

# 4th Reading Workshop Unit 6: Little Things Are Big: Making Meaning from Poems and Poetic Craft in Literature (Weeks 33-36)

Content Area: **Template**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **9 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit 6: Little Things Are Big: Making Meaning from Poems and Poetic Craft in Literature

### Unit Rationale

A unit on poetry is a chance to reenergize reading workshop. Because they often convey big things in small packages, poems lend themselves to being read, reread, memorized, quoted, recited, sung, treasured, and shared. Poems allow children to notice language and its rhythms and also to notice how a few simple words can evoke strong images or strong feeling. In this unit, you'll help children get started on a love affair with this versatile genre and with language itself. Through strategic read-aloud, you will also model how to notice and interpret poetic moves in prose, then give students time to practice this in their own reading of independent or book club novels.

The children in your room are not new to this genre, even if they've never been formally "taught" poetry in reading or writing workshop. And this is a good place to begin--with the message that poems are all around us. Poems are serenading us in songs and anthems, gracing greeting cards and billboards. Whatever children's prior knowledge of poetry, this unit is about teaching them that a poem is much more than a set of rhyming lines: Poems can touch our very soul. This might well be the transition from singing simplistic "Cat-sat-on-a-mat-eating-a-ra" type of rhymes to a serious consideration of the genre. Or, if your children are already sophisticated readers of poetry, this can be the unit to move them further along with the work of analyzing and interpreting poems. Additionally, this unit will help students find the poetry hiding in the novels they are reading independently, to notice passages that are figurative and pause to consider the effects of the author's careful construction. It's crucial that young readers continue to move through pages and pages of text every day. Finding ways to build bridges between reading poems and appreciating the poetic side of prose will be important.

Traditional ways of teaching poetry have often focused on the poet's own "life" or the poet's "intention" as the lens through which to interpret the poem. In this unit, however, you'll encourage children to create their own meanings, pushing them to ponder a poem's bigger meaning and asking: "What do these lines mean to me, in my life?" The unit begins on an exploratory note, with children comparing and contrasting several poems to get a sense of the diversity and breadth of the genre. But recognizing that the first reading of the poem is seldom enough, that a poem usually begs a second ("closer") reading, the unit moves onto specific teaching points for meaning making and, ultimately, interpretation.

Notice that each bend also teaches children to transfer the work they've practiced on poems to the context of their independent reading. You'll likely want to reserve a class period per week to check up on this transfer--a

day when students will spend workshop time reading only novels, not poems, and your conferring and small group work will support this.

From “Rationale/Introduction,” pages 76-93 in *If...Then...Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grades 3-5*

## **SEL Competencies**

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SEL.PK-12.1	Self-Awareness
SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one’s feelings and thoughts on one’s own behavior
SEL.PK-12.1.3	Recognize one’s personal traits, strengths, and limitations
SEL.PK-12.1.4	Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges
SEL.PK-12.2	Self-Management
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one’s own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
SEL.PK-12.2.2	Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
SEL.PK-12.2.3	Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one’s goals
SEL.PK-12.3	Social Awareness
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.3.2	Demonstrate awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others’ cultural backgrounds
SEL.PK-12.3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
SEL.PK-12.3.4	Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings
SEL.PK-12.4	Responsible Decision-Making
SEL.PK-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills
SEL.PK-12.4.2	Identify the consequences associated with one’s actions in order to make constructive choices
SEL.PK-12.4.3	Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions
SEL.PK-12.5	Relationship Skills
SEL.PK-12.5.1	Establish and maintain healthy relationships
SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.3	Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
SEL.PK-12.5.4	Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

## **Essential Questions**

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How can I read a variety of poems, with attention to mood, sounds, word choice, and images?

How can I notice how these elements and the parts of a poem work together to create meaning?

How can I read novels with a new appreciation for word choice, figurative language, and imagery?

## 21st Century Life and Career

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CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.

CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.

## **Pre-Assessments**

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Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark and Reading Records

Common Lit

## **Instructional Plan**

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[Reading the Weather, Reading The World LUCY](#)

[Poetry BOOK PDF](#)

[Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive](#)

## **Discovering Poetry**

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**WALTS**

We are learning about the structural elements of poems so that we can identify the form, length, structure, style, and mood of different types of poems.

We are learning about figurative language, intense imagery, and repetition so that we can determine the meaning of words and phrases in a poem.

We are learning about rhyme and rhythm so that we can notice how poets play with language.

**I Can Statements**

I can identify the structural elements of poems.

I can identify different types of poems.

I can notice figurative language.

I can think about craft moves help you understand a character or the theme.

