How do poets create images in readers’ minds and feelings in readers’ hearts?

Use this essential question to guide student learning with class discussion and inquiry activities.

1. WHAT CAN I DO? (20 MINUTES)

Read “Annie Can Whistle” and talk about the message of the poem. Annie had to work hard to learn to whistle. Ask students to think about something they learned to do through hard work. How did they feel while they were learning? Motivated? Frustrated? How do they feel about that skill now that they have mastered it?

Explain alliteration and talk about how poets use the device to create rhythm and pleasing sound. Read the poem again. Help students recognize alliterative pairs ("wonderful whistle," “worrisome whistle,” “stayed stuck,” “sparkling sunny”).

Finally, help students create alliterative phrases for their own name. Make sure the phrase describes the student! For example: Magnificent Mia. Encourage students to add on to others’ alliterations. When finished, have students write and decorate a card with their alliterative name. Post the cards on the wall for all to see!

ELL SUPPORT

Create a slideshow with some (or all) of the poems broken up into smaller chunks, such as lines or pairs of lines. Include images on each slide to aid in comprehension.
2. UNDERSTAND RHYTHM AND REPETITION (20 MINUTES)
Remind students that rhymes have to do with syllables. In order to understand the beat of a poem, you must be able to hear the syllables within the words. Pull a few words from the poems to practice clapping out the syllables ahead of time.

Together, read “Clowns in the Car.” Find the rhyming pairs (car/are, four/more, far/car). Read it again, inviting students to dance to the rhythm and clap with each rhyming word.

Next, read “I See Green” together. Ask students to listen for the repeated line “Then I look closer.” Read the poem again, asking students to say the repeated line with you each time.

As you read other poems, help students notice the rhythm and repetition. Talk about why poets use these techniques.

3. EXPLORE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (20 MINUTES)
Show students Waterford’s Understanding Literal and Figurative Language video. Talk about similes and metaphors. Together, read “Dinnertime,” looking for similes (such as “leaves like knives” and “flowers like eyes”).

Remove the word like and add are to change each simile to a metaphor. (The leaves are knives. The flowers are eyes.) Talk about how similes and metaphors create pictures in your mind. As you read other poems together, help students identify more similes and metaphors.

Support: Have students draw some of the similes and metaphors from the poem. Provide photos to aid comprehension (for example, include a picture of a knife to show what the leaves are being compared to).


4. RECITE A POEM (Two 45-minute sessions)
With students, watch Amanda Gorman (named National Youth Poet Laureate in 2017) as she recites one of her poems “Talking Gets Us There.” Discuss how Gorman engages listeners and draws their attention to the meaning of the poem. Ask each student to choose a poem (or part of a poem) to memorize and recite.

Support: Allow students to present in front of smaller groups or the teacher rather than to the entire class. Give them time to practice their recitation before they present.


ELL SUPPORT
Encourage students to read, memorize, recite, and write poems in both English and their home language. In this book, “Little White Pony” (“Caballito blanco”) is presented in English and Spanish. You can find poems in many languages online! There are two Spanish poetry books at teacher.waterford.org.
5. **SHARE A POEM (45 MINUTES)**

Share these reflection questions with students to help them think more deeply about the poem they memorized and recited:

- How does the poem make you feel?
- What pictures do you see in your mind as you read the poem?
- What is your favorite part of the poem?
- What special elements of the poem do you like (words or phrases, rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, simile, metaphor)?
- Does the poem remind you of something from your own life—a person, a place, or an event?
- Why do you think someone else would enjoy this poem?

Have each student write a letter to someone special, explaining why they like the poem and why they want to share it. Enclose a copy of the poem and help students deliver their letter.

**PRINTABLES**

- Bosquejo de una carta [https://bit.ly/3zT4vTg](https://bit.ly/3zT4vTg)

6. **BE A POET! (45 MINUTES)**

Have students write their own poems in free verse or by using the [Haiku Planner](https://bit.ly/3gQqcM1) graphic organizer. They can choose their own topic or write about something you are studying in class. Review the elements of poetry students have learned about—alliteration, rhyme, repetition, simile, metaphor. Encourage students to include some of these elements in their poems.

Ask students to illustrate their poems. To share their finished poems, arrange for students to read them to the class, display them for others to see, or publish a class anthology of poems!

**Extension:** April is National Poetry Month! Celebrate by reading poems by Shel Silverstein, Judith Viorst, and others. You can find many fun ideas at [poets.org](https://poets.org/poems-kids) and the Poetry Foundation website.

**PRINTABLES**

- Haiku Planner [https://bit.ly/3gQqcM1](https://bit.ly/3gQqcM1)

**WEBSITES**

- Poets.org | Poems for Kids [https://poets.org/poems-kids](https://poets.org/poems-kids)
- Poetry Foundation | Children’s Poetry [https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/children](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/children)