

Lesson Plan #5

Title: “Poe’s Poetry and Prosody (reading fluency)”

Introduction: Prosody is fluent reading with conversational ease and attention to punctuation and expression. It’s an acquired skill that requires lots of practice with read-aloud opportunities for students at all reading levels. This lesson employs STAR reading instruction methods designed for intermediate level students (4.0-8.9). However, because the selected poem’s reading level is somewhat advanced, students at reading levels 9.0 and above might enjoy it. Whichever group you decide, try it and see if reading “The Raven,” by Edgar Allen Poe, helps your students develop reading fluency and—maybe—also gain an appreciation of Mr. Poe’s expert command of rhythm and rhyme.

Objectives: In this lesson, students will:

- Receive an **explanation** of the activity and why they are being asked to do it

- Listen to a **model** of fluent reading: teacher will first read aloud the passage.

- Receive **guided practice** from teacher: read aloud as a group

- Apply** what they have learned by working individually with the teacher, and with additional guidance as needed. *Idea: This poem lends itself particularly well to being read as a “rap” poem or song. After students have gone through this entire lesson, they could take turns “rapping” the verses, paying attention to rhyming patterns and appropriate pauses. Perhaps they could even perform the poem in a rap mode.*

Session time: 45 minutes to 1 hour over a period of days. Each session should cover no more than one verse.

Materials:

- Copy #1a - the first verse of “The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe

- Copy #1b - the first verse with marked phrase boundaries (slanted lines to indicate a pause).

- Copy #2a – the second verse

- Copy #2b – the second verse , with marked phrase boundaries

- Copy #3a – the third verse

- Copy #3b – the third verse, with marked phrase boundaries

All copies appear on the next two pages of this lesson plan.

Methods: Using evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) and direct instructional strategies, teacher takes students through the lesson, stopping to give additional guidance where needed, but working toward independent application.

Procedures:

- 1) **Explanation:** Teacher hands out Copy #1 to all students. Teacher explains, *"We're going to read aloud a verse of this poem to help develop our reading skills and learn where to pause. I think you'll hear the rhythm of the words as I read it aloud to you first, and that may help you as we read it aloud as a group a bit later. Some of the words may not be familiar to you, but we'll worry about that later when we work on vocabulary. If you don't know what a word means, you can ask me and I'll tell you, but then we'll go on because right now, we want to focus on your reading aloud. Listen to me read it as you follow along on your copy. Then, I want you to read it with me as a group."*
- 2) **Modeling:** Teacher reads poem fluently to all students, pausing at appropriate points.
- 3) **Guided Practice:** Teacher tells students, *"Now, I'm going to give you another copy of the same verse of this poem. This one has slanted lines to help us decide where to pause as we read it. We're going to read it aloud as a group, paying attention and pausing wherever there is a slanted line."* Note: Teacher may need to do this more than once.
- 4) **Application:** Teacher tells each student, *"Now, I need to hear you read it aloud to me, individually. Taking turns, please come into the next room so that I can hear you read the poem in the way we've just learned. While we're doing this, the rest of you can try reading silently the next verse. Then, tomorrow, we'll tackle that one."*
- 5) **Monitoring of Progress:** Teacher observes each student in the larger group as they read together, and individually, as each student reads to her one-on-one. In this way, teacher will know if a student is having problems and needs additional guided practice. Monitoring of progress is ongoing. Teacher is always aware of each student's ability to grasp the lesson and demonstrate the skill.

Conclusion: This lesson employs direct instruction. Opportunities to teach certain vocabulary words may come out of this lesson, and teacher may want to make a note of them to include them in a vocabulary lesson at another time; however, the objective of this lesson is to develop reading fluency and prosody. The group read-aloud and the individual read-aloud are both important. However, because students may be reluctant or embarrassed to read aloud in front of other students, please note that teacher creates an opportunity for students to read aloud individually, one on one with teacher, away from the larger group. On the other hand, if students are comfortable reading aloud in the larger group, then go with that.

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The Raven by Edgar Allen Poe - 1845

Verse #1 Copy 1a

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more."

Verse #1 with marked phrase boundaries Copy 1b

Once upon a midnight dreary/ while I pondered/ weak and weary/
Over many a quaint and curious volume/ of forgotten lore/
While I nodded/ nearly napping/ suddenly/ there came a tapping/
As of someone/gently rapping/ rapping at my chamber door/
"Tis some visitor/" I muttered/ "tapping at my chamber door/
Only this/ and nothing more/"

Verses #2 and #3 (for subsequent lessons and for students to try marking with phrase boundaries, based on what they've learned in this lesson. *Caution: Students are not likely to mark all phrase boundaries at appropriate places when they try this, so teacher will need to provide additional guidance and practice opportunities for this lesson as well. However, it gives the students an opportunity to practice what they have learned thus far and to gain a sense of rhythm, the sounds of words, and "naturally occurring" pauses as they listen to the teacher's fluent modeling and practice reading aloud themselves.*

Verse #2 Copy 2a

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; - vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for the lost Lenore –
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore –
Nameless here forevermore.

Verse #2 (with marked phrase boundaries) Copy 2b

Ah/ distinctly I remember/ it was in the bleak December/
And each separate/dying/ember/ wrought its ghost/ upon the floor/
Eagerly/I wished the morrow/ vainly/I had sought to borrow
From my books/ surcease of sorrow/ sorrow for the lost Lenore/
For the rare and radiant maiden/ whom the angels named Lenore/
Nameless here/ forevermore.

Verse #3 Copy 3a

*And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me – filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door –
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door; -
This it is, and nothing more.”*

Verse #3 (with marked phrase boundaries) Copy 3b

*And the silken/ sad/ uncertain/ rustling/ of each purple curtain/
Thrilled me/ filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before/
So that now/ to still the beating/ of my heart/ I stood repeating/
“’Tis some visitor entreating/ entrance at my chamber door/
Some late visitor entreating/ entrance at my chamber door; -
This it is/ and nothing more./”*

Note: You may find that your students will want to read (or rap) the entire poem---all 18 verses! To find it on the Internet, just key in “Poe, The Raven” in your search engine

of choice (Google, Yahoo, etc.) You'll get lots of sites from which you can download the entire poem. L. Cox, SIPDC

Note: This lesson is included in the workshop, ***Evidence-based Alphabetic Instruction and Evidence-based Fluency Instruction for Intermediate-level Students***, in the ***SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities***.