



BECOMING WELL VERSED IN BIODIVERSITY

Materials:

- ☆ pictures and descriptions of major components of Arkansas ecosystems such as prairies, forests, and swamps
- ☆ *Arkansas and the Land* by Foti and Hanson
- ☆ student handout on poetry forms.

Rationale

This activity emphasizes the components of the ecosystems that make up Arkansas’s natural divisions. It also makes a connection between science and literature, and the diversity that exists in poetry as well as in nature.

Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate their understanding of terms describing ecosystems by creating poetry using those terms appropriately.
2. Students will practice writing poetry in various formats that will emphasize the biological diversity of Arkansas’s ecosystems.

Procedure

1. Show or allow students to look over pictures and descriptions of Arkansas ecosystems. Each student may choose the ecosystem he/she prefers or the class may opt to work on one ecosystem as a group.
2. Brainstorm words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.) that

3. describe the ecosystem(s).
3. Go over the various poetry forms and have each student/the class choose one or more forms to work with. Have students create ecosystem poems using the brainstormed words.

NOTE: Allow students to savor their words and creations and not get trapped in following the rules exactly.

Extensions

1. Have students illustrate the poetry, create a class poetry book, dramatize the poetry, or create a story quilt (a quilt pieced together of cloth or paper having squares created by the students).
2. Divide the class into groups of five or six. Go outside and allow each group to choose one tree from those available. Have each person in a group look at the tree chosen by the group in a different manner. One may stand under it and gaze up, another walk a distance away and look back over his/her shoulder, another lie on the ground to view it, another hug it closely, etc. Drawing from his/her experience looking at the tree, have each member of the group contribute one noun, one verb and one adjective to a group list. Then ask each group to write a poem using as many of the words as they can. If there are few trees to choose from, use some other natural object such as a rock or

- flower. The main point is to look at the same thing in different ways, then cooperate to describe it.
3. Conduct a guided imagery activity by having students close their eyes, relax and listen to a poem you read aloud. As they listen, tell them to pay attention to the images that form in their minds and the feelings the poem causes. Afterward allow those who wish to share their thoughts to do so. Good selections to read might include: “Desperate I walked” and/or “A Serpent’s Eye” from *The Innocent Assassins* by Loren Eiseley, Scribner and Sons, 1973; “Lightning” or “Climbing The Chagrin River” from *American Primitive* by Mary Oliver, Atlantic Monthly, 1978; “Chrysalis Diary” from *Joyful Noise* by Paul Fleischman, Harper and Row, 1988.

Correlation to National Science Standards
Life Science

Correlation to Arkansas Frameworks
Science: 5-8: L.S.3.2
Social Studies: 5.1.5
Language Arts: W.1.5, W.1.11

Keywords:
Condensed language
Images
Symbols
Acrostics
Haiku
Syntu
Cinquain
Diamante
Found poems

Becoming Well Versed in Biodiversity

Science and poetry are similar in many ways, each being a condensed language in which meaning is concentrated in images and symbols. With both subjects, there are a variety of ways in which these images and symbols are expressed.



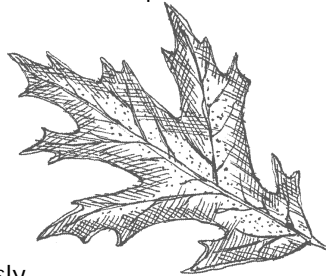
Patterned Poetry

Acrostics: A poem in which the letters of a key word are written vertically, then used to begin horizontal words or phrases. All words and phrases should address the key word.

F ronds	P retty	S tanding
E njoy	R oses	W ater
R ainy	A nd	A ccomodates
N ights	I rises	M any
	R eturn	P eaceful
	I n	S pecies
	E very spring	

Zigzag Poetry: Acrostic variation that makes a vertical/horizontal poem from a key phrase about a given topic.

Flaming
a
l
leaves
i
n
gloriously



Formula Poetry

Haiku: This nonrhyming poetry, originated by the Japanese, consists of three lines of five, seven and five syllables each. A modified format could consist of a description in line one, an action phrase in line two, and a significant detail in line three.

Whiter, whiter
Than the stones of Mount Nebo
This autumn wind

Ozark butterfly
A child laughs, it flutters
Laughs again, it flees

Syntu: Line one names the subject, line two contains an observation or fact about the subject, line three identifies a feeling or emotion about the subject, line four gives another fact or observation about the subject and line five contains a synonym for the subject.

Biodiversity
Ecosystems differ
To my joy
Differences riot
Variety

Cinquain: The name for this type of poetry comes from the French and Spanish words for five. Cinquain is based on syllables, but there are five lines. Line one is a title in two syllables, line two a description of the title in four syllables, line three a description of action in six syllables, line four a description of a feeling in eight syllables, line five another word for the title in two syllables.

Forests
Graceful, growing
Climb among the clouds
Joyfully stalking the sunset
Alive

Diamante: Consists of a seven-line diamond shaped poem. Line one has one noun, line two has two adjectives, line three has three verbs ending in "ing", line four has four nouns, line five has three more verbs ending in "ing", line six has two adjectives, line seven has one noun.

Swamp
Seasonal, diverse
Slow-moving, teeming, changing, flooding
Moccasins, egrets, alligators, canoes
Threatened, endangered, disappearing, enchanting
Beautiful, secretive
Eyes

Found Poems

Composing found poems helps students learn to summarize by picking out key terms and sentences. Students read a passage, then pick out a couple of significant sentences. The students then rewrite the sentence(s) as a poem by rearranging words and line breaks, but keeping the same word order.

A water S-T-R-I-D-E-R
Can
WALK on water
Because of
S
U
R
F
A
C
TENSION

