

## Poetry Teaches Too!

*Nicole Flores*

### Abstract

Poetry, even difficult poetry is sometimes a neglected resource for teaching reading skills. Readers who struggle can find many elements of poetry useful. First, repeatedly reading any text is one strategy that has been shown to increase comprehension (Nageldinger and Young). Because many poems are short, they offer a less stressful way for the same goal to be achieved. Using short texts that are grade appropriate gives a student a better chance to make sense of their reading (Murphy). A student sees a clean uncomplicated page of poetry and a higher desire to dig into it.

The compact size of most poems lends to them being able to be reread multiple times by a reader, as was previously stated. This repetition can also lead to reading fluency. Once a student can fluently read, and is unencumbered by obstacles of decoding, the brain is then freed up to better understand what is being read (Nageldinger and Young).

Poetry's concise nature and room for interpretation can sometimes appeal to the struggling reader. They are not, in most cases, overwhelmed with text, and their own understanding of the text, as long as it is thoughtful, may be sufficient. They have a high chance for success!

This unit will use poetry to engage, motivate and teach struggling readers. It will provide guidance for close reading a poem, making meaning of it, and then using it to teach vocabulary, and comprehension skills/concepts. The objectives will be as follows:

- Students will use routines to close read a text.
- Students will create poems using a variety of techniques.
- Students will put together a written and oral presentation that involves independently using the skills learned throughout the unit.

Each lesson plan will follow the 5-step routine of close reading used in this unit. The poem or text is read and least two times, vocabulary words are identified and defined, the poem is analyzed using the appropriate meanings of the words found (the depth of which is the teacher's discretion), overall meaning from the poem is determined, then the poem can be used to teach or review a particular skill. This routine is explained more in Lesson 1. Students will be encouraged to create their own poetry using a variety of techniques in the second part of the classroom activities. These techniques should allow students of any reading or writing level to create interesting poetry.

The third and final part of this unit's activities will allow students to use the skills learned during the unit to independently (or with a partner) work with a poem chosen on their own.

## Poetry Teaches Too!

*Nicole Flores*

*All this-*

*was for you old woman*

*I wanted to write a poem*

*that you would understand*

*For what good is it to me*

*if you can't understand it?*

*but you got to try hard-*

(William Carlos Williams from January Morning <http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/2001/williams0102.html>)

This passage from “January Morning” captures the essence of the poet-reader relationship. Poets write poems to be understood, to capture a moment or experience or a feeling that ordinary prose would not. Intentionally arranging each line, the words on them, adding or removing punctuation, the rhythm, the tone come together to bring meaning to the reader beyond the page that sits in front of them. Those who participate in interpreting a poem bring their experience and point of view to make meaning from the composition. In a sense, the reader finishes what the poet has started.

How hard we try to do this can depend on a number of factors. To start, our cognitive ability and motivation for doing the work that may be needed play a huge role. However, putting oneself in the shoes of the poet and understanding that, because of what we bring our own selves to a poem, we may receive completely different things from it- and that this is okay- can help with motivating a reader to try hard (Hirsh).

Readers who struggle can find many elements of poetry useful. First, repeatedly reading any text is one strategy that has been shown to increase comprehension (Nageldinger and Young). A struggling reader, however, may lack the desire to do this with longer passages. Because many poems are short, they offer a less stressful way for the same goal to be achieved. Using short texts that are grade appropriate

gives a student a better chance to make sense of their reading (Murphy). A student sees a clean uncomplicated page of poetry and a higher desire to dig into it.

The compact size of most poems lends to them being able to be reread multiple times by a reader, as was previously stated. This repetition can also lead to reading fluency. Once a student can fluently read, and is unencumbered by obstacles of decoding, the brain is then freed up to better understand what is being read (Nageldinger and Young).

Fluency will also, eventually, lead to efficiency. The faster a student can read and recognize the words they are reading, the more a student can comprehend in a given time. The more information that can be understood leads to more information being acquired- reading efficiency (Nageldinger and Young).

Fluency can also allow students to learn new words. Poets often play with words in innovative ways. This can make these words more appealing than they may have been in prose. Repeated readings involving these new words, along with other vocabulary strategies can help a student incorporate these words into their cache (Walther and Fuhler).

