

Poetry Activities

BY JACK PRELUTSKY

INTEGRATING POETRY WITH OTHER ARTS AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. Prepare a bulletin board for the classroom, library, or front hall celebrating favorite poems.
2. Make a quilt out of cloth or paper illustrating favorite poems.
3. Make mobiles, murals, or bookmarks based on favorite poetry characters.
4. Set poems to music or chant them in chorus for an assembly program.

Suggestions:

“Justin Austin” (**RIDE A PURPLE PELICAN**) sung to the tune of “Yankee Doodle.”

“Ankylosaurus” (**TYRANNOSAURUS WAS A BEAST**) sung to the tune of “Sweet Betsy from Pike.”

5. Put on plays, dances, or puppet shows based on favorite poems.

Suggestions:

“Willie Ate a Worm” (**ROLLING HARVEY DOWN THE HILL**). Use cooked spaghetti or candy worms for props.

“My Mother Made a Meat Loaf” (**SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE**).

6. Make “Baby Uggs”* (**THE BABY UGGS ARE HATCHING**).
 - a) Mix 4 cups of hot water, 4 packets of plain gelatin, and 3 packages of lime gelatin.
 - b) Pour mixture in L’EGGS containers. Let “uggs” harden.
 - c) Children can hatch “uggs.” Use yellow gumdrops for eyes.

7. Recite “Countdown” (**IT’S HALLOWEEN**) as a finger play. Have children hold up all ten fingers and fold down each finger one at a time as you count down the number of ghosts.
 8. Have a **SOMETHING BIG** party. Children can dress up in oversized clothing such as novelty eyeglasses, huge neckties, hats and shoes. Serve oversized cookies and other **BIG** foods for refreshments. (**SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE**).
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GENERATING IDEAS

1. Make up your own list of weird ice cream flavors. (“Bleezer’s Ice Cream” in **THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK**).
 2. What other things would be hard to hide? (“An Elephant is Hard to Hide” in **SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE**).
 3. Make a list of strange things you’d rather eat instead of some food you don’t like. (“I’d Never Eat a Beet” in **THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK**).
 4. Think of other things that might happen when Euphonica Jarre sings. (“Euphonica Jarre” in **THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK**).
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GETTING CHILDREN TO WRITE POETRY AND APPRECIATE WORDPLAY

1. Write a poem about your favorite animal. (**ZOO DOINGS**).
2. Write a poem in which the **SHAPES** of some of the words look like their meanings. (“When Snowflakes are Fluttering” in **IT’S SNOWING!**)
3. Can you find all the “hotdog” puns in “We’re Fearless Flying Hotdogs” (**SOMETHING BIG HAS BEEN HERE**)?

4. Can you end a poem with a pun? Start with the punch line first, then work backwards to the beginning. (“A Wolf is at the Laundromat” in **THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK**).
 5. Explain to students what “anonymous” means. Have students look in the library’s poetry section for anonymous poems that do not appear in **POEMS OF A. NONNY MOUSE**.
 6. Inaugurate a “Poetry Annual” of students’ poetry for your school. Keep one copy of each edition in your school library.
 7. Have a “Jack Prelutsky Poetry Contest.” Suggested themes: Silly People, Strange Animals, Imaginary Creatures.
 8. Have students submit poetry to children’s magazines for publications.
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