

Rain Poems in Several Voices For Elementary Grades

by Alice Pero

This lesson works because it does not require even basic English skills. A child who does not speak English well can write phonetic sounds for the Voice 2 part and come away feeling she accomplished something in the class. Almost every child knows the language of the rain!

1. Start with a drum, making rhythms. Each child gets a turn.
2. Have the children read the Sibbet poem, taking turns with the various parts. (Since this poem doesn't fit on the worksheet, you may wish to project it or copy it onto chart paper.)
3. In a large class, this reading is done in groups, but give one child the Voice 3 part. The others make rain sounds. In Sibbet's poem, the Voice 3 is the main part and the other voices are the sounds. Read the Voice 3 part first, then add the other Voices for interesting sound effects.*
4. Brainstorm some rain sounds. As students think of sounds, write them on the board, showing how the sounds might be spelled. Get more spellings from the students. Let them play with this; it isn't rote!
5. Now, have the children write poems about rain. They will alternate between writing the "Rain Poem" part and the "Rain Sounds" part.
6. Perform the poems. Practice getting to the point where Voice 1 is heard distinctly and the other parts are interesting sound effects. Voice 1 can read alone first, then Voice 2 joins in on a second read through. If time allows, practice having Voice 1 read a line alone, then Voice 2 join in on the next line, then silent again, then join in again etc. If time allows, add sounds with small percussion instruments. Experiment with sounds!

Materials: A drum, other small percussion instruments. The Sibbet poem, in a form that it can be shared.

**Sibbet performed this starting with Voice 1, followed by Voice 2. Then the more narrative Voice 3 came in, repeating her/his lines in reverse order one time.*

Rain Suite

by Susan Sibbet, poet-teacher

(to be read aloud as a trio of voices)

Voice 1

Sip, Sip, Slip, lip,
sip, sip,
Sssh, shhh, shhh, wish,
this
Wish, wish, shh
[Keep repeating until
Voice 3 is done.]

Voice 2

blink blank, not
sock, clock, knock
not knock, not,
dark, lock, like, not
light, dot, dot,
blink, plank, not
[Keep repeating until
Voice 3 is done.]

Voice 3 [Speak very clearly.]

Hollow sound
of metal
dripping
drainpipe water
rattling with the rain
sound echoing
in the light well
in the narrow
space
between two buildings
this rain
in the dark early morning
winter rain
before we open our eyes