

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

• middle school •
• elementary • • high school •

title **Poetry in Motion**

skill



theatre



dance



music

about the strategy

Poetry provides a stimulating starting point for expressive movement. Adding movement and music to poetry can turn words on the page into innovative and fun performances. This energizing activity also be the foundation of a great Original Creation for your Bernstein unit.

v i s u a l

Viewing each other's movements

a u d i t o r y

Listening to and reciting poetry

k i n e s t h e t i c

Creating movement

instructional steps

objective Students select poems and interpret them through movement as they listen to music. They refine their improvised movement into a performance piece.

materials

- Selection of short poems that have vivid imagery and active language, for example:
For younger students - Shel Silverstein, Dr. Seuss, Dennis Lee, Jack Prelutsky
For older students – Shel Silverstein, Nikki Giovanni, Gary Soto, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost
- A variety of musical recordings and a CD player

procedure

1. Choosing and Reading

- Provide an assortment of poems and have students choose a poem. You may choose to let them work individually or in groups.
- Read the poems, check for comprehension and analyze briefly.

Poetry in Motion

instructional steps

procedure

2. Creating Movement

- Experiment with different movements to accompany a reading of the poem.
- Remind students of the elements of effective movement:
 - Use of space: high, medium, and low levels; traveling and non-traveling
 - Use of energy: heavy, light, loose, flowing, sharp
 - Use of time: beat, rhythm, accent, short, long
- Select music, if desired, to accompany the performance.
- Rehearse, allowing sufficient time to memorize longer poems, if used.
(Alternatively, one student in the group can be designated as a reader while the others perform the movement.)

3. Performing and Reflecting

- Share group or individual performances of the movement and poetry for the class.
- Ask students to identify effective uses of movement in each group's work.
- Reflect and consider: Did the meaning of the poem change at all when you added movement? How did you incorporate the elements of space, time and energy?

Poetry in Motion

strategy for curricular connections



social studies

- Choose poetry that is related to a particular time period, historical event, culture, or country.



science

- Instead of working with poems, add movement to scientific formulas, models, theories or cycles. For example, take a verbal description of photosynthesis, have students create movements to express the text, and perform with music, if desired.



language arts

- Movement is an imaginative way to analyze and synthesize poetry. For variety, use the “Poetry in Motion” strategy to explore short stories or other literary genres.

ARTS • BASED SKILLS & STRATEGIES

Poetry in Motion

multiple intelligences target



verbal • linguistic



interpersonal



musical



visual • spatial



bodily • kinesthetic

adaptations

to simplify

- Before creating movement, brainstorm a list of movements, and a list of types of energy. Students choose words from each list which describe the mood of their poem. Use these words to inspire the movement. See the Arts-based strategy, “Verbs and Adverbs” for examples.
- Provide additional time and side-coaching as needed.

to challenge

- Develop the movement, through variation and extension, into a dance piece.

special needs

- Those with limited movement may need encouragement to explore and use all the movement that is available to them.
- ESL/ESD students may need help with translation. Consider choosing some poems in first languages or dialects.