

Celebrate Poetry Month

with Random House Children's Books

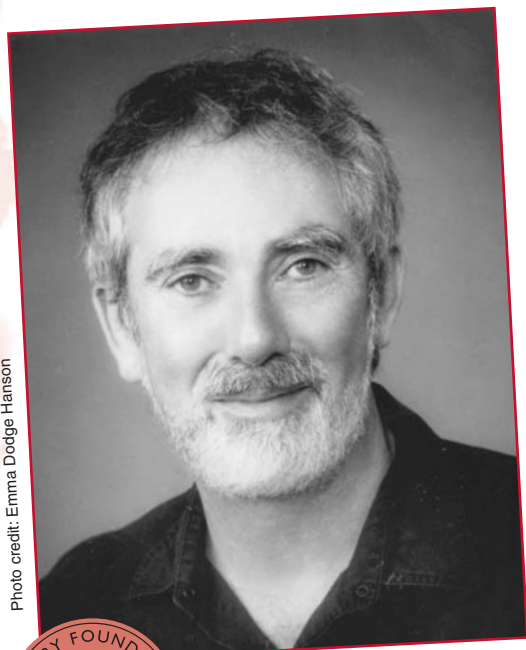


Photo credit: Emma Dodge Hanson



*Jack Prelutsky is
our nation's first-ever
Children's Poet Laureate!*

Dear Educator:

Recently, I met a second-grade teacher who floored me by telling me that he recites one of my poems to his students *every day*, and that he's been doing it for 20 years. As flattering and impressive as that is, I certainly don't expect you to emulate him. However, I think that the notion of sharing a poem daily with your own students is utterly wonderful.


There's something about poetry that sinks into us and livens our minds and our senses. It can show us new ways of seeing the world, turn the mundane into the spectacular, and turn the ridiculous into the serious . . . and vice versa. With just a few well-chosen words, a poet can weave a tapestry of wonder, and create surprise and delight out of things as diverse as hiccups, robots, bugs, and baseball.

I hope that you enjoy sharing my poems, as well as the poems of my colleagues, with your students. Recite these poems to them with enthusiasm . . . you'll discover that your students will be enthusiastic too.

~Jack Prelutsky



PREPARING FOR POETRY MONTH


 Make your classroom poetry-friendly. Hang poster boards with poems written on them from the ceiling, on the bulletin board, and off the side of your desk. Here's a great one to start with:


A POEM IS A LITTLE PATH

*A poem is a little path
That leads you through the trees.
It takes you to the cliffs and shores
To anywhere you please.*

*Follow it and trust your way
With mind and heart as one,
And when the journey's over,
You'll find you've just begun.*

—Charles Ghigna from *The 20th-Century Children's Poetry Treasury*
© 1992 by Charles Ghigna

 Get ready to immerse your students in poetry! Work with the school librarian to gather as many poetry books as you can to share with your budding poets.

 Sign up for the free Teachers @ Random e-mail newsletter and you will receive a poem a day for the month of April that you can share with students. Go to www.randomhouse.com/teachers to sign up.



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Poetry Month: what a wonderful whimsical time



Week 1: Meet Jack Prelutsky

DAY 1: Surround students with the genius of Jack Prelutsky. Make all of his books available for the class to browse. Have the class check out the poet's interactive Web site at www.jackprelutsky.com and get to know him as a friend.

DAY 2: In his newest book, *Good Sports*, Jack celebrates the joy of participating in sports boys and girls play. Have students read a few of the poems aloud. Discuss why the book's title is so appropriate. Do you have to be a good athlete to be a good sport?

DAY 3: Share with students the fabulous shape poems on pages 42–43 of *The 20th-Century Children's Poetry Treasury*. Discuss how the physical layout of the poems works with the words. Challenge students to write and design their own shape poems. Create a bulletin board to display the creations.

DAY 4: Read aloud Jack's introduction to the "Nonsense!" section on page 168 of *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*. Then read it along with the class at a slower pace. Talk about the fun of the rhymes and the lively language. Why is it so much fun to be silly? Have students try their hand at a poem that might fit into the "Nonsense!" category.

DAY 5: Have students write a poem congratulating Jack on being named our nation's first-ever Children's Poet Laureate.

*My friend and I play Frisbee
In the summer in the park.
I flip the frisbee to her,
It describes a graceful arc.*

*She runs and tries to catch it,
And I watch her miss and fall—
We both like playing Frisbee,
Though we aren't good at all.*

—From *Good Sports* by Jack Prelutsky
© 2007 by Jack Prelutsky



Week 2: Poemstarts— Where Will Your Poem End Up Going?

