

NEED a little **inspiration** for writing your OWN

poetry? **LOOK HERE!**



What follows on this Google Doc is a list of poems from *POETRY SPEAKS WHO I AM* along with suggestions about how to use each of these poems as a template or as inspiration for writing poetry of your own.

Poem 1	THE DELIGHT SONG OF TSOAI-TALEE by N. Scott Momaday (p. 20)
About the Poem	In this poem the poet uses a series of statements that begin with the words "I am..." to describe the person he is, but instead of using adjectives, like we usually do when we are asked to
About Using this Poem as a Template	Think about how you might describe yourself using ideas, images, objects, and places that symbolize some aspect of your life experiences and personality. IMPORTANT! Though you don't have to use 24 lines to fully describe yourself as the poet does, you must use at least 10.
Mrs. Bestor's example using the template	<p>I am the green shoot pushing through the soggy soil of spring. I am a salmon swimming upstream. I am a turtle sunning on a floating log in the pond. I am the cloud cloaking the moon. I am the icy fingers of the first frost of fall.</p> <p>Side Note: I used alliteration in this poem because I like the way it sounds and because it slows the reading down so readers can spend a little time with me in my thoughts.</p>

Poem 2	HERE by Arthur Size (p. 23)
<p>About the Poem</p>	<p>In "Here" Size describes a place and time using a succession of lines that begin with the word "here." Each line describes this place and time through associated objects, feelings, scenes, sounds, people, and experiences. Like the poem "The Delight Song of Tsoai-Talee" adjectives are not enough to fully capture a person or place, but symbols are.</p>
<p>About Using this Poem as a Template</p>	<p>Choose a time or place or a time and place together. Think about what that place and time mean to you, the things you experienced there, the people you see there, objects that relate to or remind you of that place and time. Think about the sights, sounds, smells, and flavors of that place and time. Now, list those ideas in sentences that begin with the word "here."</p> <p>IMPORTANT! While the poet uses 17 lines to express himself, you must use at least 9.</p>
<p>Mrs. Bestor's example using the template</p>	<p>Here the slamming of the door to the garage jars memories from deep storage.</p> <p>Here the driveway is open, expansive, not the parking lot it was.</p> <p>Here swirl the echoes of small packs of small boys riding their bicycles up and down the street.</p> <p>Here shimmers the image, vapor-like, of a little girl picking berries and flowers, leaves and bark, intently mixing these ingredients in a bucket of cold water in order to make a summer garden soup.</p> <p>Side Note: Notice how the repetition creates a rhythm of its own and creates a mood in which readers feel rooted to a particular place.</p>

Poem 3	CINDERELLA'S DIARY by Ron Koertge (p. 6)
<p>About the Poem</p>	<p>In this poem, Koertge plays with the ideas of point of view and of irony, or the surprisingly unexpected. He focuses his efforts on the disappointed fairy tale princess, Cinderella, who, now that she has her Prince Charming, finds herself feeling quite and quite trapped. We hear Cinderella's complaints as we read this poem, which takes the form of a page from her diary. Cinderella is spirited, smart, and sarcastic, which is ironic since we have been taught to think of her as silent, sweet, and submissive and certainly not dissatisfied with her happily ever after!</p>
<p>About Using this Poem as a Template</p>	<p>Choose a character from a fairy tale. Play with the idea of irony in the life of that character. What if the fairy tale character actually didn't like the outcome of his or her story? What if he or she was not happy with happily ever after? Express their feelings of disappointment or regret ironically from their point of view.</p> <p>IMPORTANT! Make sure your poem is long enough to tell your readers all about the irony of your character's situation.</p>
<p>Mrs. Bestor's example using the template</p>	<p>See if you can guess which fairy tale character is talking to you in this poem.</p> <p>I actually admired that wolf. What a thing to say, but there it is. Knowing he lurked about made my life more interesting because danger thrills me. It makes me feel alive.</p> <p>Don't let my red cape and basket fool you into thinking otherwise.</p> <p>And while I love my grandmother, I blame her for the quiet woods, the safe woods, the boring woods between my house and hers.</p> <p>A woods without a wolf is too lonely, so I am off to live with my aunt.</p> <p>In her woods there dangers galore.</p> <p>Wolves and bears and snakes and spiders.</p> <p>and no hunters lurking about looking for ways to save me.</p>

Poem 4	VAMPIRE'S SERENADE by Dana Gioia (p. 7)
About the Poem	In this poem Nosferatu, the vampire, serenades his next victim with this song of seduction.
About Using this Poem as a Template	<p>Write from the point of view of a mysterious, monstrous, or mythical being. Include at least 10 lines to describe that being, each line beginning with the phrase "I am." As it is with many poems, the vampire is described here through the use of symbols and other concrete and abstract representations.</p> <p>In addition to symbols that represent your being, think about the various sights, sounds, smells, textures, temperatures, and flavors associated with your subject, and then serenade us until we are thoroughly creeped out.</p> <p>IMPORTANT! Make sure your poem is no shorter than 10 lines.</p>
Mrs. Bestor's example using the template	<p>This is the beginning of my poem "Zombie's Serenade."</p> <p>I am the stench that fills the room, the green, putrid flesh, like swollen balloons.</p> <p>I am the hunter that stumbles about. Your flesh makes me hunger, slobber, and shout.</p> <p>Side Note: I have written my poem using couplets (two line sets that rhyme).</p>

