Why is poetry a natural teaching tool?

- **Brevity and rich vocabulary**
- **Strong oral quality** – meant to be read aloud; poem’s meaning more clearly communicated when read and heard; acquire correct word pronunciations
- Poems tend to be about one subject – crystallized focus can aid students as they use their word knowledge to make sense of new content; abstract thoughts (patriotism, democracy, etc.) can become more real
- Repeated readings allow children to gain reading fluency and build sight vocabulary and/or subject area vocabulary
- Poetry packs a punch – filled with emotion and/or imagination;

Poetry

- Rhythm and rhyme
- Complement or extend the curriculum
- Varied to meet the needs and interests of children
- Selected for any age level

Reading

Through poetry, students can explore:

- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Sentence structure
- Rhyming words
- Sight words
- Vocabulary
- Concepts of print
- Punctuation
- Syllabication
- Personal connections
- Synthesize and infer information
- Summarize
- Natural springboard to written composition

Tips on Getting Started

- Select a verse that contains a definite rhythm, interesting sound patterns, and content that would be appealing to students
- Enlarge the verse so everyone can see it
- Model the verse dramatically
- Invite the children to read along
- Add physical responses, if appropriate, to get them directly involved
- Use poetry as a springboard to other activities/subjects

Bubble gum, Bubble gum, Penny a packet,
First you chew it,
Then you crack it,
Then you stick it in your jacket,
Then your parents
Kick up a racket!
Bubble gum, Bubble gum, Penny a packet.

Traditional Verse
Alligator Pie
by Dennis Lee

Alligator pie, alligator pie,
If I don’t get some I think I’m gonna die.
Give away the green grass, give away the sky,
But don’t give away my alligator pie.

Alligator stew, alligator stew,
If I don’t get some I don’t know what I’ll do.
Give away my furry hat, give away my shoe,
But don’t give away my alligator stew.

Alligator soup, alligator soup,
If I don’t get some I think I’m gonna droop.
Give away my hockey stick, give away my hoop,
But don’t give away my alligator soup.

Random House Book of Poetry
Jack Prelutsky

Have you ever, ever, ever
In a long-legged life,
Seen a long-legged sailor,
With a long-legged wife?

No, I never, never, never,
In a long-legged life,
Saw a long-legged sailor,
With a long-legged wife.

Variations:
• Pigeon-toed
• Slim-d implies

Shimmy Shimmy Cake-A-Pop
John & Carol Langstaff

Butterscotch Pie
Butterscotch, Butterscotch Butterscotch pie
For butterscotch flavor
I gladly would die.
I love it in cookies
I love it in cakes
I crave it in candy
Or fudge that I make.
It’s heaven in sauces
Divine in ice cream
I have butterscotch, butterscotch,
Butterscotch dreams.

Butterscotch Dreams
Sonja Dunn

Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack,
All dressed in black, black, black,
With silver buttons, buttons, buttons,
All down her back, back, back.
She went upstairs to make her bed,
She made a mistake and bumped her head;
She went downstairs to wash the dishes,
She made a mistake and washed her wishes;
She went outside to hang her clothes,
She made a mistake and hung her nose.

Miss Mary Mack and Other Children’s Street Rhymes
Cole and Calmenson

Word Builder
by Ann Whitford Paul

Begin your new construction
With 26 letters.
Hammer a through z into words.
Pile your words like blocks
Into sentence towers -
Measure some tall,
saw others short.
Mortar each sentence
with punctuation.
Then frame your sentences
into paragraph villages,
stack your paragraphs
into chapter cities.
Keep on building
words into sentences
sentences into paragraphs,
paragraphs into chapters
until you have created
a whole world book.

Big Book of Poetry
by Bill Martin Jr.

Over the years, many rhymes have been set to music. Whether the verses are recited or sung with a tune, the sounds (and sometimes silliness!) of these rhymes offer students a source of pleasure.

www.songsforteaching.com
Brother Mitch (To the tune of "London Bridge")

Brother Mitch keeps falling down
Throughout the town
He's a clown
When he falls he wears a frown
Tie his laces!

Tie them twenty times and then
Not again!
Think I get a better plan
Buy him Velcro!

They're open!

Think I got a better plan
Buy him Velcro!

Tie his laces!

Buy him Velcro!

Take Me Out of the Bathtub and Other Silly Dilly Songs
Alan Katz

Juba This and Juba That

Juba this and Juba that
Juba saw a yellow cat
Juba up and Juba down
Juba runnin' all around

Juba This and Juba That
Virginia A. Tashjian

Way down south where bananas grow,
A grasshopper stepped on an elephant's toe.
The elephant cried with tears in his eyes,
"Step on somebody your own size."

Way down in Florida where oranges grow,
Some second graders stepped on an alligator's toe.
The alligator cried with tears in his eyes,
"Step on somebody your own size."

Let's Write

Down By the Bay

Down by the bay
Where the watermelons grow
Back to my home
I dare not go
For if I do
My mother will say ....
"Did you ever see a goose
Kissing a moose?"
Down by the bay.

"Did you ever see a whale
With a polka dot tail?"
Down by the bay.

"Did you ever see a dog

As children learn that words have the power to amuse, they enjoy reading, telling and writing riddles.

Riddles may seem foolish by adult standards, but wordplay is an important precursor to understanding literal and figurative language, multiple meanings of words, and sound patterns. It can also be the foundation for writing poetry.
• A hink pink is a riddle in which the answer is made up of two, one-syllable rhyming words.

