

CONNECTING WITH POETRY PROJECT # 7

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

PLAY WITH WORDS: INSTRUCTIONS FOR CREATING A PARALLEL

Choose a poem in which the poet makes careful observations of his/her surroundings. It helps if the poem is about something with which you are familiar. Look in books or sections of books on descriptive or lyric poetry.

Poets and scientists both have to be good observers. For the poem you are working with, what did the poet have to observe carefully? Was it an animal, a plant, a person, the sky, the earth, the poet's own reactions or feelings

Examples of the poet's careful observations might be dialogue, color, size, location, activity, light, or shadow.

For the next part, you will need a thesaurus and will need to know how to use it. List the main words in the poem. Leave out the articles ("a", "an" or "the"). Leave out the helper verbs such as "is," "was," "am," "were," "have," "has" and "had." Look up each of the main words in your list in the thesaurus. Write down other words it gives that would fit what you are observing.

Write a second version of the poem using some of the words you have found.

A writer often uses the thesaurus to keep the writing interesting. Look at both versions of the poem. Which words do you think have made the poem better or more interesting? Which words in the original seem exactly right? They don't have to be fancy, just carefully chosen.

POINTS FOR FOCUS AND EVALUATION:

1. Did you choose a poem with careful observations in it?
2. Did you know or find out how to use a thesaurus?
3. Did you make a list of the important words in the poem?
4. Did you find them in the thesaurus and write down alternates?
5. Did you write an alternate version of the poem and decide which parts of the original or the second version are best?
6. If you worked with a partner did you cooperate to get the job done well and on time? What could you have done to make the job easier or the result better?

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GRAMMAR

MAKING A POEM MORE EXCITING!: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING PRESENT TENSE

Choose a poem with lots of action.

Verbs (action words) make poems exciting.

The verbs are usually most exciting when they are in the present tense.

"Runs," "run," "is running," and "are running" are all in the present.

"Ran," "did run," "were running," "have run," and "had run" are all in the past.

The verbs in the present make you feel you are right there in the action.

For this poem, make a list of words used as verbs. If you are not sure whether a word is used as a noun or a verb, look the word up in the dictionary. There should be a "v." or "vt." or "vi." beside it somewhere if it is usually used as a verb. If you are still not sure, ask for help.

Now write an alternate version of the poem and change the tense wherever you can from past to present or present to past. You may find some verbs make no sense if changed and so you must leave them as they are.

Read both versions and decide which verb choices give the poem greater effect.

Optional: Try the effect of changing the verbs to the future e.g. "will run."

Find a poem **you** have written using past tense and see if you can make it more effective by using present tense.

POINTS FOR FOCUS AND EVALUATION:

1. Did you choose a poem with plenty of action?
2. Did you list the words used as verbs? Did you ask for help with any you were not sure about?
3. Did you change the tense? Did you find any places where it did not make sense to change the tense?
4. Did you read the whole through both ways, with present tense and past tense? Did you try any future tense?
5. Did you decide which version makes the greater impact?
6. Did you choose a poem of your own in which you had used past tense? Did you try it changing the verbs to present?

7. If you worked with a partner did you cooperate to get the job done well and on time? What could you have done to make the job easier or the result better?