Outdoor Learning – The Giving Tree – Years 3 & 4

Teacher preparation

Overarching learning goal: Students will be able to identify nouns, adjectives and verbs, and will understand how to create a poem using a variety of these words. Students will also recognise how poems can be used to express ideas on a topic and to communicate a message to a chosen audience. Finally, students will develop their understanding of the importance of trees, to both nature and people.

Outdoor learning information:

Outdoor Learning Series: https://vimeo.com/171030135

Factsheets:

- Why teach outdoors?
- Designing your outdoor learning space
- Tips for making outdoor learning easier
- Outdoor Learning - Risks/hazards and actions

To help guide teachers through suggested activities in this lesson, we have developed a series of icons designed to show what types of activities are involved and where these activities may take place (see Learning Activity Key below).

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LEARNING ACTIVITY KEY

- OUTDOOR LEARNING
- CLASSROOM LEARNING
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
- HANDS-ON ACTIVITY
- DIGITAL LEARNING

This lesson is designed to support students and teachers undertaking the Outdoor Learning Unit. Click here to view the Unit Outline.

Teacher content information: For more information about trees, download the Background Information About Trees.

Teaching sequence

Work through this resource material in the following sequence:

20 minutes - Part A. Nature Poem Walk and Story
15-20 minutes - Part B. Parts of Speech and Explaination
20 minutes - Part C. Poetry Writing and Editing
5-10 minutes - Reflection

PART A. Nature Poem Walk and Story

Step 1. If you aren't already outside, take your class outside to your outdoor learning space. Review outdoor learning rules and the benefits of outdoor learning with students, including potential hazards and actions to take in the event of hazards.

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Step 2. Invite students to take a walk with you around the school yard, looking for features of nature (such as trees, birds, stones, clouds, etc). As you and your students name these features, work together to think of words that rhyme with the features you are observing. For example:

- 'Tree' rhymes with 'bee', 'see/sea', 'me', 'free' etc.
- 'Flower' rhymes with 'power', 'hour', 'sour' etc.
- 'Rock' rhymes with 'sock', 'lock' etc.

Step 3. Explain to students that in this lesson they will be focusing on trees, and will be thinking about why trees are so important to nature and people. They will be beginning this process by reading a fictional story that explores the importance and value of trees. They will then be given a chance to write a creative poem about trees and the class will work together to decide how to share these poems with other students, the school or community.

Obtain a copy of *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. If you can't access a hard copy, you could stream an online version such as the following:

The Giving Tree from Luke Knecht on Vimeo (https://vimeo.com/25202145)

Hot tip: Using an illustrated copy of the book, or streaming the story online, will help students to focus and to visualise the events.

Step 4. After reading the book, guide students in a reflective discussion about the story to help them consider the key themes and expand on their ideas. You could prompt students with questions such as:

- How do you feel after hearing the story?
- Was it fair to use some of the tree?
- Was it fair for the boy to use the whole tree?
- What could the boy have done instead of using the tree?

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Hot tip: To encourage deeper reflection, you could ask students 'What makes you say that?' after their response to your initial question. This helps promote evidential reasoning, and encourages students to understand multiple perspectives.

👫PART B. Parts of Speech and Explanation

Step 1. Explain to students that they have an opportunity to express their beliefs on the importance of trees by writing a poem that will then be shared with others.

Step 2. Before students begin writing, assess their understanding of nouns, verbs and adjectives. For revision, you may wish to teach the rap below:

WORD RAP

A NOUN IS A PERSON, PLACE OR THING,
LIKE BOY OR HOUSE OR PLAYGROUND SWING.
AN ADJECTIVE DESCRIBES NOUNS WELL,
A SMALL SMILE, BLUE SKY OR BEAUTIFUL SHELL.
A VERB IS AN ACTION OR BEING KIND OF THING,
EAT, RUN, WERE, BE, SHOUT AND SING!

Step 3. Spread out six pieces of cardboard and markers/textas in the learning space to form a large circle. Ask students to form six equal groups, with each group sitting next to a different piece of cardboard. Groups write "noun", "-ing verb" or "adjective" as a heading on their cardboard (two groups per word type). Students work together in their groups to brainstorm nouns, verbs and adjectives that could relate to trees, the importance of trees or our uses for trees.

Give each group of students 2-3 minutes before they rotate to the next

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word type. Monitor student attention and behaviour, and shorten the time at each word type, if necessary. If students are given too much time at each station, they may loose interest and focus.

