

Poetry

SAMPLE





About the Course

Students learn to love the sight and sound of words and appreciate history through daily poetry reading covering a wide variety of authors and poems from the 19th century.



Placement & Combining Tips

Students in Grades 5-8 can easily be combined for these lessons as all grades use nearly the same texts this year, although older grades read additional selections and have corresponding composition assignments.



Scheduling

GRADE	SCHEDULE INFO.	BOOKS
5-6	Poetry: Grades 5-6 5 times/week 5 min	Jump Back, Paul: The Life and Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar Over the River and Through the Wood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century American Children's Poetry The Poet: Pauline Johnson The Crescent Moon

Sample Weekly View

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Poetry: Grades 5-6				
Poetry: Grades 5-6	Poetry: Grades 5-6	Poetry: Grades 5-6	Poetry: Grades 5-6	Poetry: Grades 5-6



Planning & Prep

Permission to print for non-commercial use. See Alveary group use policy to use lessons in a group context.

LINKS: Click text or scan the QR code in the top corner of the lesson plan pages to view online resources associated with the lessons.

Responsibility for previewing all links rests with the teacher. All links were checked at the time of publication; however, websites change frequently and may contain objectionable content. Please report broken links by contacting us through our website.



Books & Resources

For book rationales and purchase options, click the Book List link or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Book List Details](#)

Poetry: Grades 5-6



Jump Back, Paul: The Life and Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar



Over the River and Through the Wood: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century American Children's Poetry



The Poet: Pauline Johnson



The Crescent Moon



Supplies

For supply list details and basic supplies helpful to have on hand, click the links or scan the QR code below.

∞ [View Basic Supplies](#)
(No Subject Supplies Assigned)



Quick Links

Poetry: Grades 5-6

∞ [Over the River Public Domain Poetry List](#)

Click THIS text
or scan the QR
code for links.



Poetry: Grades 5-6

How To Teach



Introduce

Tell something about the poet or the kind of poem or fable to prepare students. Remember that poems are like paintings—they not only convey ideas, they create an experience with the sound of words, the way the words are arranged, and the emotions, thoughts, and images they evoke.



Read

Read the poem aloud in order to hear the sounds and meter. Have students read it aloud as well as it is helpful to hear poetry read by different voices. Try to read paying attention to the punctuation as well as the line breaks to get the sense of the poem.



Discuss

Allow students to share any thoughts or connections. What are your impressions of the poem? Talk about anything that stood out to you: the images, ideas, words, phrases, sounds, or even physical look of the poem. What kinds of things is the poem about?



Reread

Read (or have the student read) the poem again.



Connect

Students may choose to add poems to their Commonplace Book or mark them to copy later.

Poetry: Grades 5-6

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

WEEK 1 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 1

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ NOTE

You will usually spend one week reading the poems from ~5 pages (depending on the size of the illustrations and length of poems). You can pick 1-3 to read each day and reread them as much as you like. Poetry is made to be read many times. Lessons give some ideas for discussing a particular poem, but those are only suggestions. You'll also focus particularly on getting to know the poets Rabindranath Tagore in Term 1, Pauline Johnson in Term 2, and Paul Laurence Dunbar in Term 3. Feel free to use the index of the book to look up other poems by poets you particularly like.

→ INTRO

Almost all the poems we'll read this year were written from 1800-1900 AD (the time period you'll learn about in many of your other lessons as well). So, as you read, imagine children like you listening to these same poems about 200 years ago! First, let's start by reading a poem that reminds us to enjoy (and not overthink) the poems we'll read this year.
∞ Link: Introduction To Poetry

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.31-36 Chapter: Growing Things
Pick and choose poems from these pages over the week.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

★ TEACHER NOTE

Optional: Read the Introduction and share information with students throughout the year.

Note: The "Holidays" chapter of Over the River and Through the Wood is not scheduled until Term 3. Feel free to also read from that chapter during Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, etc.

WEEK 1 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 2

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ INTRO

Our poem today is by Paul Laurence Dunbar. He was one of the first Black Americans to earn a living as a writer, and he inspired many other writers after him. He also became friends with Orville Wright and his brother Wilbur (who you may remember as the inventors of the airplane)! The Wright brothers owned a printing press and published Dunbar's first writings.

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.36 "The Seedling" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

- Do you notice how the seedling starts talking in the poem? Have you ever heard a seedling talk? Of course not! Poets sometimes imagine that things like plants or animals can talk to help us think about them in new ways. The fancy word for this is "personification." Do you notice any other examples of the seed doing things only people normally do?

→ NOTE

You'll read an interesting biography about Paul Laurence Dunbar in Term 3 that includes several more of his poems.

★ TEACHER NOTE

∞ **Article Link:** How To Read a Poem Out Loud

WEEK 1 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 3

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.31 "Tree Feelings" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

- How does the poet use personification in this poem? What human traits does the poet give the trees?

Poetry: Grades 5-6

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

p.31-36 Chapter: Growing Things
Use any additional time to pick and choose poems from these pages.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

WEEK 1 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 4

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.31-36 Chapter: Growing Things
Pick and choose poems from these pages.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

★ TEACHER NOTE

Alternatively, explore more poems on p.37-44 and 51-54 of this chapter, as we will not have time to cover those sections in lessons. You can also use the author index on page 559 to find other poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

WEEK 1 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 5

Materials: Crescent Moon

→ INTRO

Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861 in Calcutta, India, and grew up in a family that loved art, music, and ideas. He was a poet, short-story writer, composer, playwright, and painter who spent his life creating in many different ways. In 1913, he became the first non-European writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He also composed the national anthems for both India and Bangladesh, making his words a lasting part of two nations. Once a week this term, we'll read poems by Rabindranath Tagore, exploring themes like mothers, children, and nature.

