

Poetry of the Bighorn

Objectives:

Students will be able to express their knowledge of bighorn sheep through poetry.

Grade level: 2-high school

Duration: An hour or more

Group Size: Individually, or projects could be completed by teams of students

Setting: indoors



Common Core State Standards:

- RL.1.10 With prompting and support, read prose and poetry
- RL.2.10 Read and comprehend literature, including poetry
- RL.3.10 Read and comprehend literature, including poetry
- RF.3.4 Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
- RL.4.10 Read and comprehend literature, including poetry.
- RF.4.4 Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.
- RL.5.10 Read and comprehend literature, including poetry.
- RF.5.4 Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.

Background:

Throughout time poetry has been a medium for expressing ideas, emotions, and beliefs. History has been told, legends passed down, and faith strengthened by simple poems written by passionate people. A literal definition of poetry is “the art of rhythmical composition, written or

spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts.” Poetry can be the expression of a heart filled with passion and love, whether that is a passion for justice, or faith; or a love of nature or family. Poetry is a means of expressing our hopes and dreams, emotions and beliefs.

Materials:

- Writing materials
- Photos of bighorn sheep to help students visualize (optional)

Procedures:

1. Everyone can be a poet, at least to some extent. This activity is designed to take knowledge about bighorn sheep that students have learned and apply it to means of expression with less rules.
2. There are many ways to go about this. Photos of bighorn sheep and their habitat could be placed on groups of students’ desks to initiate conversations and ideas about these sheep. Perhaps giving time to allow students to imagine they are a bighorn and what that might feel like, how it lives, where it travels, and how plants

and other animals look from its perspective.

3. Using these thoughts, students could write free verse or rhyming. Cinquain and haiku are interesting forms that can be taught, which include more structure. Even a poem written as a group could be fun.

Poem Examples:

Haiku: Haiku (*high-koo*) are short three-line poems with a 5-7-5 syllable structure that use sensory language to capture a feeling or image. They are often inspired by an element of nature, a moment of beauty, or another poignant experience. Haiku poetry was originally developed by Japanese poets, and the form was adopted (and adapted) by virtually every modern language, including English. The secret to writing great haiku is to be observant and appreciate nature.

Example:

*Tall cliffs abound it
Yet it glides from rock to rock
The desert bighorn.*

Cinquain: A cinquain poem has five lines. The word comes from the French *cinq*, which means five.

Cinquain poems have the following pattern:

Line 1 = 2 syllables
Line 2 = 4 syllables
Line 3 = 6 syllables
Line 4 = 8 syllables
Line 5 = 2 syllables

There are no specific rules about writing a cinquain other than it must have five lines and the correct syllable count. However,

most poets feel that it is better to stick with concrete objects than with abstract ideas (“My Dog” rather than “Happiness”). It is also true that mixing the emphasis of the syllables (or words) will create a stronger effect than writing a string of words with similar lengths and emphasis. Other poetic devices such as assonance and alliteration can be used to help make your cinquain poem memorable. Organizing the ideas in your cinquain to follow the order below is another suggestion:

Title

Description of the title

Some action about the title

Feeling about the title

Synonym (similar word) for the title

Example:

*Bighorn
Curved horns on head
Jumping from rock to rock
The magnificent beast stands high
Wild sheep*

Diamante: A diamante is a poem shaped like a diamond. It can be used to show that words are related through shades of meaning from one extreme to an opposite extreme, following a pattern of parts of speech like this:

noun
adjective adjective
participle participle participle
noun noun noun noun
participle participle participle
adjective adjective
noun

Another way of thinking about it is:

Line 1: Beginning subject

Line 2: Two describing words about line 1

Line 3: Three doing words about line 1
(each word ends in “-ing”)
Line 4: A short phrase about line 1, a short
phrase about line 7
Line 5: Three doing words about line 7
Line 6: Two describing words about line 7
Line 7: End subject

The key element is that the first noun and
the last noun are unlike, almost like
opposites.

Example:

Lamb
Small, White
Growing, Jumping, Playing
Hoof, Hair, Wing, Feather
Soaring, Looking, Gliding
Brown, Large
Golden Eagle

Assessment: Through their poems, a
teacher could assess elements learned
from several lessons taught about bighorn
sheep. For example, the above diamante
would demonstrate that the student
understood that a young sheep, the lamb,
is part of a food chain also belonging to
the golden eagle, which often times preys
upon lambs. The descriptions of the lamb
also would demonstrate an understanding
of what a lamb looks like and actions
associated with a young sheep.