The brevity of poetry also lends itself easily to differentiation. A poetry collection sharing a common theme will more than likely not be overwhelming when presented to a student. It would allow for the teacher to potentially engage the student in a variety of ways with multiple levels of reading demands (Murphy). This can serve the multiple purposes of selecting and mixing poems that teach a common skill, have high interest, are at a student's reading level along with more appropriate grade-level poems.

In my teaching experience, poetry has been an under-utilized genre of literature within the School District of Philadelphia. Emphasis has instead been placed on non-fiction passages—understandable, as students tend to have the most difficulty with these types of texts.

However logical this may be, given the demands of the Common Core, students are short-changed of an entire world of literature. Poetry can also allow students to demonstrate comprehension skills as it also challenges student's ideas and broadens their horizons. Poetry's concise nature and room for interpretation can sometimes appeal to the struggling reader. They are not, in most cases, overwhelmed with text, and their own understanding of the text, as long as it is thoughtful, may be sufficient. They have a high chance for success!

## **Content Objectives:**

This unit will use poetry to engage, motivate and teach struggling readers. It will provide guidance for close reading a poem, making meaning of it, and then using it to teach vocabulary, and comprehension skills/concepts. The objectives will be as follows:

- Students will use routines to close read a text.
- Students will create poems using a variety of techniques.
- Students will put together a written and oral presentation that involves independently using the skills learned throughout the unit.

## **Strategies:**

Students will work mostly within partnerships and groups as well as a whole class to complete activities within this unit. When appropriate, students can work independently. Strategies such as inquiry-based learning, the jigsaw technique (groups of students working on separate parts of an activity, then presenting to each other for the whole) and graphic organizers can also be used.

Each lesson plan will follow the 5-step routine of close reading used in this unit. The poem or text is read and least two times, vocabulary words are identified and defined, the poem is analyzed using the appropriate meanings of the words found (the depth of which is the teacher's discretion), overall meaning from the poem is determined, then the poem can be used to teach or review a particular skill. This routine is explained more in Lesson 1. Although my ideas are added to the interpretations of each poem, students (and teachers) should be encouraged to find meaning that makes sense to them, as long as it is in line with the poem.

Students will be encouraged to create their own poetry using a variety of techniques in the second part of the classroom activities. These techniques should allow students of any reading or writing level to create interesting poetry.

The third and final part of this unit's activities will allow students to use the skills learned during the unit to independently (or with a partner) work with a poem chosen on their own.

## **Classroom Activities:**

### ***Part I- Close Reading Poetry***

#### **Lesson 1- (@60 minutes) Introduction/Template of Routines for Close Reading**

**Objective-**Students will understand the purpose of close reading a text, and examine ways to close read a text using a well-known song.

**Plans:**

The teacher will begin by introducing the basic idea of the unit—using poetry to increase our understanding of new words, gain deeper knowledge of print by close reading, make inferences as to the meaning of poems and review skills that we have learned. Students are told that they will go through a few activities to get an idea of what they will be doing throughout the unit.

The teacher will begin by introducing the concept of close reading. A song can be used that is familiar to them, for example, *The Lion King's* "Circle of Life" by Elton John and Tim Rice. The teacher will explain that the text will be read twice, that overall questions will be asked about the text and that individual words and lines will be examined to fully understand the whole text as much as possible. Close reading of most, if not all lyrics and poems will follow the routine below:

1. A copy of the poem/lyrics will be displayed for the class, as well as each student having their own copy. The poem/lyrics are read twice, or once and if the song is available (for lyrics), it can be played for the additional reading.
2. Students are asked to circle or point out words that they do not understand or do not know, then define them using crowd sourced knowledge, the dictionary or technological resources. These definitions can be collected on a shared Google document for the class, chart paper or any other way that the meanings can be made available for students to refer to.
3. Individual lines of the song lyrics or poem are focused on now to look at closely to analyze. Students are asked questions about the possible meanings of those lines, what is happening in them and/or how the lines fit into the overall concept of the text. A list of possible questions are included in Appendix B.
4. Once selected lines are analyzed, an overall understanding of the lyrics or poem is determined by piecing together the examined parts.
5. The lyrics or poem can then used for skills practice or review (optional).

**For example:**

The first stanza of Circle of Life can be used to model this close reading process:

“From the day we arrive on the planet

And blinking, step into the Sun

There's more to be seen than can ever be seen

More to do than can ever be done”

1. The section of the lyrics are read twice.
2. The teacher determines that there are not really any words that are difficult to define, but if there were, they would be done next.
3. Selected lines are analyzed by the teacher and/or questions similar to those in Appendix B are asked. In this case, the following could be asked:

- What meaning can we make from some of the lines?