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.8 "On the Seashore"

- What are the children doing at the seashore?
- What might the "seashore of endless worlds" symbolize?

p.6-10
Pick and choose poems from these pages.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

WEEK 2 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 6

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ INTRO

Our poet today is Ina Coolbrith. She was born Josephine Smith. Her uncle Joseph Smith was the founder of the Mormon church, and her father (who died when she was just a few months old) was a church leader, though she concealed this most of her life. Her ties to the church were severed in childhood when her mother remarried a non-Mormon, and they moved to California to follow the gold rush. She published her first poems as a teenager and worked for over two decades as a librarian, encouraging the writing careers of others. She became California's first Poet Laureate in 1915.

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.50 "In Blossom Time" by Ina Coolbrith

- "In Blossom Time" is written in quatrain, meaning each verse contains exactly four lines. Sometimes a whole poem is written in quatrain, as in this poem, and sometimes just part of the poem uses this structure. Quatrains usually have a specific rhyme structure. In this poem, the structure is ABCB, meaning that the words ending the second and fourth lines rhyme (B), but the first (A) and third (C) lines do not. Quatrains can have other rhyme structures, such as AABB or ABBA.

• EXTRA HELPING

∞ Article Link: Ina Coolbrith Bio

Poetry: Grades 5-6

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

WEEK 2 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 7

☐ Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ INTRO

Last lesson, we learned that a quatrain is when each verse in a poem has exactly four lines. We'll read two more poems that use this format today, but have different rhyme structures.

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.44 "Prairie Fires" by Eudora May Stone

- What is the rhyme scheme of "Prairie Fires"?

p.46 "The Mushroom's Soliloquy" by Hannah Flagg Gould

- What is the rhyme scheme of "The Mushroom's Soliloquy"? Note that a soliloquy is when a character speaks their private thoughts or feelings out loud without anyone else around to hear them. What are some of the mushroom's thoughts?

★ TEACHER NOTE

"Prairie Fires" has an ABAB rhyme scheme.

"The Mushroom's Soliloquy" has an AABB rhyme scheme.

WEEK 2 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 8

☐ Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.45 "The Johnny Cake" Author Unknown

- "The Johnny Cake" has three lines per stanza, which is called a tercet. The pace of a tercet is often slower than a couplet or quatrain. What is the rhyme scheme?

p.44 "To Make A Prairie" by Emily Dickinson

- Notice "To Make A Prairie" is both very brief and uses an unconventional AAABB rhyme structure. Why might Dickinson have chosen this for her subject? Note that reverie means to daydream or be lost in imagination.

★ TEACHER NOTE

"The Johnny Cake" rhyme scheme is ABB.

WEEK 2 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 9

☐ Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.44-50 Chapter: Growing Things

Pick and choose poems from these pages.

(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

- As time allows, use the author index in the back to explore more poems by any of the poets we have been introduced to so far.

WEEK 2 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 10

☐ Materials: Crescent Moon

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.12-13 "Sleep-Stealer"

- Do you think someone really stole the baby's sleep?
- What phrase is repeated throughout the poem? Why do you think this is?
- How does the poem blur the line between the real world and the imaginative world?

Poetry: Grades 5-6

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

p.11-15

If time allows, pick and choose poems from these pages.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

WEEK 3 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 11

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.58 "Give Me The Splendid Silent Sun" by Walt Whitman
(We'll learn more about Walt Whitman later in the year.)

- What examples of alliteration (repeated sounds) and/or repetition (repeated words) can you find in this poem?
- The poem in our book leaves out some lines. The verse ends like this:

These demanding to have them, (tired with ceaseless excitement,
and rack'd by the war-strife,)

These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,
While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,
Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets,
Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time refusing to give me
up,

Yet giving to make me gluttoned, enrich'd of soul, you give me
forever faces;

(O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,
I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

- This poem was written during the Civil War. In fact, Whitman volunteered as a nurse caring for wounded soldiers, and the experience inspired some of his most powerful poems. Knowing this, how does the line about being "rack'd by the war-strife" impact Whitman's longing for peaceful nature?

★ TEACHER NOTE

The full poem is split into two distinct parts — the first longing for nature and solitude, the second embracing the city. However, the second part does include content that may not be suitable for your students, so it is not included in the book or the lesson. Be sure to preview if you wish to share with your students.

WEEK 3 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 12

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.59 "A Day" Emily Dickinson

- We previously read Emily Dickinson's "To Make A Prairie" (p. 44), which used an unconventional rhyme structure. "A Day" includes a more traditional quatrain (four-line verse) and rhyme structure. Can you identify what that rhyme structure is?

★ TEACHER NOTE

"A Day" rhyme scheme is ABCB.

WEEK 3 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 13

Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.57-62 Chapter: Landscapes and Seasons
Pick and choose poems from these pages over the week.
(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

- As time allows, use the author index in the back to explore more poems by any of the poets we have been introduced to so far.

Poetry: Grades 5-6

[Click THIS text or scan the QR code for links.](#)



Term 1

WEEK 3 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 14

☐ Materials: Over the River and Through the Wood

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.57-62 Chapter: Landscapes and Seasons

Pick and choose poems from these pages over the week.

(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)

- As time allows, use the author index in the back to explore more poems by any of the poets we have been introduced to so far.

WEEK 3 ☐ 5m Poetry: Grades 5-6 - Lesson 15

☐ Materials: Crescent Moon

→ READ & DISCUSS

p.19 "Playthings"

- How does the poem compare child's play to adult work, and which seems more satisfying?
- What "art" has the adult forgotten?
- What does the poem mean when it says adults spend their lives seeking "costly playthings"? Does this create success and happiness?

p.16-19

If time allows, pick and choose poems from these pages.

(Read one time, discuss, and then reread the poems.)