

Poetry Unit

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Framework objectives

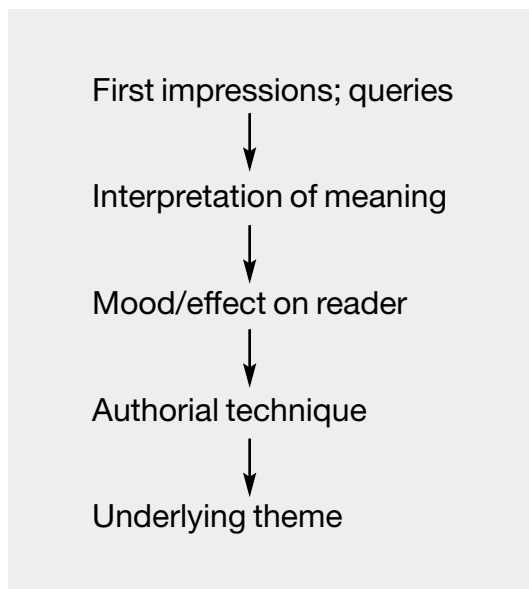
Text

3. to recognise how poets manipulate words:
 - for their quality of sound, e.g. rhythm, rhyme, assonance;
 - for their connotations;
 - for multiple layers of meaning, e.g. through figurative language, ambiguity;
4. to investigate humorous verse:
 - how poets play with meanings;
 - nonsense words and how meaning can be made of them;
 - where the appeal lies;
5. to analyse how messages, moods, feelings and attitudes are conveyed in poetry;
6. to read and interpret poems in which meanings are implied or multi-layered; to discuss, interpret challenging poems with others;
9. to increase familiarity with significant poets and writers of the past;

Outcomes

Presentation and reading test practice paper

Teaching sequence for interpreting and responding to poetry



Intensive one-week plan for Year 6 Term 2 Unit 1: Poetry

	Shared text and sentence level	Guided	Independent work	Plenary
Monday	Poem, e.g. 'Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carroll. Shared reading of poem followed by paired discussion of immediate response and feedback. Discussion of words used in the poem and then brief discussion of events.	Reading	In pairs, consolidate understanding of events/images by drawing quick cartoons of each scene.	Feedback from independent work. Start to work on choral presentation.
Tuesday	Revisit poem by reading it in chorus as yesterday in plenary. Explore the effect on the reader, authorial technique and underlying theme.	Writing	Prepare written answers to a set of questions based on the poem.	Discuss answers to questions. Complete preparation for presentation the next day in assembly.
Wednesday	As for Monday. Poem, e.g. 'My mother saw a dancing bear' by Charles Causley.	Reading	As for Monday.	As for Monday.
Thursday	As for Tuesday. Poem, e.g. 'My mother saw a dancing bear' by Charles Causley.	Writing	As for Monday.	As for Tuesday.
Friday	Do practice reading test questions on a poem all together. (20 mins).	Individually, do practice reading test questions on a different poem (20 mins).		Go over test questions (20 mins).

Purpose

- To entertain
- To recreate experience
- To create an experience

Generic text structure

- Opening and closure
- Range of possible structures
- Words used to create a varied pattern on the page

Sentence/word level features

- Possible use of:
- Internal rhyme and rhythm
 - Half or near rhyme
 - Alliteration and onomatopoeia
 - Assonance and dissonance
 - Metaphor and simile (personification)
 - Expressive adjectives, adverbs and verbs
 - Unusual word combinations
 - Use of patterns, repetition

Detailed lesson plans for Days 1 and 2

Day 1: shared reading and analysis

Day 2: shared writing

Day 1 – Shared reading and analysis

1. Read through the poem, e.g. ‘Jabberwocky’¹ by Lewis Carroll with the children a couple of times.
2. Ask the children to discuss what they like, dislike, what puzzles them (questions they would like to ask the author), what patterns they can find. Take some feedback on a flipchart and save until tomorrow.
3. Take a quick look at the words in the poem – particularly the ‘nonsense’ words and how it is possible to make sense of the poem. Notice the rhyming at the ends of lines 1 and 3, and 2 and 4, and some of the effects such as onomatopoeia, e.g. ‘burbled’, ‘snicker-snack’, ‘galumphing’. Don’t spend too long on this as you will be spending more time tomorrow.
4. Discuss the series of events. Help the children to see the story emerging in verse 2. Ask them to use independent time to fix the order of events with simple cartoon sketches and label each sketch with a caption, using language from the poem.