*“From the day we arrive on the planet – When we are born.  
And blinking, step into the Sun-We are new to the world.  
There's more to be seen than can ever be seen  
More to do than can ever be done”- Any and everything is possible.*

- How does the speaker or character feel?

*A sense of newness, being born into a situation, optimistic, that anything is possible.*

4. The overall meaning, connecting it to the title, is that this stanza describes the birth part of the circle of life, the beginning.

*The lines convey the sense of wonder that can be felt when entering a new situation or a new life (Saddler).*

5. This part is optional and can be any skill that the teacher deems appropriate for the lyrics, individual stanza or entire poem.

The next stanzas can be used in a similar fashion, but as guided or independent practice. The same questions can be used or any other from the list that are more appropriate. This can be continued using the organizer in Appendix C.

This lesson can be repeated with other songs determined by the teacher or students to be more appropriate or to continue practicing the routine.

## **Lesson 2 (@90 minutes)- “Foreclosure” by Lorine Niedecker**

**Objective-** Students will understand the meaning and usage of new vocabulary words and phrases; use those new meanings and phrases close read and to interpret a poem; and understand and use homographs.

### ***Plans:***

The teacher will then let students know that they will use the routines learned with poems. These poems may seem difficult, in some cases, are difficult, but closely reading them will make them easier to understand.

### **Foreclosure By Lorine Niedecker**

Tell em to take down my bare walls down

My cement abutments

Their parties thereof and clause of claws

Leave me the land

Scratch out: the land

May prose and property both die out

And leave me peace

1. The teacher will display a copy of the above poem, then pass out copies, reading it twice.

2. Students will be asked to circle words that they are unsure of. The class will agree on 3-5 words to use as vocabulary words for this poem, based on the teacher’s discretion. These words will be assigned to partnerships or groups. Students will use resources they have in the class to find one or two definitions of the words and share them. Students can

add to a Google Doc that is shared by the teacher, or added to a class list on a poster so that everyone has access to each word and the definitions found. Vocabulary words should be separated by poem to make sure they are easy to find for each poem's assignment.

3. The teacher can then direct students to do one of two activities with the poem. For the first activity, students begin by either lettering, or numbering each line of their poem. The teacher will then work with students to interpret individual lines of the poem using the definitions of the words on the vocabulary list and student's background knowledge. It should be stressed that almost any idea, as long as it makes sense with the meaning of the words involved, is acceptable. However, when possible and appropriate, a deeper meaning can be sought out or discussed. Students can also be directed to do a second activity. In this activity, students reread the poem with the definitions of the words learned to make sense of it on a broad level, then are directed towards one to two questions from Appendix B.

*For example:*

- What meaning can we make from some of the lines?

*Tell em to take down my bare walls down*

Informal language, possibly signaling the frustration and disgust at the situation.

*My cement abutments*

*Their parties thereof and clause of claws*

There were legal issues that caused this, the word "claws" may indicate anger and a sense of wanting to fight back.

*Leave me the land*

*Scratch out: the land*

The speaker wants to be left with what they came with, the house can be taken, the speaker no longer wants it, "Scratch out: the land" can mean to scratch "the land" out from the previous line, then "leave me" is left (possibly meaning leave me alone).

*May prose and property both die out*

*And leave me peace*

The speaker seems resigned to his/her fate.

- Who or what is being referred to in the poem?

*The speaker is communicating with someone or something attempting to foreclose or repossess their house.*

4. Once each line is analyzed and selected questions are answered, a discussion can be had of student's thoughts about the meaning of the whole poem. Students can be split into groups to do this, then report out.

*The speaker seems to be frustrated and finished with his/her current living situation. The cause of the frustration, from the title, would be the bank taking back the dwelling due to nonpayment. The poem describes his/her anger, then acceptance of the situation.*

5. Students can then be lead through a lesson on homophones. Examples can be discussed in the poem (bare/bear, claws/clause, their/there/they're, peace/piece). It can then extend to other pairs determined by the students. Students can also determine the theme of the poem, the message that the speaker is conveying-*I will be fine with what I came with/what I already have.*

### **Lesson 3 (@90 minutes)- "Poet's Work" by Lorine Niedecker**

**Objective-** Students will understand the meaning and usage of new vocabulary words and phrases; use those new meanings and phrases close read and to interpret a poem; and understand how the structure of a poem can communicate the overall theme or idea behind the poem.