  Mouse – House
  Rude – Dude
  Rock – Jock

• A hinky pinky is a riddle in which the answer is made up of two, two-syllable rhyming words.

  » Fraction – Action
  » Alley – Rally
  » Cryin’ – Lion

The Crocodile’s Toothache

The crocodile went to the dentist
And sat down in the chair,
Now the dentist said, “How tall are we?
Why does it hurt and where?”

And the crocodile said, “It hurt you the truth,
I have a terrible ache in my tooth.”
And he opened his jaws so wide, so wide,
That the dentist, he climbed right inside,
And the dentist laughed, “Oh isn’t this fun!
As he pulled the teeth out, one by one.

And the crocodile cried, “You’re hurting me so!
Please put down your pliers and let me go.”

But the dentist laughed with a Ho Ho Ho,
And he said, “I still have twenty to go.
Darn, that’s the wrong tooth, I confess,
But what’s one crocodile’s tooth, more or less?”
Then suddenly, the jaws went SNAP,
And the dentist was gone, right off the map.
And where he went one could only guess –
To North or South or East or West . . .
He left no forwarding address.
But what’s one dentist, more or less?

Poem starts

My dog is less than one foot tall
And hasn’t any tail
She never answers when I call,

———

Some possible rhyming words:
snail / rail / frail
pole / trail / mail
nail / pail / stale

Where the Sidewalk Ends

In the content areas, poetry can add the novelty and variety that is sometimes missing from the traditional textbook.

There are many poetry books on math, science, or social studies, but don’t forget about anthologies, a collection of poems about all types of subjects.
Expand Your Knowledge of Science

My name starts with letter A.
I have a pleasant smell.
I'm sometimes used for trinkets
That artists make and sell.
During prehistoric times,
I oozed from trunks of trees,
Lots of things got trapped in me –
Like spiders, ants, and bees.
People travel far and wide
To look for chunks of me.
I'm a light brown resin.
Can you guess what I might be?

amber

What is science?

What is science? So many things.
The study of stars – Saturn's rings.
The study of rocks – geodes and stones –
dinosaur fossils, old-chipped bones.
The study of soil, oil, and gas
Of sea and sky, of seed and grass.
Of wind and hurricanes
That blow;
volcanoes, tornadoes, earthquakes, snow.
What is science?

The study of trees.
Of butterflies and killer bees.
Glaciers, geysers, clay and sand;
mighty mountains, the rolling land.
The power of trains – Planes that soar.
Science is this

What is science?

Rebecca Kai Dotlich

Velcro

As fasteners go,
I'm unsurpassed.
My stickiness will flabbergast.
I'm King of Cling,
My grip won't slip
until you choose
to rip the strip.
Neither has
my strength, my ease.

I sneer at snaps,
the lonely lace.
They lack my lock,
my fierce embrace.

Just try to name
a greater gripper,
(Don't even think of saying zipper.)

by Maria Fleming

Incredible Inventions

Lee Bennett Hopkins

Giant Sequoias

Ancient seers
Of three thousand years.
Heavenly high.
Friends to the sky.
Spongy thick bark.
Large as an ark.
Gargantuan girth.
Anchored in earth.
Growing by degrees
To world's tallest trees.
Never destroy a Giant sequoia.

Poetrees
Douglas Florian
Push Me, Pull Me

“Say, what if we two,” she insisted,
“Could stick together?” He resisted.
Their north poles jitterbugged and may
Have touched . . . but quickly pushed away.
And so they tried to make a start
From south to south . . . Still far apart.
Turning around and facing north,
She threw her little metal forth!
Kaa-thwupp! Those two engaging chips
Were stuck like barnacles to ships.
What is it?  

Sci-en-Trickery: Riddles in Science
J. Patrick Lewis

As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives,
Each wife had seven sacks,
Each sack had seven cats,
Each cat had seven kits—
Kits, cats, sacks, wives,
How many were going to St. Ives?

And the Green Grass Grew All Around
Alvin Schwartz
Social Studies

Since jump rope rhymes and street chants have originated from culturally diverse groups, they are valuable in portraying that the language of play is universal.

- Contains 32 street rhymes from 17 nations
- Illustrations done by artists native to the country represented

The Rider

Lanterns glowing just for me.
Two lights warn: Attack by sea.
Horseback riding through the night
Redcoats coming. Soon we'll fight.

Who am I?

This tall handsome lady
On Uncle Sam's porch
Stands still as a statue
Holding a torch.

Who is it?

Joan Holub

Yankee Doodle Riddles: American History Fun
Jean Holub
Solemn bells in steeples sing:

Doctor
Martin Luther
King

He lived his life
He dreamed his dream:
The worst off people
To redeem.
He dreamed a world
Where people stood
Not separate, but
In brotherhood.
Now ten-ton bells together swing:
Remember
Martin Luther
King.

What I hope you learned...

• Poetry should be an important component of the curriculum
• Easy to incorporate into all subject areas
• Poetry invites participation ... clap hands, tap feet, move bodies, add their own words, and connect with the poem
• Poetry is FUN!

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SHOUT
Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.
Clap your hands! Stomp your feet!
Feel the rhythm! Feel the beat!
Chunky words all chopped in chips!
Silky words upon your lips.
Tell a story – happy, sad;
Silly, sorry; good or bad.
Leap a leap, hop a hop,
See the ocean in one drop.
Shout it! Shout it! POETRY!
Fun for you and fun for me.

Shout: Little Poems That Roar
Bagert