



# Poetry of Agriculture

## Subject:

English Language Arts

## Grade Levels:

3rd—12th

## Florida Standards:

Writing Standards - W.2.4  
and W.4.10

## Materials:

- Paper Bags
- Slips of paper
- Agriculture items

## Vocabulary:

Georgic - a Greek word meaning “relating to agriculture or rural life.” The subject of georgic poems is agriculture. Originally, the poet Virgil wrote *The Georgics*, a poem in four books. This poem has influenced writers throughout history.

**Overview:** Students will sharpen their observation, listening and vocabulary skills with this poetry writing exercise that features items with an agriculture connection. For higher grades, have students create a haiku, acrostic, mirrored refrain or cinquain poems.



## Activity:

1. Collect a group of Florida agricultural items or pictures of items (citrus, vegetables, peanuts, dairy, beef, fish, etc.)
2. Create stations around the room with the agriculture item, a brown paper bag and several blank slips of paper. (Students will be moving around classroom so make sure to space the bags far enough apart.)
3. Explain that agriculture has long inspired artists and writers. Read aloud some examples of poetry with agricultural themes. Samples of poetry can be found on page two.
4. Instruct students to visit each station around the room and record their impressions of each agricultural product on the slips of paper. Each student should write a single word or short phrase describing the item on a slip of paper then place it in the station’s bag. Encourage them to record whatever stands out about the item - color, shape, smell or texture. Have them use their senses and creativity. (If you have a large class you can have the students only go to two or three stations.)
5. Once everyone has had a chance to visit all of the stations, break students into small groups. Give each a bag. Explain they will be using the words and phrases inside the bag to create a piece of free verse poetry about their item.
6. Challenge them to not mention the item by name in their poem. Then, from their writing, the rest of the class will guess the subject of each poem.

**Lesson Source:** Lesson developed by Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, <http://aitc.oregonstate.edu/>

# Samples of Poems About Agriculture

## **Ode to the Pig: His Tail**

by Walter R. Brooks

My tail is not impressive  
But it's elegant and neat.  
In length it's not excessive —  
I can't curl it round my feet —  
But it's awfully expressive,  
And its weight is not excessive,  
And I don't think it's conceit,  
Or foolishly possessive  
If I state with some aggressive-  
ness that it's the final master touch  
That makes a pig complete.

## **I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud**

by William Wordsworth, 1804

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze  
Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

## **Pigs**

by Charles Guigna

Pigs are playful  
Pigs are pink  
Pigs are smarter  
than you think.  
Pigs are slippery  
Pigs are stout  
Pigs have noses  
Called a snout.  
Pigs are pudgy  
Pigs are plump  
Pigs can run  
But never jump.  
Pigs are loyal  
Pigs are true.  
Pigs don't care for  
Barbecue.

## **Theme in Yellow**

by Carl Sandburg

I spot the hills  
With yellow balls in autumn.  
I light the prairie cornfields  
Orange and tawny gold clusters  
And I am called pumpkins.  
On the last of October  
When dusk is fallen  
Children join hands  
And circle round me  
Singing ghost songs  
And love to the harvest moon;  
I am a jack-o'-lantern  
With terrible teeth  
And the children know  
I am fooling.

## **This is Just to Say**

by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten t  
he plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast  
  
Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

## **Watermelons**

by Charles Simic

Green Buddhas  
On the fruit stand.  
We eat the smile  
And spit out the teeth.

Visit AITC Oklahoma website  
for more ag poetry samples and  
additional poetry lessons - [http://  
http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/  
aitc/lessons/extras/songs/  
food.html](http://http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/aitc/lessons/extras/songs/food.html)