#### **Plans:**

Poet's Work by Lorine Niedecker

Grandfather

Advised me:

Learn a trade

I learned

To sit at desk

And condense

No layoffs

From this

Condensery

1. The poem will be read at least twice for students to hear with a copy of it in front of them.
2. Students will (if needed) circle then define any words that are difficult to understand. The meanings of choice words (or all) will be displayed or discussed. Students will read or have read to them the poem with the meanings of any words chosen to clarify the message of the poem.
3. The teacher can again direct students to do one of two activities with the poem. For the first activity, students begin by either lettering, or numbering each line of their poem. The teacher will then direct students to interpret individual lines of the poem using the definitions of the words on the vocabulary list and student's background knowledge. Students should be given more of this responsibility at this point, as they now have practiced several times with guidance. It should again be stressed that almost any idea, as long as it makes sense with the meaning of the words involved, is acceptable. However, when possible and appropriate, a deeper meaning can be sought out or discussed. Students can also be directed to do a second activity. In this activity, students reread the poem with the definitions of the words learned to make sense of it on a broad level, then are directed towards one to two questions from Appendix B.

- What meaning can we make of some of the lines?

*Grandfather*

*Advised me:*

*Learn a trade-*

Grandfather gave the speaker advise to learn a skill for a basic job and to conform to the expectations of society.

*I learned*

*To sit at desk*

*And condense-*

The speaker realized that conforming with a regular job this was not his/her preference, they learned that sitting at a desk, condensing, writing poetry, doing what they wanted was best for them.

*No layoffs*

*From this*

*Condensery*

This job will not let him/her down, they won't be fired or let go. There is an advantage to being oneself.

4. Students can discuss of their thoughts about the meaning of the whole poem. Students can be split into groups to do this, then report out.

5. This poem can be lastly analyzed for its structure. Students can be guided to understand that the poem is talking about learning to condense, and has condensed its line- "I learned to sit at desk", as some poems do. They can then look at poems like *Shallow Poem* by Gerda Mayer, *Reply to the Question: "How can You Become a Poet?"* by Eve Merriam, *Metaphors* by Sylvia Plath and others compiled at <https://mseffie.com/assignments/poem-a-day/metapoetry.html#Kidnap> and other websites.

#### **Lesson 4 (@90 minutes)- "In a Station of the Metro" by Ezra Pound**

**Objective-** Students will understand the meaning and usage of new vocabulary words and phrases; use those new meanings and phrases close read and to interpret a poem; and understand metaphors.

**Plans:**

"In a Station of the Metro" by Ezra Pound

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:

Petals on a wet, black bough.

1. Copies of the poem are handed out to each student, displayed for the class if possible and read at least two times.

2. Students work on unknown words for vocabulary and meanings are shared with the class.

3. Meanings are constructed from the poem and questions are asked while incorporating the definitions learned in the previous step. Suggestions are:

- What meaning can we make of some of the lines?

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd:*

The ghostly faces in the crowd

*Petals on a wet, black bough.*

Look like white or light petals on a dark branch

- Why might the speaker have used the word apparition to describe the faces?

To emphasize the fact that the people's faces stand out from the like ghosts like the petals would.

- Can you connect in any way to the speaker or situation?

Answers may vary.

4. Students can discuss of their thoughts about the meaning of the whole poem. Students can be split into groups to do this, then report out.

5. This poem can be used to reinforce what metaphors are and why they are used.

### ***Part II- Writing Poetry (Times for each activity will vary)***

***Objective-*** Students will write their own poetry using methods provided by the teacher.

#### ***Plans:***

Students are encouraged in this part of the unit to write poetry of their own. There are a variety of standard as well as unconventional ways that a student may accomplish this, the name for the activity is listed as well as a short description. The teacher can choose some or all of these approaches for students to complete.

**Free Verse Poems-** Students write a poem without attention to rhyme or meter. They can model it after a previously read poem or can completely think of the content and form on their own.

*Versions of free verse can include:*

-Beginning with the same lines as another poem.

Ex. She got \_\_\_\_\_, He got \_\_\_\_\_, from Jayne Cortez's "She Got He Got" then continue.