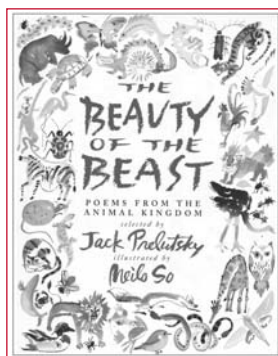
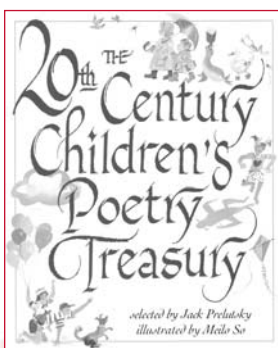
DAY 1: Introduce Jack Prelutsky's *Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme* to the class. Copy one of the poemstarts on the board and see how many directions it can go in.

DAY 2: Hand out the poetry journals inside this kit. There are original poemstarts by Jack Prelutsky that will get students' creative energy flowing.

DAY 3: Have students write their own poemstarts, and then trade papers with a partner and finish each other's poems.

DAY 4: Have students bring home a poemstart and complete the poem with a family member.

DAY 5: Host a read-aloud hour where students can read their best poem from the classroom or from home that started with a poemstart.



erful,
with so many ways to celebrate!

Week 3: Budding Anthologists

DAY 1: Jack Prelutsky has selected poems for several acclaimed poetry anthologies. Lead a class discussion about the format of *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*. The anthology is divided into 16 sections and it includes a table of contents, as well as an index by author, title, first line, and subject. Why is order so important in an anthology?

DAY 2: In his introductory letter in *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children*, Jack talks about his target audience of elementary school students and how he chose poems based on what he knew about them. Discuss the concept of a target audience. What type of poems would students select for an anthology for their parents, their younger siblings, their teachers, etc.?

DAY 3: Meilo So is the illustrator of three anthologies selected by Jack: *Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme*; *The Beauty of the Beast*; and *The 20th-Century Children's Poetry Treasury*. Have students take a look at her gorgeous art in the three books. How do the illustrations help the poems come to life?

DAYS 4-5: Now that students understand the concept of an anthology, put together a classroom poetry anthology. As a class decide on the target audience and a catchy title. Next have each student choose a poem that inspires him/her—the poems can be by published poets or by fellow students. Read the selected poems beforehand and decide on a list of categories for the anthology. Write the categories on the board, and as you read each poem aloud to the class ask for volunteers to come up and write the poem name in the category it best fits into.

Type up the anthology and ask for a few volunteers to illustrate the anthology. Depending on the age of your students, you may want to assign the table of contents and index to volunteers. Make copies for each student to bring home and share with their families.

Week 4: Just for Fun!

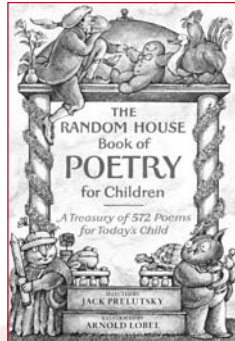
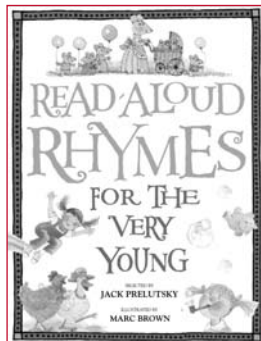
DAY 1: Have students send a poem-a-gram to a friend in another class.

DAY 2: Make a class recording of students reading their favorite poems or their original poems.

DAY 3: Host a poetry writing contest where the winner reads his or her poem over the loudspeaker for the whole school to hear.

DAY 4: Invite family members in for tea or punch and have the students read a poem for their guests of honor.

DAY 5: Set aside free time for the class to enjoy poetry. Students can write a poem, read a poem, share a poem with a friend, or illustrate a poem.



Build your classroom's poetry collection!



