

# Lesson 33: Poetry

*“Poetry is the way we give name to the nameless so it can be thought.”*  
—Audre Lorde

**Social Justice Standards: Identity 5, Diversity 6**

## Summary

Reading has always been a way to explore imagination, storytelling, and creativity. Poetry takes these aspects of literature, with the author’s specific sound and rhythm, to show meaning and emotion. One of the oldest literary genres, poetry has a wide variety of styles including chants, songs, folk tales, and written form. Poetry can be an exciting way for children to understand different perspectives and comprehend complex stories and experiences. The poets in this lesson each have their own style and form of expression that fosters readers’ curiosity and enjoyment.

## Booklist

- *Poetry for Young People* by Langston Hughes, edited by David Roessel and Arnold Rampersad, illustrated by Benny Andrews
- *The Blacker the Berry* by Wallace Thurman
- *Honey, I Love* by Eloise Greenfield, illustrated by Jan Spivey Gilchrist
- *Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Floyd Cooper
- *Sweet Words So Brave: The Story of African American Literature* by Barbara K. Curry and James Michael Brodie, illustrated by Jerry Butler

## Consider This

- Were you exposed to poetry as a child? What do you remember about it?
- Is there a certain tone or mood that you prefer when reading poems? Why do you think that is?
- Poetry often tells stories with emotion and rhythm. How do you think the cadence of a poem affects its story? Do you see a difference in a poem’s rhythm based on its mood?

## *Talk Together*

- What do you love about poetry?
- Can you find a phrase or couple of sentences that you really liked from one of these books? Why did you pick this one? What do you feel when you read it?
- Did any of the poetry help you “see” or picture something clearly in your mind?

## *Engage*

Choose a favorite toy, book, or any item around the house, and create similes and metaphors about that object. This helps children to “see” through language and play with a figure of speech often used in poetry.

- “My strawberries are as red as a rose.” (simile—comparing using “like” or “as”)
- “Strawberries are a spotted, red flower” (metaphor—comparing without using “like” or “as”)

Check out different “Poetry Slams” online. Talk about how the performer feels and what they want their audience to feel.

## *Explore More*

- Reading Is Fundamental's “Explore Poetry Around the World”
- GLSEN's “These Queer and Trans Students of Color Use Poetry to Put #KindnessInAction”
- Amanda Gorman Reciting Her Poem “Talking Gets Us There” on the PBS Kids YouTube Channel