
Write a List Poem



by Marik Berghs, Jessica McBrayer

Lists are all around us. We have lists of groceries, of laundry items, of things that make us happy, of things that make us sad, of things we would like to do. But lists aren't always just used for organizing our thoughts; sometimes, lists can be works of art too.

Some of the best poems are simply lists of things, so if you can make a list, you can write a poem! Inspire your child to improve her writing skills, develop her vocabulary, and channel her inner poet with a list poem, a poem in which every line is one item in a list. In this activity, use this outline to help your child write meaningful poetry using lists.

This activity is wonderful for grades three through six.

What You Need:

- Pen or pencil
- Paper

What to Do:

1. Brainstorm some themes with your child, and pick one theme to write about for the list poem. Examples of themes can range from your child's likes and dislikes to the real or fictional places she would like to travel to. Almost any topic can be the subject of a list poem. Be creative, and pick a topic that both you and your child will enjoy writing about.
2. Brainstorm a list of details about the chosen theme. Encourage your child to use specific language, and explain what he has observed about the subject. For instance, if your child has chosen to write about cotton candy, let her detail how it tastes ("sweet and sugary"), what color it is ("baby blue"), how it feels ("soft like spun wool"), and what she associates it with ("the summer fair"). Remind

your child to use all her senses to make as detailed a list as possible. This list can be a series of words ("pink", "fluffy") or of descriptive phrases ("as soft as a cloud", "feathery light").

3. Write the poem. The title of the poem states the poem's theme and can be as simple as "What I Did Today" or "Things That Are Red". The actual poem itself is composed of the details your child has brainstormed for the theme. The list poem is simple and doesn't require rhyme or rhythm, so encourage your child to change words and experiment with phrasing to her heart's content.
4. When she's finished her poem, let her share it with others! Or try this: take her best list poem and read it without telling the listener what the theme is. Can they guess from the poem's observations what it's about?

Variations: Once your child has practiced the basic form of the list poem, encourage her to select a phrase to include in every line. An example of such a phrase might be: "I remember when _" or "At night, _". Your child can also write a new list poem where she rhymes certain lines together.

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