JACK PRELUTSKY

Selected by
Jack Prelutsky

The 20th-Century Children's Poetry Treasury

Illustrated by Meilo So
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-679-89314-1 (0-679-89314-8)

The Beauty of the Beast: Poems from the Animal Kingdom

Illustrated by Meilo So
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-679-87058-6 (0-679-87058-X)
GLB: 978-0-679-97058-3 (0-679-97058-4)

For Laughing Out Loud: Poems to Tickle Your Funnybone

Illustrated by Marjorie Priceman
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-394-82144-3 (0-394-82144-0)

Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme

Illustrated by Meilo So
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-82286-5 (0-375-82286-0)
GLB: 978-0-375-92286-2 (0-375-92286-5)

Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young

Illustrated by Marc Brown
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-394-97218-3 (0-394-97218-5)

The Random House Book of Poetry for Children

Illustrated by Arnold Lobel
Random House
HC: 978-0-394-85010-8 (0-394-85010-6)
GLB: 978-0-394-95010-5 (0-394-95010-0)

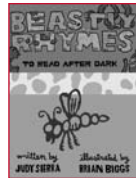
Written by Jack Prelutsky

Good Sports

Illustrated by Chris Raschka
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-83700-5 (0-375-83700-0)
GLB: 978-0-375-93700-2 (0-375-93700-5)

MORE POETRY

For Younger Readers



Beastly Rhymes

To Read After Dark
Judy Sierra
Illustrated by Brian Biggs
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-83747-0 (0-375-83747-7)
GLB: 978-0-375-93747-7 (0-375-93747-1)
Available August 2008

The Camel's Lament

Illustrated by Charles Santore
Random House
HC: 978-0-375-81426-6 (0-375-81426-4)

Dogteam

Gary Paulsen
Dragonfly
PB: 978-0-440-41130-7 (0-440-41130-0)

Good Dog

Maya Gottfried
Illustrated by Robert Rahway Zakanitch
Dragonfly
PB: 978-0-553-11383-9 (0-553-11383-6)
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-83409-5 (0-375-83049-9)
GLB: 978-0-375-93049-2 (0-375-93049-3)

Hailstones and Halibut Bones

Mary O'Neill,
Illustrated by John Wallner
Doubleday
PB: 978-0-385-41078-6 (0-385-41078-6)
HC: 978-0-385-24484-8 (0-385-24484-3)

Ready . . . Set . . . Read!

Joanna Cole and Stephanie Calmenson
Doubleday
HC: 978-0-385-41416-6 (0-385-41416-1)



Schoolyard Rhymes: Kids' Own Rhymes for Rope-Skipping, Hand Clapping, Ball Bouncing, and Just Plain Fun

Judy Sierra
Illustrated by Melissa Sweet
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-82516-3 (0-375-82516-9)
GLB: 978-0-375-92516-0 (0-375-92516-3)

For Middle-Grade Readers

The Dream Keeper and Other Poems

Langston Hughes
Alfred A. Knopf
PB: 978-0-679-88347-0 (0-679-88347-9)
HC: 978-0-679-84421-1 (0-679-84421-X)
GLB: 978-0-679-94421-8 (0-679-94421-4)

Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes

Roald Dahl
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-81556-0 (0-375-81556-2)



Summerhouse Time

Eileen Spinelli
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-84061-6 (0-375-84061-3)
GLB: 978-0-375-94061-3 (0-375-94061-8)

by Marilyn Singer
Illustrated by Meilo So

Central Heating: Poems About Fire and Warmth

Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-82912-3 (0-375-82912-1)
GLB: 978-0-375-92912-0 (0-375-92912-6)

Footprints on the Roof: Poems About the Earth

Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-81094-7 (0-375-81094-3)
GLB: 978-0-375-91094-4 (0-375-91094-8)

How to Cross a Pond: Poems About Water

Alfred A. Knopf
GLB: 978-0-375-92376-0 (0-375-92376-4)

For Young Adult Readers

Girl Coming In for a Landing

April Halprin Wayland
Illustrated by Elaine Clayton
Yearling
PB: 978-0-440-41903-7 (0-440-41903-4)

Your Own, Sylvia: A Verse Portrait of Sylvia Plath

Stephanie Hemphill
Alfred A. Knopf
HC: 978-0-375-83799-9 (0-375-83799-X)
GLB: 978-0-375-93799-6 (0-375-93799-4)

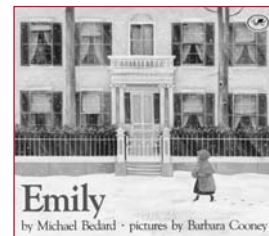
For All Readers

Favorite Poems: Old and New

Helen Ferris
Doubleday
HC: 978-0-385-07696-8 (0-385-07696-7)



A beautiful picture book about Emily Dickinson:



Emily

Michael Bedard
Illustrated by Barbara Cooney
Dragonfly
PB: 978-0-440-41740-8 (0-440-41740-6)
Doubleday
HC: 978-0-385-30697-3 (0-385-30697-0)
GLB: 978-0-385-90539-8 (0-385-90539-4)