- Pull out one word from another poem and use that as the topic to create a new one.

- Create specified rules for the new poem.

Ex. Write with no punctuation, write a poem in which you don't repeat any words, etc.

**Dadaist Poems-** Begins with choosing a newspaper article, a page from a passage you are reading in your classroom or even a random printed story will work. Cut out the text and each of the words. The words can then be selected randomly, one at a time or intentionally selected to create a unique poem. Once the words are chosen they can be glued to a background or written out.

**Mesostic Poems-** This type of poem is very similar to an acrostic, except a poem is created with the recognizable word in the middle.

Ex.

pertur**B**ed  
st**U**bborn  
u**G**ly

**The Golden Shovel Method-** A way to create poetry invented by Terrance Hayes. This method starts with a favorite phrase or words from a poem that has been read already. Each line of the new poem ends in each word or the phrase.

Ex.

**TRUST**  
after 'Perfect' by Bo Burnham

You and I, we started with **trust**.  
With you dropping your heart, and **me**  
catching it, clutching the **perfect**

rhythmic drum that I **should**  
not play with, but rather I should **try**  
not to break what is already bruised, **to**  
duct tape it up, and hope that you will **be**  
just fine when I return it to **you**.

by Asta Geil

**N+7-** A method invented by Jean Lescure which involves taking an original poem and replace each noun with the 7<sup>th</sup> letter that comes after it in the dictionary. Variations can occur with how the number of words after (n +3, n+10), choosing words before that noun instead (n-3, n-10) or replacing verbs or adjectives instead.

**Centos-** Another form of borrowed poetry that is created entirely or lines from other poems.

**Erasure poems-** Students take an already composed poem and simply erase words they select to make a new poem. The new poem can stand on it's own with the erasing (or blacking out) or be rewritten.

**Blackout Poems-** Are similar to erasure poems in that an already composed poem is used. Once words have been chosen for a new poem, the rest of the poem is either completely blacked out with a marker or a picture is created to black out the words that are not used. The selected words can have a box drawn around them to clearly distinguish them from the unused words.

Other ideas can be found at the following website as "Bernadette Mayer's Writing Experiments". This site lists many of the creative ideas she has for composing poems/writing and is listed in the Reading List portion of this unit.

### **Part III- Putting It All Together/The Project**

**Objectives-** Students will use the skills they have learned throughout the unit to create an independent (or partnership) project.

#### ***Plans:***

This project will allow each student to practice the skills from this unit. First, students will choose a poem that was not used as an activity for this lesson. A list of websites for other possible poems to use is provided the Reading List portion of Resources.

Once the poem is chosen, students must choose at least three questions from the close reading routine in Appendix B to answer.

Students must then create at least four poems from Part Two of this unit based on this poem in some way.

Students will then present their work in a display of their choosing. Some ideas are:

- A skit in which each poem is simply read aloud, elements of the poem are acted out or a play based on the elements of the poem is created.
- A song/rap- the original and new poems created are set to music.
- Performance poetry- each poem is presented “Poetry Café “ style.
- Poster board can be artfully arranged to display all or the poems.
- A slide show or other digital presentation program.

Student’s work is then scored for what they produce and their presentation of their material. Material that can be used to assist students with organizing their information and sites to find poetry can be found in the Appendix.

## Appendix A

### Academic Standards for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts

**CC.1.3.5.B** Cite textual evidence by quoting accurately from the text to explain what the text says explicitly and make inferences.

**CC.1.3.5.E** Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

**CC.1.3.5.F** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in grade level text, including interpretation of figurative language.

**CC.1.3.5.J** Acquire and use accurately grade appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships.

## Appendix B

### Close Reading Questions

Use these questions as appropriate to closely read and delve deeper into a poem. Add any that work with the poem you are using!

- What meaning can we make of lines \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?
- Who or what is being referred to in the poem? Who is the speaker or main character?
- How does the speaker or character feel? How do you know?
- What event or events are being referred to in the poem/what is happening to the speaker or main character?
- Why might the speaker have used the word \_\_\_\_\_ to describe the \_\_\_\_\_?
- Can you connect in any way to the speaker or situation?
- What is the setting?
- Do any lines repeat? What effect does it create?
- What message or theme do you get from what happens to the speaker or main character?

