

**Reading and Writing**  
**Free Verse Poetry Mini Unit**  
by Piper Nuetzel

**Utah Core Standards**

Standard 1 - Students develop language for the purpose of effectively communicating through listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting.

Objective 1 – Develop language through listening and speaking

Standard 5 - Students develop reading fluency to read aloud grade level text effortlessly without hesitation.

Standard 7 - Students understand, interpret, and analyze narrative and informational grade level text.

Objective 2 – Apply strategy to comprehend text

Standard 8 - Writing-Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

**Materials –**

1. “Love That Dog” by Sharon Creech
2. Many different quality poetry books suitable for the age of the children.  
I would recommend having at least 2-3 poetry books per child
3. Writing material or writing journals

**Estimated time –** One hour daily

15 minutes daily – Reading “Love That Dog” and discussing

30 minutes daily – Reading and discussing poetry

20 minutes daily – Writing poems similar to the ones we read.

**Day 1 - Immersion**

1. Introduce poetry to the students by reading “Love That Dog.” Read for about 10 minutes and have the class share their thoughts about how the boy feels about writing poetry. Discuss the interesting things and the difficult things about poetry.

2. Present the class with a large amount of poetry books. Have them disperse throughout the class and read some poetry books. Remind them that they do not have to read every poem in the book before moving on to another book. Give each person a small piece of paper to mark their favorite1 poem that they read.

3. After about 15 minutes of reading time bring them back together and have them share some of their findings but remind them that this is not the time to share their favorite poem. Have them discuss what they like and don’t like about the poems they are reading. Encourage them to identify that some poems rhyme and others do not rhyme.

4. Send them to pick another poem book and start reading more poems. This time have them sit by a friend or partner to read poems together. Have them read with partners for about 10 more minutes. Remind them that they have to have an interesting poem picked out by the end of the reading time

5. Have as many students as possible read their poems and share why they like that poem.

6. Have each person reread their chosen poem to themselves. This poem will be their model for writing their first poem. Remind them that poems don't have to rhyme and they don't have to be long. If they have another idea they can write about that as well.

### *Conferencing*

As students are working, walk around and talk to the students about their poems. Ask them if they are having any troubles. Keep notes about what they are working on and what they are struggling with.

### **Day 2 - Model**

1. Continue reading "Love That Dog." Read for about 10 minutes and have the class share their thoughts. Does the boy have an attitude change toward poetry? What kind of poems does he write?

2. Give the students about 25 minutes to read poems with a partner and have them again find a different poem that they like. Have the students bookmark their poem to share later.

3. When the time is up gather the students together and have them share many of their chosen poems. If students did not share yesterday have them share today. Discuss as a class what they like and don't like about the poems they are reading. Encourage them to identify that some poems rhyme and others do not rhyme.

4. Pick one poem that the boy wrote in "Love That Dog." Make sure it is a poem that does not rhyme.

5. Read this poem several times to the class and have them think about it and talk about why this is a poem and not a paragraph.

6. Tell the students that I am going to model a poem that does not rhyme. I will think aloud as I write my poem on the board.

### **This is just to say . . .**

I ate your  
Favorite slipper  
And put  
A hole in the  
Toe.

It tasted  
Really good  
And it felt great  
On my budding  
Teeth.

I can't knit  
You a new pair  
Because I have  
No thumbs

-Love, Your Puppy

7. Discuss using breaks in the poem to create pauses and meaning.
8. Have each person try and write on their own a poem that does not rhyme.

Leave your poem on the board so they can use it as a model.

*Conferencing*

As students are working, walk around and talk to the students about their poems. Ask them if they are having any troubles. Keep notes about what they are working on and what they are struggling with.

**Day 3 - Shared**

1. Continue reading "Love That Dog." Read for about 10 minutes and have the class share their thoughts. Does the boy have an attitude change toward poetry? What kind of poems does he write?
2. Give the students about 25 minutes to read poems with a partner and have them again find a different poem that they like. Have the student bookmark their poem to share later.
3. When the time is up gather the students together and have them share many of their chosen poems. If students did not share yesterday have them share today. Discuss as a class what they like and don't like about the poems they are reading.
4. Pick one poem from other books you have provided. You may want to choose a favorite poem that you hear other students reading.
5. Read this poem several times to the class and have them think about why they like it.
6. Tell the students that we are going to write a poem together today. We are going to write a free verse poem about the activity in the lunchroom.
7. Have the students first list some interesting words that they think of when they think of the lunchroom. List these on the board to refer to as we are writing the poem together.
8. Have student share phrases that they would like to have in the poem. List these phrases on the board. Next look at the phrases and decided if they need to go in a different order or eliminated from the poem.
9. Read the poem as a class 2-3 times and see if the poem is the way that they liked.
8. Have each person try and write on their own a poem that does not rhyme. Leave the class poem on the board so they can use it as a model.

*Conferencing*

As students are working, walk around and talk to the students about their poems. Ask them if they are having any troubles. Keep notes about what they are working on and what they are struggling with.

**Day 4 - Collaborative**

1. Continue reading "Love That Dog." Discuss as a class the transformation that is being seen in the boy.

2. Give the students about 25 minutes to read poems with a new partner and have them again find a different poem that they like. Have the students bookmark their poem to share later.

3. When the time is up gather the students together and have them share many of their chosen poems. If students did not share yesterday have them share today. Discuss with the class their findings as they read more and more poems.

4. Tell the students that they are going to write a free verse poem with a friend. Have them quickly pick a friend and sit with that partner.

5. Have the friends take a few minutes to come up with a common topic or experience.

6. Have them list several interesting words to refer to later.

7. Next, have them write phrases that they would like to have in the poem. List these phrases on a paper. Next look at the phrases and decided if they need to go in a different order.

9. Have them read the poem 2-3 times and see if the poem is the way that they like.

10. Rewrite the poem.

11. Have each team share their poem to the class.

### *Conferencing*

As the teams are working, walk around and talk to the teams about their poems. Assist them as necessary. Keep notes about what they are working on and what they are struggling with.

### **Day 5 - Independent**

1. Finish reading “Love That Dog.” Discuss as a class the transformation that is being seen in the boy.

2. Give the students about 25 minutes to read poems with a new partner and have them again find a different poem that they like. Have the students bookmark their poem to share later.

3. When the time is up gather the students together and have them share many of their chosen poems. If students did not share yesterday have them share today. Discuss with the class their findings as they read more and more poems.

4. Tell the students that they are going to write a free verse poem on their own.

5. Have them list a few topics and then select the topic of their choice.

6. Have them list several interesting words to refer to as they write their poem.

7. Next, have them write phrases that they would like to have in the poem. List these phrases on a paper. Next look at the phrases and decided if they need to go in a different order.

9. Have them read the poem 2-3 times and see if the poem is the way that they like.

10. Rewrite the poem.

11. Share as many poems as possible at the end of the class.

### *Conferencing*

As the students are working, walk around and talk to the students about their poems. Assist them as necessary. Keep notes about what they are working on and what they are struggling with.

**End of Unit Assessment –**

1. Collect their five poems and read them in order of how they were read.
2. Note the specific progress made in the students poems and give this feedback to the students.
3. Use this assessment and information to guide the second week of poetry using rhyming poems.