



# Desert Poetry

\*Location of activity provided by staff\*

## Summary

Intro: 3 mins

Explain activity: 2 mins

Pass out materials/ do activity: 15 mins

Conclusion/sharing: 5 mins

**Grades:** (suggested) K-3

**Subject:** Poetry and Writing

## **Activity Objective:**

Students experiment with different poetry forms as they sit in a quiet desert spot and use all their senses.



## **Materials & Preparation:**

PROVIDED:

- Clipboards
- Xeroxed copies of Desert Poetry examples

NOT PROVIDED:

- Paper & pencils
- Large envelope to put students' poetry to bring back to school

PREP: Lessons in different poetry forms in class prior to the trip

\*Attached to this lesson are examples of different types of poetry\*

**Key Vocabulary Terms:** poetry, patterns, alliteration, haiku, couplet

**NOTE:** Go to the location assigned and look for an area where the students can spread out and still be safe. Students will be more creative if they feel they are alone, and are able to use their senses without distractions from other children

### **Intro Discussion:** (3 mins)

Ask the students if they have been practicing poetry in school. Ask if they know of different types of poetry.

### **Explain Activity:** (2 mins)

Explain the activity to the group. (The procedure is up to the teacher.) Perhaps the children have already practiced poetry and have a favorite type of poem they want to use. They may wish to look at the Desert Poetry samples (inside binder). There could be no rules at all...the students merely write what they see, feel, hear, touch, and smell.

### **Activity:** (15 mins)

After directions are given, give each student a clipboard, paper and pencil. Then place the children in positions where they cannot see one another easily. This can be done along a trail. Though the students feel they are alone with nature, the leader should be able to keep an eye on everyone.

Remind the students to use their senses as they write their poems.

### **Conclusion:** (5 mins or more)

They may wish to spend the entire period writing. If this seems too long a time, gather the students together for the last five minutes so they can share their poetry.

Collect the poems after each group has finished. Be sure the students' names are on the papers.

### **Clean Up:**

Be sure no papers or pencils are left behind after the last group is finished. Return the clipboards to "Biznaga" building. Place the poetry papers in the envelope and give it to the teacher.



## DESERT POETRY

You may think you can't write poetry, but you can! All it takes is to observe your surroundings, and think about what you see, hear, and feel. Poems do not have to rhyme. Trying to find rhyming words sometimes ruins your thoughts.

### GROWING A POEM

Here's how to "grow a poem". The chart will help you.

- 1) In the first column are the words *see, hear, feel, where I am, weather*.
- 2) In the second column write one word on each line that describes what you see, hear, etc.
- 3) In the third column write a thought ending with the word you wrote in the second column. You can change the form of the word (add and "s", "ing", "ed" to your word).

Here's a sample of how it works. We used a northern scene for this sample so we won't take any ideas you may have about the desert scene.

<i>see</i>	trees	I walk among the leafy trees
<i>hear</i>	birds	Hiding above are singing birds
<i>feel</i>	breeze	Brushing my face, a soft breeze
<i>where I am</i>	woods	Whispers through the woods
<i>weather</i>	cool	Shady, dark, and cool.

Got the idea? Now let your senses and the natural surroundings inspire you to be a poet.

**Note to teachers:** Attached to this lesson are blank charts. You may reproduce these for your students use, or they may do the activity without aid of a chart. You may wish to use different senses in the first column...touch, smell, etc.

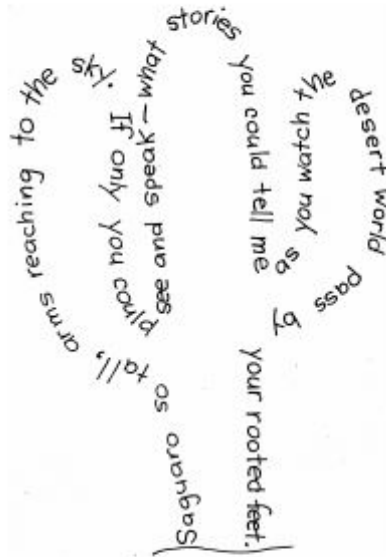
### NAME POEM

Each letter of a name is used as the initial letter for a line of the poem. The poem does not need to rhyme.