**Appendix C**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Close Reading Poetry!**

Poem: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the poem at least two times by yourself, with your teacher or a neighbor.
2. Circle or point out any words that you do not understand or know. Define them using your classmates, the dictionary or technological resources. You may record some of them here, or where your teacher directs you to.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>

3. Answer questions asked about the poem here.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>


4. What does you think this poem means?

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5. What other skills are found in this poem? Your teacher will direct you.

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**Appendix C**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The Project!**

Poem chosen and author : \_\_\_\_\_

1. Read the poem at least two times by yourself or with your partner.
2. Circle or point out any words that you do not understand or know. Define them using your partner, the dictionary or technological resources. Record them here.

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>

3. Answer 3 close reading routine questions about the poem here.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>


4. What does you think this poem means?

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5. Choose 4 ways that you can create unique poetry based on the poem you chose. After you have listed them, write out each on separate paper.

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

❖ \_\_\_\_\_

6. How will you present and display your original and new poem? Some ideas are:

\_\_\_\_\_ A skit in which each poem is simply read aloud, elements of the poem are acted out or a play based on the elements of the poem is created.

\_\_\_\_\_ A song/rap- the original and new poems created are set to music.

\_\_\_\_\_ Performance poetry- each poem is presented “Poetry Café “ style.

\_\_\_\_\_ Poster board can be artfully arranged to display all or the poems.

\_\_\_\_\_ A slide show or other digital presentation program.

➤ Your grade will depend on the following rubric:

Project Element	4	3	2	1	0
3 Close Reading Poetry Questions	More than three appropriate questions are chosen and answered accurately.	Three appropriate questions were chosen and answered accurately.	Two appropriate questions were chosen and answered accurately –with possibly a few errors.	Less than two appropriate questions were chosen and/or many errors were found among the answers.	No questions were chosen or they were not appropriate to the poem in any way, no answers were given.
Four Written Poems	More than four poems were created from the list of suggestions, poems are based on the original poem selected, poems followed the form given.	Four poems were created from the list of suggestions, poems are based on the original poem selected, poems followed the form.	Three poems were created from the list of suggestions, poems are based on the original poem selected, poems followed the form given possibly with a few errors.	Two poems were created from the list of suggestions, poems may or may not be based on the original poem selected, poems followed the form given with a few errors.	No poems were created.
Poem Presentation	A high level of creativity was shown in the way the created poems were presented or displayed.	Poems were appropriately presented or displayed.	Poems were appropriately presented or displayed with a few errors.	Poems were appropriately presented or displayed with many errors.	Poems were not presented or displayed.

## Appendix D

### Resources

#### Bibliography

1. Walther, and Fuhler. "Teaching Struggling Readers with Poetry." *Scholastic*, shop.scholastic.com/parent-ecommerce/parent-store.html.  
*This article describes the benefits of using poetry with readers who struggle.*
2. "Considering the Context and Texts for Fluency: Performance, Readers Theater, and Poetry" *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 2014, 7(1), 47-56.  
*This article describes the importance of reading using reading performance activities.*
3. Murphy, Eileen. "Against Slogging: Engaging Poetry in the Classroom by Eileen Murphy." *Poetry Foundation*, Poetry Foundation, [www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69416/against-slogging-engaging-poetry-in-the-classroom](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69416/against-slogging-engaging-poetry-in-the-classroom).  
*This article describes the benefits of using poetry as a teaching tool with readers who struggle.*
4. <https://www.sadlier.com/school/ela-blog/disney-songs-close-reading-lesson-for-elementary-students>  
*This article offers tips on close reading and how kid-friendly songs can be used to introduce this skill.*

#### Reading List:

<http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/index.html>

*This site has a wide variety of poetry. Poems are arranged by content, title, author and can even be search by the first of the poem.*

[http://www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Mayer-Bernadette\\_Experiments.html](http://www.writing.upenn.edu/library/Mayer-Bernadette_Experiments.html).

*A list created by Bernadette Mayer of ideas for journaling or poetry writing.*

<https://mseffie.com/assignments/poem-a-day/metapoetry.html#Kidnap>

*This is a compilation of meta-poems, or poems that are about poetry or show what their topic is with the way the poem is written.*

#### Classroom Materials:

*For this unit the following materials are needed:*

- Copies of each poem to be used for each student
- Access to dictionaries or websites to define unknown words
- Chart paper or other form of technology for students to share/view definitions
- Paper to write poems that are created
- Various materials for student projects/presentations