

“Native Plant Poetry” lesson plan

Duration: 20-30 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to native wildflower species found in the Ottawa area
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of characteristics and uses of plants and of plants' responses to the natural environment
- Students will assess ways in which plants are beneficial to society and the environment, and ways in which human activity has an impact on plants and plant habitats
- Student will identify various elements of style in texts, including voice, word choice, word patterns, and sentence structure, and analyze how each element helps create meaning and is appropriate for the text form and genre
- Students will identify the topic, purpose, and audience for various texts they plan to create, and describe how the chosen text form and genre will help communicate their intended meaning

Background:

Nature poetry encourages individuals to engage and connect with the natural world. Students will learn about poetic devices and the science of nature while developing a greater appreciation for the value of nature and its significance. Poetry allows us to express our thoughts and feelings while painting a picture in our minds! In this activity, students will write their own limerick poem – a specific form of short poetry known for its bouncy rhythm, unique rhyming scheme, and often funny intent. This activity will encourage students to build connections with and communicate interactions among native wildflower and plant species found in the Ottawa area through poetry.

Materials:

- One “Native Plant Poetry” handout per student
- One writing utensil per student (pencil recommended)
- Colouring utensils (optional)

Procedure:

1. Introduce the following six native wildflower species found in the Ottawa area: Black-eyed Susan, Common Fireweed, Common Milkweed, White Trillium, White Water Lily, and Yellow Pond Lily. Why are native wildflowers important for the local ecosystem? As a class, discuss both positive and negative interactions between native plants, wildlife, and humans in the natural environment.
2. Ask students if they have ever heard any poems about nature. Why might poetry be an effective form of communication about nature? What impacts do nature poems have on individuals? Nature poetry encourages individuals to engage and connect with the natural world. Poetry allows us to express our thoughts and feelings while painting a picture in our minds!
3. Give each student a “Native Plant Poetry” handout. In this activity, students will write their own limerick poem about native plants or wildflowers.

4. Tell students that a limerick is a type of poem with 5 lines that often has a funny message. A limerick has three long and two short lines rhyming “AABBA” such that the last words in lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme and the last words in lines 3 and 4 rhyme. This form of poetry also has a bouncy rhythm based on the number of syllables in each line. Lines 1, 2, and 5 should contain 8 or 9 syllables while lines 3 and 4 should be made up of 5 or 6 syllables each, as indicated on the handout.
 - Below is an example of a limerick nature poem for kids:
*Blooming native wildflower plants
Helping the bumble bees and ants
Stems planted in the soil
Hoping the leaves don't spoil
Time to put on my gardening pants!*
5. Have students bring their poems to life with an illustration. Encourage students to share their poetry and art with friends and family - nature is for everyone!