

Nature poem

Topic

Nature, acrostic poems

Aims

- To help learners identify features of an acrostic poem
- To recycle or extend previous language work
- To provide opportunities to use the language in writing
- To develop learners' ability to manipulate language
- To develop planning skills for creative writing

Age/level

Primary learners aged 9–12
CEFR level A1+

Time

45 minutes approximately

Materials

materials for finished poem: card and colours (per learner or pair of learners)

Introduction

This short lesson plan is intended to provide a supplementary activity for primary learners who have been working on the topic of nature. The activity works regardless of the aspect of nature that you have been working on, but there is an assumption that learners will be familiar enough with the aspect to be able to generate a wide variety of words and phrases connected to it.

In this activity, learners look at an example acrostic poem and identify its features. As a class, they build another poem together by following simple stages, then they go through the same stages independently in order to create their own poem. Finally, they share their poems with the other learners and try to guess the topic of each other's poems.

Procedure

1. Introducing the concept (5 minutes)

- Read the class an example acrostic. The poem should use a main word from the aspect of nature that you have been working on and show how the main letters can either start the line or come in the middle. For example, if you have been doing flowering plants, you could use this poem about petals:

	<p>Soft and Pretty Every shape and size Each Together with its neighbours Like A colourful crown Looking for visiting insects and birds Success!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners what they think the poem is about. After a few ideas, show them the poem. Make sure you have written it so that the letters P – E – T – A – L – S stand out, e.g. written in a different colour.
2. Identifying features (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners if they have seen this kind of poem before or if they know what it's called. Tell them it's an acrostic poem. Give them the following questions to answer in pairs, based on your example poem: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What word is the poem about? 2. Does the poem rhyme? 3. Does each letter from the main word start the line? yes/no/sometimes 4. Are the lines long, short or both?
3. Task set-up and demonstration (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that learners are going to write their own nature acrostic poem. The main word (i.e. what the poem will be about) can be any word connected to the aspect of nature that you have been working on. Brainstorm some ideas. • Choose one of the ideas and ask learners in pairs or groups to write down as many words or phrases that could describe the main word as they can think of. Tell them not to worry about whether the words or phrases contain one of the letters from the main word at this stage. • Write their ideas on one half of the board. Then write the main word vertically in the middle of the other half of the board. First, ask learners to tell you where some 'easy' words or phrases could go, i.e. ones with a word which start with one of the main letters. Now choose one or two of the trickier ones, where there is no main letter. Elicit or demonstrate some ways of including it. Is there a synonym that has one of the main letters? Could another word be added to make it a (longer) phrase that would make it fit? Is it possible to make it fit with one of the main letters that's already taken and then find another place for that one? • Once you have a rough poem on the board, finally ask learners to read it through and decide if they like it, if they think the words and phrases are in a roughly logical order, and to look at the remaining ideas on the board to see if there are any there they might like to change something for. Then finalise the poem.
4. Planning and production (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners now choose their own main word and write a poem. They can work individually or in pairs. You might like to specify a minimum or maximum length for the word they choose. • Break the planning and writing into stages as you did with the demonstration poem – deciding on a main word, brainstorming words and phrases connected to it, slotting in obvious ones, manipulating the language to fit the trickier ones, evaluating and finalising the poem. Set separate time limits for learners to complete each stage to help the class stay on task. During each stage, monitor to help with language and ideas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When learners have finished their poem, give them some card and colours to write their poem out neatly. Encourage them to make the main word stand out, e.g. by using different colours or writing them in bubble writing which they decorate. Fast finishers can draw pictures to illustrate their poem.
5. Presentation (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask learners to mingle and read their poem to each other, but not show each other the written poem. Learners listen to each poem and then try to guess what the main word is. Display the finished poems on the classroom wall if possible.
[Optional extension]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners could write a few sentences to summarise what they've learned in previous lessons about this particular word. For example, for <i>petals</i> they could write about what petals are and their function on a flower. Alternatively, learners could write another acrostic poem using a different main word for homework.

Contributed by

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