

Plant or Animal Stories and Poems

Writing poems and stories can be a great way for students to practice language skills and learn to express how they feel about something. By focusing on a plant or animal of their choosing, especially one that lives in the schoolyard or local environment, you help them to build a sense of empathy for the natural world.

AGES: 2nd

INTENDED OUTCOMES: Hands, Feet, Heart (and Head – for older students)

SUGGESTED SUPPLIES:

- Pens, pencils, paper
- Clipboards or something hard to write on
- A tarp, blanket, etc. to sit on (optional)
- Warm layers or sun layers, depending on the season

STEPS*:

- Introduce students to the basic framework for stories (beginning, middle, end) or poems. (Try choosing a particular poem structure to work with like a haiku or acrostic poem.) Share examples and create a list of aspects that should be included in their own writing.
- Go outside and allow students to have time exploring the schoolyard (or neighboring natural area, if available) to find a plant or animal (insects count!) that they want to write about. You may want to give them time to think about their selection for a day or two before hand.
- Give students time to sit with their plant and/or animal and write. Especially for animals, it can be nice to take a photo of the organism for them to go with their writing.
- It may take a few sessions for students to complete their writing. Revisit the plant or animal for inspiration and be sure to share and celebrate their writings and what they have learned.

*For more detail on the grade-level focus for natural and social concepts and sense of place, please refer to the Guidelines

TIPS AND TRICKS

- If it helps, you can give them a prompt like, “what does your plant or animal dream about?” or, “What does your plant or animal do on the schoolyard when we are not here?”
- To get the creativity flowing, try some warm-up activities. Ask students to describe their plant or animal in detail, using multiple senses. Ask why they choose this particular plant or animal – what makes it special?



Relevant Standards

RWC09-GR.2-S.3-GLE1