Celebrate National Poetry Month

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Dear Educator,

National Poetry Month offers the perfect opportunity to invigorate your classroom with creativity and imagination! Poetry has the unique ability to challenge students to think about the ordinary world in a new light. A thoughtfully designed poetry unit can teach students how to experience the delight of finding the poetic in the ordinary while forming a lasting love and respect for the carefully crafted written language. Join us this April as we celebrate our rich poetic history and perpetuate the wonderful craft of our favorite poets—old and new!

—From all of us at Random House Children’s Books

Prepare Your Classroom for Poetry Month

• Reciting poems aloud is a fun, engaging way to help improve your students’ fluency! To jump-start your poetry unit, choose a new poem each day and have your students practice reading aloud in pairs, starting with simple poems and building up to challenging tongue twisters. Your students will find delight in the simple act of reading aloud and will be ready to engage in the unit!

• Make your classroom poetry-friendly. Hang poster boards with your favorite poems written on them from the ceiling, classroom door, bulletin board, and desk.

• Introduce your students to the concepts of rhythm and syllables. Gather students on a reading rug. Start with simple words and sentences, and teach students how to “clap out” syllables to track rhythm.

• Create a list of favorite rhyming words on your whiteboard or bulletin board. Give students fun incentives, such as extra credit, a homework pass, or a prize, for adding interesting or challenging words to the board!

For an abundance of poetry resources, check out these collections of poetry for young readers:

20th Century Children’s Poetry Treasury
Selected by Jack Prelutsky
Illustrated by Meilo So
978-0-679-89314-1
Ages: All

Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young
Selected by Jack Prelutsky
Illustrated by Marc Brown
978-0-394-87218-6
Ages: 3–7

Favorite Poems Old and New
Selected by Helen Ferris
Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard
978-0-385-07696-8
Ages: 3–7
A Poem in Your Pocket is a classroom-friendly introduction to all things poetry!

Mr. Tiffin and his students, stars of How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin? and The Apple Orchard Riddle, are back in this celebration of all things poetry. Once again, Margaret McNamara sets her playful, child-friendly story in the classroom, and this time, poetry—from metaphors to acrostics to haiku—is the name of the game. The focus here is on Elinor, whose confidence falters as she tries to write something “perfect” for Poem in Your Pocket Day and impress a visiting poet. G. Brian Karas’s accessible, adorable illustrations add to the fun.

Celebrate Poem in Your Pocket Day in your classroom on April 16, 2015!

Visit www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/poem-your-pocket-day to watch videos, download classroom resources, and learn more about how Poem in Your Pocket Day came to be.

After reading A Poem in Your Pocket in your classroom, have your students work together to create a fun, collaborative poem!

Writing Poetry Together Activity

• Gather students in groups of 4 to 7.
• Fold a piece of paper vertically accordion-style into one long, flat rectangle.
• Have one student begin the first line of the poem in the first rectangle and pass the paper to the next student.
• The next student should read the first line, undo the first fold, and then write the second line of the poem in the next rectangle.
• Pass the paper to the next student, who will continue writing in the next rectangle.
• Keep on writing and folding until there are no more empty rectangles.
• Unfold your accordion poem and read it aloud.
• Afterward, make copies and distribute “pocket-sized” poems for your students!

• April is National Poetry Month, but poetry is year-round.
• Poem in Your Pocket Day is generally celebrated in the third week of April. Set a date that works for your school, or join in with local or national festivities.
• Make pockets out of construction paper and hang them in your classroom. Fill the pockets with poetry on the big day.
• Ask older students to read their pocketed poems to younger students as part of the day’s celebration.
• Encourage faculty and staff to carry poems in their own pockets. No one is too old or too important for poetry.
• Take time to memorize a poem or two with your class. Poems learned by heart stay with you for a long time.
Rhyming Fun Has Just Begun!

Dr. Seuss was a master at rhyming. Now it’s your turn!

Have the kids sit in a circle. Read out one of the words below and see how many words they can come up with that rhyme.

CAT
FISH
DOG
FED
KIT
CAP
POP
DAY

Share your favorite Dr. Seuss rhymes with your students this April!
Choose your favorite poetry picture book for a read-aloud. Pause as you read to have your students clap out the syllables on each line. Discuss the ways the syllables and rhyming words form rhythm as you read. **RL.2.4**

Poems are a great way to teach your young students about imagery. To simplify the concept for a younger audience, discuss the five senses with your students. Then read a poem together to identify words in the poem that enable us to “see,” “hear,” “taste,” “smell,” or “touch” the events that are happening. **RL.1.4**

Investigate the beautiful illustrations of the book to have students brainstorm details about the characters, setting, or events in the poem. **RL.1.7**

As a pre-reading activity, choose an interesting or action-filled page as a writing prompt. Have students study the page and write a creative narrative about the events that might be happening in the poem. **W.1.3**