Plenary

Very briefly, get feedback from the children on what they think the poem is about. Start work on a choral presentation of the poem. Consider the following:

- who reads which verse/lines, e.g. in ‘Jabberwocky’, who reads the narration, who reads the father;
- dynamics (volume);
- tempo (pace/speed) of the reading;
- use of pauses;
- expression;
- positioning of speakers.

Day 2 – Shared reading

- Spend the first five minutes of the lesson working on the presentation. This will serve as a reminder to the children of the poem.
- Look in more detail than you did yesterday at the different interpretations, particularly of verse 1. For example, what did different children think ‘brillig’ meant: a time of day, e.g. dusk, a time of year, e.g. spring, a type of weather, e.g. snowing? What did they think ‘toves’ were? How many of them thought that ‘slithy’ probably meant something between ‘slimy’ and ‘writhing’? Can a child demonstrate ‘gyring’ and ‘gimbling’? Does ‘vorpal’ conjure up the word ‘viper’? etc.
- Investigate how the words, rhyme and rhythm create the effects the author wants to convey to the reader to establish the mood/atmosphere. For example, the rhyme and the rhythm help to move the poem along; they make it easy to read and memorable, and they help to build up the tension. The repetition in verse 2 of ‘Beware’ creates foreboding. Also in verse

¹‘Jabberwocky’ is available in the following anthologies: *I like this poem*, chosen by Kaye Webb (Puffin); *The School Bag*, edited by Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes (Faber and Faber); *The Apple-Raid*, chosen by Pie Corbett (Macmillan); and *Creatures, Kings and Scary Things*, compiled by Elspeth Graham and Mal Peet (Oxford University Press).

2, the internal rhyme of 'jaws' and 'claws' and the use of a comma between the two phrases rather than 'and' help to make the Jabberwock into a fearful creature. Why is the first verse repeated at the end? Consider how the language evokes a sense of period in time – the use of a sword, the words 'slain', 'foe' and 'sought' remind us of St George and the Dragon – tales of valour in the Middle Ages.

- Consider the theme. Is this a typical warning story? Immediately the central character is told not to do something, off he goes and does it. Or is it that the young man/boy is off to seek his fortune in the world and someone (his father?) sends him on his way with words of wisdom? What might the hero of the poem have been thinking as he stood by the Tumtum tree? What is 'uffish thought'? Why was the father so happy? Was it to see his son home alive, to have the Jabberwock killed? Did he deliberately goad the boy out there to try to kill it with his warning words? Is there an underlying theme to this poem, a message the author is trying to get across to the discerning reader? Is there something about the need to prove ourselves? Is it a 'boy thing' or does it now apply equally to girls?
- Bring out the sheet written the previous day of the children's first impressions of the poem. Do they feel the same? Have their queries been answered?
- Give the children some probing questions about the poem to write the answers to during independent time, e.g.
 - Write three real-word synonyms for 'frumious'.
 - Why do you think the son ignored his father's warning?
 - Why might the author have chosen the word 'galumphing' to describe the son returning home'?
 - Explain what these words mean and why you think the author used them in this poem – 'slain', 'awhile', 'foe'.

Plenary

Prepare the poem for presentation the following day, perhaps in assembly.

Note: Teach Days 3 and 4 using the same approach but with a different poem, e.g. 'My mother saw a dancing bear' by Charles Causley.²

²'My mother saw a dancing bear' by Charles Causley is available in the following anthology: *The Apple-Raid* chosen by Pie Corbett (Macmillan).

Transcript of lesson for Day 1

(taught by Year 6 teacher, Parminder. Children's responses and contributions omitted)

Day 1 - Shared reading

(extended to about 20 minutes since no sentence level objectives are being covered in this unit)

We are going to look at a poem today. I'm not going to tell you much about it before I read it, except that it is by the Victorian writer, Lewis Carroll, who is famous for writing *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*. [Switched on data projector connected to laptop. Poem had been entered ready into a text manipulation package, 'Textease', and so could be projected to whole-class scale. Later was able to use this facility to manipulate the text on-screen, highlight words, etc. - but could have used OHP instead.] I just want you to listen and see what you make of it. It's called 'Jabberwocky'. [Read through poem, scrolling it up the screen.] Try reading it with me. Everyone read the first verse with me and then I'll point to one table at a time to read the in-between verses with me and then we'll read the last one together. It's not as difficult to read as you might think. Try it with me. [Scrolled text back to top, and had very first go at a simple 'choral reading'.] Good. Now just turn to your partner and spend three or four minutes talking about that poem. How do you respond to it? What does it make you think about? What interests you? What puzzles you? Can you see (or hear) patterns in it? How does it make you feel as a reader/listener? Be honest. Just say what you think and feel when you hear it Thank you. Now would some of you share your thoughts with the rest of us? [Took feedback and jotted down some of the more interesting responses on a flip chart.] Thank you. Some really interesting early thoughts. We'll keep these notes and come back to them tomorrow.