Example: Can't touch,  
 Always sticky.  
 Careful!  
 Tough, green skin,  
 Uses little water,  
 Spines instead of leaves.

**POETRY PATTERNS**

These are poems written in the shape of the poem's main idea. They do not have to rhyme.



**HAIKU**

This is an unrhymed Japanese poem of three structured lines. It is usually light and delicate and is about something lovely in nature. Sometimes, there is a direct contrast within the verse.

Structure: line 1, 5 syllables  
 line 2, 7 syllables  
 line 3, 5 syllables

Example: Coyote howling  
 His brother barks an answer  
 The moon shines brightly

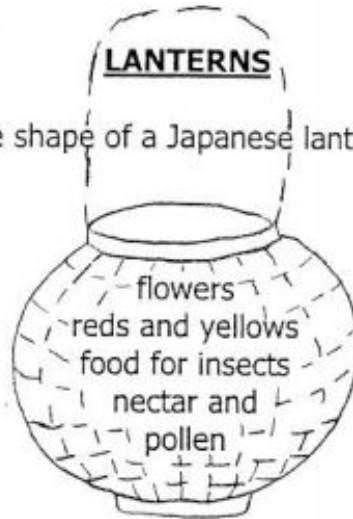
**TANKA**

This is another oriental verse form similar to Haiku, but two more lines are added.

Structure: line 1, 5 syllables line 4, 7 syllables  
 line 2, 7 syllables line 5, 7 syllables  
 line 3, 5 syllables

Example:           Sonoran Desert  
Sun-baked land 'neath cloudless sky.  
Coyote, rabbit  
Hide under palo verde  
Waiting for the cool night air.

These are light poems written in the shape of a Japanese lantern.  
Example:



### **COUPLET**

This simple poem consists of two rhyming lines. It often contains a humorous twist.

Example:           Hawk, I watch you soar the sky.  
Oh, I wish I, too, could fly.

### **CLERIHEW**

This is a four-line poem that makes a brief, humorous statement about a person. In our case we can make that a plant or animal.

Structure:           line 1 - ends with person's (or animal's or thing's) name  
                  line 2 - rhymes with line 1  
                  lines 3 and 4 - rhyme with each other

Example:           Little kit fox  
Climbing on a cliff of rocks.  
Kangaroo rat hops out from a crack  
Pounce and gulp, midnight snack.

## ALLITERATION

This is the repeated use of an accented syllable that has the same beginning sound.

Example: Six sleek snakes slowly slithering southward.

## QUATRAIN

This is a four-line poem that may follow any one of four different rhyme patterns (AABB, ABAB, ABBA, ABCB).

Example:     A     Can you see the heat waves  
              B     Rise from the sand?  
              C     Air shimmering, wavering  
              B     Baking the land.

## CINQUAIN

This is a five-line verse form.

Structure:       line 1, one word of 2 syllables (may be the title)  
                  line 2, 4 syllables (describing the subject or title)  
                  line 3, 6 syllables (showing action)  
                  line 4, 8 syllables (expressing a feeling or observation about the subject)  
                  line 5, 2 syllables (describing or renaming the subject)

Example:

Bursage  
Small gray-green shrub  
Shelters young saguaro  
Few know your name or who you are  
Nurse plant

## LIMERICK

This is a humorous five-line poem that follows a definite rhyme pattern and has a particular rhythm.

Structure:     Lines 1, 2, and 5 each have three stressed syllables and rhyme with one another (A).  
                  Lines 3 and 4 each have two stressed syllables and rhyme with each other (B).  
                  These lines are indented.

Example:       There once was a girl who loved snakes.  
                  She tried feeding them candy and cakes.  
                  But the snakes slithered away  
                  And she heard one of them say,  
                  "We prefer mice, goodness sakes."

<i>see</i>		
<i>hear</i>		
<i>feel</i>		
<i>where I am</i>		
<i>weather</i>		

<i>see</i>		
<i>hear</i>		
<i>feel</i>		
<i>where I am</i>		
<i>weather</i>		

<i>see</i>		
<i>hear</i>		
<i>feel</i>		
<i>where I am</i>		
<i>weather</i>		