than Poem 2 – there can be more satisfaction for the reader when they have to work to understand the meaning. In Poem 2, there is an implied "cat owner/parent" who is watching their cat but in Poem 1 we are not given any information about anyone other than the cat.

Congratulations page:

Use or adapt this page to congratulate the SS on their hard work.

If you also wrote poems along with your SS, congratulate yourself too!

Thank you for inspiring young people to connect with poetry.

Focus: Hard-working verbs

A verb that precisely captures the action you want to describe without the need for an adverb.

Examples: "sway" and "zip"

Task:

Finish this poem by writing 4-6 new lines. Include at least 2 new hard-working verbs.

Extra challenge: Decide if you want to use stanza breaks or not.

Spring blooms sway in the warm breeze,

Early bees zip between yellow petals,

Focus: Poetic techniques: simile

A simile compares two unlike things using the word "like" or "as".

Example: clouds float past my window like tourists in a hotel pool

Task:

Finish this poem by completing the similes in lines 2 and 4, then creating your own full simile in lines 5 and 6.

Extra challenge: dig deep to find unexpected similes that really make your reader work to see the image/meaning you're trying to capture.

Snow melts to slush

Like _____

Rain rinses the soil

Like _____

Like _____

Poetry Analysis:

What do you notice about this poem?

Is there anything special about it? Anything hidden in it maybe?

Poems are fun
Or serious, or both
Each one a new moment
Transformed,
Retold, just for
You.

Focus: Poetic forms: acrostic (or mnemonic) poem

An acrostic poem takes a base word or phrase, and then uses the letters as either the initial letter of each line or the last letter of each line.

Example: In the poem below, the word "poetry" is the base word.

*Poems are fun
Or serious, or both
Each one a new moment
Transformed,
Retold, just for
You.*

Task:

Finish this poem by creating lines that start with the letters in the base word "spring." The final line has already been created for you.

Extra challenge: Write your own final line instead of the one given.

S _____

P _____

R _____

I _____

N _____

Glimmers in the sunlight

Focus: Poetic functions: capturing and conveying feelings

Poems can serve many functions and purposes, and we write poems for many different reasons. One reason is to capture what an experience or event feels like to us and then convey that feeling to a reader.

Example: Look at the difference in these 2 poems. Which one helps you better feel the sensation of loving winter?

I love winter

I love the cold and ice

I love the sparkling snow

And the warm log fires

Snow sparkles in the bright morning light,

Snowflakes tickle my face,

Melt into my cheeks,

The sweet perfume of log fires

scents the air

Task:

Write a poem about what spring feels like to you.

Extra challenge: Use 1-2 poetic techniques in your poem (for example: alliteration, assonance, metaphor, simile, imagery)

Focus: literary techniques: point of view (POV)

Like in prose, when we write a poem, we need to choose whose point of view we are experiencing the poem through. In personal poems, the POV (the "I") is often the poet themselves. However, poems can also play with POV.

Example: Can you guess the POV (the "I") in this short poem?

*I stretch and curl
Snuggle close
and purr
As the fading sun
Warms my amber fur*

Task:

Write a 6–8-line poem from the point of view (POV) of an animal or plant in spring. **(Note: Do not include the name of the animal in your poem.)**

Extra challenge: See if your friend or teacher can guess the POV.

Poetry Analysis:

What do you notice about the differences between these poems?
How does changing the POV affect how the reader experiences the poem?

Poem 1:

*I stretch and curl
Snuggle close
and purr
As the fading sun
Warms my amber fur*

Poem 2:

*Cat stretches and curls
Snuggles close
and purrs
As the fading sun
Warms his amber fur*

Congratulations!

You played with 5 poetic or literary techniques and made 5 poems.

These poems didn't exist until you made them – that's amazing!

Way to go, Poet, and I hope you'll play with poetry again soon.

Copyright & Terms of Use

All text and images in this resource, including any originals poems, are copyright © Kim T. Harrison, 2024

Fonts credit: Google Fonts (Urbanist; Caveat)

You have permission to use and adapt this resource for educational purposes only. Any re-selling is prohibited; similarly, re-sharing without attribution is prohibited.

If sharing this resource with other educators, please include link to my website: kimtharrison.ca and/or my full name, Kim T. Harrison

If you have questions or would like to provide feedback on the resource, please get in touch: kimtharrisonwrites@gmail.com

Happy teaching!

Kim xo

About the Resource Creator

Kim T. Harrison is a certified ESL Instructor with a PhD in contemporary French literature and cultural studies. She has been teaching English and French language and literature since 1996 in a variety of settings, including universities, language schools, and around her kitchen table. In recent years, she has also transitioned to teaching online using digital tools. In addition to her teaching experience, Kim worked for over 15 years in the field of corporate communications and copywriting.

Kim loves the possibilities of language in all its forms and today finds joy in teaching languages, writing her own stories and poems, and creating resources to inspire students, teachers, and fellow writers. Kim currently lives on the beautiful Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland, Canada, with her family.

I hope you find this resource useful. If you have any questions or have ideas for other resources, please get in touch!

Kim kimtharrisonwrites@gmail.com