I can explain the rhythm and rhyme of poetry.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Talk Between and Across

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Whole class reading

Independent reading

Group work

Video Analysis

Questioning

Cooperative Learning

### **Formative Assessments**

Entrance/Exit slips

Reading checks/quizzes

Student conferences

Class discussions

Observation

Turn and talks

Active reading logs/journals

Open Ended Question

## **Instructional Materials and Resources**

Heinemann Resources

Jeniffer Servallo Texts and Resources

Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading

Scholastic Resources

BrainPop

Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

## **Deeper Comprehension**

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### **WALTS**

We are learning about details and examples in a poem so that we can explain how parts of a poem fit together.

We are learning about creating mental images so that we can draw inferences from a poem.

We are learning to make relevant connections so that we can draw inferences from the text.

We are learning about the ideas and images in a poem so that we can determine the theme.

### **I Can Statements**

I can read a poem section by section determining how they fit together.

I can create mental images of the words of a poem.

I can make a connection to a poem using details from the poem.

I can determine the theme of the poem

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## **Looking at Life and Literature through the Lens of Poetry**

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### **WALTS**

We are learning about making relevant connections so that we can explain a poem.

We are learning about determining the theme of a poem so that we can carry valuable life lessons with us as we live our lives.

### **I Can Statements**

I can connect to the lines of a poem to carry the meaning with me in my life.

I can memorize a few lines of poetry.

I can carry lines of poetry and their message as I live my life.

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## **Modifications and/or Accommodations**

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### **Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)**

#### **English Language Learners**

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with

a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

## **Special Education Students**

**Chunking:** The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

**Checking for Understanding:** It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

**Extra time:** The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

**Oral Reading:** The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

**Timers:** The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

## **Students with 504 Plans**

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## **Gifted & Talented Strategies**

**Extensions/Enrichments:** Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

**Modify/Change Activities:** Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

## Students at Risk of School Failure

**Directions or Instructions:** Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

**Peer Support:** Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

**Alternate or Modified Assignments:** Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

**Increase One to One Time:** When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

**Contracts:** It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

**Hands On:** As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

**Tests/Assessments:** Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

**Seating:** Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

## Literacy

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See Crosswalks

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

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ELA.L.RF	Foundational Skills: Reading Language Phonics and Word Recognition
ELA.L.RF.4.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.  Fluency
ELA.L.RF.4.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
ELA.L.RF.4.4.A	Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
ELA.L.RF.4.4.B	Read grade-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
ELA.L.RF.4.4.C	Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
ELA.L.VI.4.3	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
ELA.L.VI.4.3.A	Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., as pretty as a picture) in context.
ELA.L.VI.4.3.B	Determine the meaning of words and phrases that allude to significant characters found in literature.
ELA.L.VI.4.3.C	Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
ELA.L.VI.4.3.D	Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).
ELA.RL.TS.4.4	Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.
ELA.RI.TS.4.4	Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
ELA.RL.MF.4.6	Make connections between specific descriptions and directions in a text and a visual or oral representation of the text.
ELA.W.NW.4.3.D	Use concrete words, phrases, and sensory details and explore using figurative language to convey experiences and events precisely.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.B	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

## **Integration of Career Readiness. Life Literacies and Key Skills**

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TECH.9.4.5.CI	Creativity and Innovation
TECH.9.4.5.CI.1	Use appropriate communication technologies to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives about a local and/or global climate change issue and deliberate about possible solutions (e.g., W.4.6, 3.MD.B.3,7.1.NM.IPERS.6).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.2	Investigate a persistent local or global issue, such as climate change, and collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives to improve upon current actions designed to address the issue (e.g., 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3, W.5.7).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one's thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.CT	Critical Thinking and Problem-solving
TECH.9.4.5.CT.1	Identify and gather relevant data that will aid in the problem-solving process (e.g., 2.1.5.EH.4, 4-ESS3-1, 6.3.5.CivicsPD.2).
TECH.9.4.5.GCA	Global and Cultural Awareness
TECH.9.4.5.IML	Information and Media Literacy
	Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.
	Curiosity and a willingness to try new ideas (intellectual risk-taking) contributes to the development of creativity and innovation skills.
	Collaborating digitally as a team can often develop a better artifact than an individual working alone.
	Different digital tools have different purposes.
	Intellectual property rights exist to protect the original works of individuals. It is allowable to use other people's ideas in one's own work provided that proper credit is given to the original source.

## **Integration of Computer Science and Design ThinkingNew Section**

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CS.3-5.IC	Impacts of Computing
CS.3-5.ITH	Interaction of Technology and Humans
	Data can be organized, displayed, and presented to highlight relationships.

## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSL for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math**

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ELA.L.RF.4.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words; use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
	History, Culture, and Perspectives: Understanding Perspectives
SOC.6.1.5.HistoryUP.1	Describe the reasons various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to New Jersey and America, and cite evidence from multiple perspectives to describe the challenges they encountered.
	Effective conflict resolution is possible when evidence, diverse perspectives, and

intended/unintended consequences are considered.