Hot tip: Gather the pieces of cardboard, and quickly review the words and phrases written to check their suitability while students begin the next activity. This is an important step, as you may need to cross out words that don't fit the given category, so students don't use them in their poems later on.

PART C. Poetry Writing and Editing

WHILE THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE CONDUCTED INSIDE, CONSIDER REMAINING OUTSIDE AS THIS CAN IMPROVE STUDENTS' CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING.

Step 1. Provide each group with a copy of the Nature Diamond Poem worksheet and ask students to work with their group to identify the nouns, -ing verbs and adjectives in each poem, and the commonalities between the two poems (you may need to give the class a hint about counting the number of words).

Step 2. Reconvene the class and discuss their findings. Students should be able to note that both poems follow a pattern: one noun, two adjectives, three -ing verbs, four words, three -ing verbs, two adjectives and one noun.

Step 3. Provide each student with a copy of the Tree Diamond Poem

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worksheet and place the pieces of cardboard back into the large circle formation.

Discuss the worksheet and emphasise that the final word for the poem needs to be written first.

Point out that the first adjectives and -ing verbs describe the tree, and the second lot of adjectives and -ing verbs need to describe whatever noun they write at the bottom.

Step 4. Have students spread out across the learning space to write their poems. Encourage students to use the words on the pieces of cardboard if they need help thinking of ideas.

Step 5. Encourage 'fast finishers' to whisper their poem aloud and check they have described the tree in the first part of their poem, and their chosen noun in the second part of the poem.

Reflection

Invite students to engage in the 'Two Stars and a Wish' thinking routine. Encourage students to reflect on two things they have learnt regarding why we should value trees, and ask them to write a 'wish' regarding how the poems could be used to encourage others to also value trees. Students can complete this activity in their workbooks or on the Student Worksheet.

Students' 'wishes' can then be used as a guide for your next lessons. Students may wish to: publish the poems in a class eBook, add them to the class website, create posters for display around the school, turn their poems into inspirational artworks by typing their poem on a photo background, or create an interactive gallery display using published poems and QR codes linked to students reciting the poems.

Differentiated Learning

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Extension: Students could research poems about trees written by other authors and create a short anthology of tree poems. Students could perform their poem as a monologue, choosing accompanying background music that reflects the theme. Students could perform their poem using movement to reflect and enhance the language used in their poem. Students could explore additional forms of poetry by researching and writing their own cinquain about trees, applying what they have already learnt about nouns and verbs.

Provisional Learning Support: Teachers may need to assist individual students to write their poem by prompting them with key words or writing words that students dictate. If several students require additional assistance, teachers could help a small group of students write a poem together. Alternatively, the poetry-writing component could become a paired activity.

Take action

Students can take action by designing and implementing a conservation project at their school. By spending time outdoors participating in activities that help conserve nature, students are more likely to care for and conserve nature as adults.

The actions your students participate in can be incorporated into a calendar event - such as [Planet Ark's Schools Tree Day](#) or [Enviroweek](#) - or designed according to the specific conditions and requirements of your school.

Actions could include:

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CONSERVATION ACTION IDEAS

PARTICIPATE IN:
* ENVIROWEEK
* PLANET ARK'S SCHOOLS TREE DAY
* CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY
* AUSSIE BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

INVITE GUESTS TO YOUR SCHOOL TO TALK TO STUDENTS ABOUT:
* LOCAL PLANTS AND ANIMALS
* LOCAL INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS

DESIGN, PLAN AND CONSTRUCT:
* AN INDIGENOUS GARDEN
* AN INSECT HOTEL OR A BUG HOUSE
* A POSSUM BOX FOR YOUR SCHOOL
* A BIRD BOX FOR NATIVE BIRDS
* A FROG BOG IN YOUR SCHOOL YARD
* A LIZARD LOUNGE FOR YOUR SCHOOL OR LOCAL PARK
* A VEGIE GARDEN

OTHER THINGS TO DO:
* BUY FOREST FRIENDLY PRODUCTS
* THINK ABOUT INGREDIENTS OF PRODUCTS (E.G. PALM OIL)
* ADOPT A TREE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY
* ADOPT A LOCAL CREEK

Students can use the following Project Planning Tool to help them design and plan their project: Project Planning - Our Tips for Success.

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