Poem 5	LITANY by Billy Collins (p. 33)
About the Poem	In this poem, poet Billy Collins uses a few lines written by another poet, Jacques Crickillon, to inspire him. Collins uses pairs of objects and ideas to describe the person about whom he is writing and eventually to describe himself. These paired objects and ideas are at times amusing, but it's hard to tell if Collins is being complimentary or insulting.
About Using this Poem as a Template	<p>Think of a person you feel strongly about. The feelings you have may be strictly positive, strictly negative, or a combination of both. Think about the objects, sensations, and ideas that represent that person. A litany is a list, so make your own litany or list of paired objects and ideas that give us as readers a sense of who the person you are writing about is and what this person is like. If you want to include yourself in the poem also, feel free to do so. In his final three stanzas of his seven stanza poem, the poet Billy Collins does.</p> <p>IMPORTANT! While the poet uses 32 lines in 7 stanzas to express himself, you must use at least 16 lines.</p>
Mrs. Bestor's example using the template	<p>My poem, though incomplete, is about my grandfather, a complicated man whom I admired in spite of his insensitivity to others.</p> <p>You are the frozen surface of a woodland pond and the frost on the mirror obscuring my view.</p> <p>You are the jam on my toast and the sugar and lemon in my tea.</p> <p>However, you are not the song in the throat of the birds, the sweetness in the berries or the lightness of air.</p> <p>And you certainly are not the empty, turned out pocket. There is just no way you are the empty, turned out pocket.</p> <p>Side Note: I rely on imagery here to give you an idea of who my grandfather was to me.</p>

OTHER POETRY IDEAS TO CONSIDER!

Poem #6 -- *Blackberry Picking* by Seamus Heaney (p. 58)

Think of a single experience, like blackberry picking. Take your readers deep into that experience using rich sensory details. How does that experience SOUND; how does it TASTE; how does it FEEL; how does it SMELL; how does it LOOK?

Poem #7 -- *From FOR A GIRL BECOMING* by Joy Harjo (pp. 62 - 63)

This poem gives advice to a girl who is about to become a woman. Think about the advice you'd like to give someone. Use the words Harjo begins with to get yourself started. Plan on writing a poem containing 12 or more lines.

"Don't forget how you started your..."

Poem #8 -- *A BOY IN A BED IN THE DARK* by Brad Sachs (p. 67)

This poem is the poet's confession about an act of violence he didn't really mean to commit against his innocent little brother. In this confession we feel the weight of the poet's guilt, confusion, and regret. If you are brave enough, make your poem into a confession of something you deeply regret or continue to feel guilty about. Perhaps in expressing these feelings, you will feel a bit lighter. Your poem should be no shorter than 10 lines.

Poem #9 -- *WHAT WE MIGHT BE, WHAT WE ARE* by X.J. Kennedy (p. 84)

This is an interesting poem in which the poet reflects on what the relationship between two people might have been had they not been so different. Think about someone you wish you knew or related to better. Express, using paired objects and ideas, how the two of you might work out being together. Express, using paired objects and ideas, how the two of you could never work out being together. Your poem should be no shorter than 12 lines.

Poem #10 -- SEAL by William Jay Smith (p. 97) Think about one of your favorite animals. Write a poem that not only captures the traits of that animal in words, but shape the poem to represent the animal in some way. Use brief rhyming lines like Smith does if you are able. Make sure you write at least a 12-line poem.

Poem #11 -- WHAT ARE HEAVY? by Christina Rossetti (p. 126)

Because Rosetti's poem is so brief, should you choose it as your inspiration, expect to write two poems using WHAT ARE HEAVY? as your template. Notice how Rosetti uses questions to begin each of her four lines, and her answers are pairs of things that represent the physical world and the abstract world of ideas and feelings.

Poem #12 -- CAROLINE by Allison Joseph (pp. 10 - 11)

This poem is written from the point of view of one African American girl in a group of friends. In this group there is only one white girl, Caroline. If Caroline had a chance to respond to this poem, would she interpret the way the group of girls treats her as friendly or caring? Would she describe herself the same way the speaker in the poem does? Write a poem exploring this eighth grade dynamic from Caroline's point of view. Include at least 12 lines.

Go on to the next page for a final option...

Poem For Multiple Voices:

If you want your poem to sound and look like the slam poets Sarah and Phil spoken word poem "An Origin Story" create a three column table in Google Docs that looks like this:

First, look over this example. How do you think it should be read aloud? In what order?

Spoken alone by voice #1:	Both voices say together:	Spoken alone by voice #2:
I am the younger brother. Playing with toys is my favorite past-time. When I am your age, I will earn such better grades than you do.	Mom yells at you more than me! You have it so easy!	I am the older sister. Talking on the phone is what I do best. When I was your age, School was so much harder than it is now.

Each character/voice in the poem will have his/her/its own column. If you want the speakers to speak at the same time but with different words, position the individual words on the same line in each speaker's column.

If you want the speakers to speak at different times, leave white space in the column of the silent speaker across from the words the active speaker will say.

When you want the speakers to say the same words at the same time, place those words in the center column.