



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.

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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)