

Lesson Plan: Nature Poems

Town of North Hempstead Earth Day Poetry Contest

Grade Level: K-5

Curriculum Connections: Language Arts

Class Time: One Class Period

Teacher Guide

Summary:

Earth Day is one of the Town's most cherished events of the year and residents of all ages and from all communities participate in this yearly celebration. The Town of North Hempstead is committed to environmental education and we thank you for joining us in celebrating Earth Day.

Earth Day reminds us that we have a responsibility to protect the Earth today and for future generations. This activity is meant to give students an opportunity to express their feelings about the environment through the composition of an original poem.

Objective:

To inspire students to think about how they are connected to nature and express themselves through poetry. By feeling a closer connection to nature we are more likely to care about environmental issues.

Student Activity:

- a) Read the example poems aloud to the class (or call on students to read them).
- a) Engage students in a dialogue.
Ask students if they think that our modern way of life presents barriers which obstruct us from experiencing the natural world.
Do they feel more comfortable inside or outdoors?
- c.) Ask students to compose their own original poem.
- d.) Feel Free to use the worksheet in this lesson plan.
- e.) Enter students' poetry into the Town of North Hempstead's Earth Day Poetry Contest.

Contest Instructions:

1. The contest is open to all students in grade levels Kth-12th.
2. Original poems may be hand written or typed.
3. Students may enter as many times as they would like.
4. All entries must be in by Friday, May 18, 2012.
5. Mail Entries to:

**Town of North Hempstead
ATTN: Outreach Team
1601 Marcus Avenue
New Hyde Park, NY 11040**

If you have questions about the contest please contact the Outreach Team by calling 311 or (516) 869-6311 or by email at OutreachTeam@NorthHempsteadNY.gov.

Teachers who participate in this lesson should send in their student's entries together. We must receive all entries by no later than **Friday, May 18, 2012**. If you do not think you will make the deadline of **Friday, May 18, 2012** (by mailing the poems in), please call 311 or (516) 869- 6311 to schedule a pickup.

The contest winners will be chosen by the Earth Day Educational Outreach Committee. School winners will receive an Earth Day T-shirt, a certificate that will be presented to them at a special ceremony in front of Supervisor Jon Kaiman, the Town Board and their family and friends.

Thank you very much for your time and "Happy Earth Day" to you and your class!

Example Nature Poems:

Haiku poems with nature themes are a Japanese tradition. Students may wish to write their "Connecting with Nature" poem in this style. Haiku poems composed in English are usually written on three lines with seven syllables in the first line, followed by five syllables in the second line and seven syllables in the third line.

When we write Haiku poems in English there is a special formula.
Haiku poems have three lines. 5--- 7---5

The first line has five syllables
the second line has seven syllables
and the third line has five syllables.

Matsuo Basho (1644-1694 C.E.)

The crescent lights
The misty ground.
Buckwheat flowers.
Spring departs.
Birds cry
Fishes' eyes are filled with tears

The old pond is still
a frog leaps right into it
splashing the water

Translated by Earl Miner & Hiroko Odagiri

The crescent moon shines
Down across the misty ground.
Purple flowers smile

The summer is done
Fishes' eyes are filled with tears
The Birds are crying

The old pond is still
a frog leaps right into it
splashing the water

The first cold shower
Even the monkey needs a
Little coat of straw

The Rose by Donna Brock
The Red Blossom Bends
And drips its dew to the ground
Like a tear it falls

A Rainbow by Donna Brock
Curving up, then down
Meeting blue sky and green earth
Melding sun and rain

Song of the Redwood-Tree (Lines 20-24) by **Walt Whitman**

Murmuring out of its myriad leaves,
Down from its lofty top, rising two hundred feet high
Out of its stalwart trunk and limbs—out of its foot-thick bark,
That chant of the seasons and time—chant, not of the past only, but the
future.

Leaves of Grass published in 1900

The Cricket
By **Emily Dickinson**

The cricket sang,
And set the sun,
And workmen finished, one by one,
Their seam the day upon.

The low grass loaded with the dew,
The twilight stood as strangers do
With hat in hand, polite and new,
To stay as if, or go.

A vastness, as a neighbor, came,—
A wisdom without face or name,
A peace, as hemispheres at home,—
And so the night became.

XXXIV Daughter of the Sea
By **Pablo Neruda**

You are the daughter of the sea, oregano's first cousin.
Swimmer, your body is pure as the water;
cook, your blood is quick as the soil.
Everything you do is full of flowers, rich with the earth.

Your eyes go out toward the water, and the waves rise;
your hands go out to the earth and the seeds swell;
you know the deep essence of water and the earth,
conjoined in you like a formula for clay.

(Translated by Stephen Tapscott)