Already a lot of you have mentioned the thing I want to talk about next - the *words* Lewis Carroll uses. Can you tell me some more about the words of this poem? Yes. Some are 'real' words and some are made up What might we call the made-up words? Yes. I think they are what a lot of people would call 'nonsense' words, but my next question is: Are they really nonsense? Just talk about that to your partner for one minute Well, are they nonsense? Does this poem *mean* nothing at all - or can you sort of work out what Carroll means? How can you tell what the poem is saying? Yes, the 'real words' help. How? But do the nonsense words have any meaning? How do we work out what they mean? Do they mean just one thing or could they mean different things? Let's just look at the first verse for a minute. [Scrolled screen display to just show verse 1.] Talk to your partner for a couple of minutes about the different things the nonsense words in the first verse could mean? And what makes you think that's what they mean? What ideas did you and your partner have about those words? And what made you think it means that? All right, we have started to talk about the *sound* of the words Tell me some more things about the *sound* of these words Yes, they fit with the rhythm of the poem. Can you give me an example of what you mean? [Highlighted words and sections on screen as children talked about them.] Some of the words sound like what they are doing? Can you give me an example of that? What about in this verse? Yes, 'snicker-snack'. Do you know what we call that sort of word? We have talked about it before. Onomatopoeia. Can you try to explain that for me? Yes, are there any other examples here? Yes, 'galumphing' What do you think about that one? What sort of picture does it put in your mind? Good, so now tell me some interesting things about the way Carroll uses words, *and* why you think he does it [Made brief notes of important responses on flip chart, building up an embryo list of language features, rhythm, rhyme, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, etc.]

So, can you tell what is 'happening' in the poem? Does it have a sort of 'story'? Just in some verses or all the way through? Let's just look at verse two for a minute [scrolled to it on screen]. What do you think is 'happening' here? Let me make a very quick sketch of what we think is going on [draws on a

clean page of flip chart - very quickly - stick figure, etc., only]. Yes. We've got some sort of grown-up giving some sort of boy (really a son?) a 'right good talking to' He's warning him to keep away from these terrible things [draws monster and monster bird in thought bubble - adult wagging finger at boy and shouting].

Now in independent time I want you to work in pairs. You have a sheet with seven blank boxes, one for each verse. I want you to talk to each other about what you think is happening in each verse, and then make a quick sketch on your sheet for each one, just like I did here. Your verse two can be like mine if you want - but you might want to make it entirely different. Whatever you do, don't spend too long on each drawing. Just a very quick sketch like mine. No more than a couple of minutes for each one. You can write on odd words as well taken from the poem. The quality of the drawing doesn't matter at all. It's only a way of quickly noting down what you think is happening. One of you do the sketch for the first verse, the other do the second and so on. But both of you discuss each one first and agree what should be in each sketch. And I've got a particularly interesting question for you. Is the last verse sketch going to be exactly the same as the first one, or is it going to be different? Don't tell me now. Think about it and talk about it as you are working. [Put on screen an alternative version of text in smaller type, so that children can see all of the verses at once.]

Plenary

(extended to about 20 minutes)

Before we start to work up a presentation of the poem, let's just get an idea of what you think the poem is about. Matthew, can you tell us the story of the poem? Does anyone disagree with that? Sheena? Yes, that's right. He carried it back - presumably to his father. Tomorrow, I want us to look a little more closely at the meaning of the poem and also at some of the effects that Lewis Carroll achieves here.

Now let's go back to trying to read the poem all together - but this time we'll need to think about what is happening, and the different moods and images of each bit [indicated list]. So how do we want the first verse to sound? Shall we try reading it like that? [Began to work on a choral 'performance' of the poem, drawing on the work of the lesson, splitting verses up between different groups of voices, etc.]