

D is for Dandelion

Learning Objectives

Poetry and Poetics

Students memorized at least one stanza of poetry weekly in front of the class and at the end of the year in front of a large audience. Students memorized the following poems:

- “The Fountain” by James Russell Lowell
- “Mr. Finney’s Turnip” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- “Sunset” by Emily Dickinson
- “Who Loves the Trees Best” by Alice May Douglas
- “Fire and Ice” by Robert Frost
- “The Stranger on the Sill” by Thomas Buchanan Read
- “The First Spring Day” by Christina Rossetti
- “Lines Written in Early Spring” by William Wordsworth

In preparation for the coming week’s memorization, the students practiced saying the stanza while learning various poetic devices, including the following: alliteration, anapestic, anaphora, apostrophe, assonance, asyndeton, ballad stanza, catachresis, consonance, dimeter, end rhyme, end stop, enjambment, feminine rhyme, foot, iambic, imagery, irony, masculine rhyme, meter, paradox, pathetic fallacy, pentameter, personification, rhyme scheme, Romanticism, scansion, stanza, tone, trochaic.

Reading

Throughout the year, students worked on reading comprehension skills, such as reading for detail, making inferences, discovering the meaning of words in context, and understanding rhetorical devices. Students read the following works: “Cornelia and Her Jewels,” “The Bells of Justice,” “What Was Her Name?”, “The Patient Cat,” “the Shepherd Boy” by Aesop, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” “Pleasant Walk” “The Real Story of Humpty Dumpty,” “Mount Vesuvius” by Charles Kingsley, “The Passing of Arthur” by Thomas Malory, “The Traveling Musicians,” “The Rose and the Cactus Flower,” “Oliver Goldsmith,” “the First Steamboat” by Robert Fulton, “The Perplexity of Zadig,” Abdallah the Unhappy,” “The Brahmin, the Tiger and the Jackal,” “The Jealous Courtiers,” “The Wonderful Weaver,” “The Iron Box,” “I Have No Friends,” “Sand Babies” by A. A. Milne, “No, That’s My Seat,” “The Story of the Caliph Stork,” “Arnold von Winkelried,” “The King and the Rebel,” “Napoleon and the Drummer Boy,” “The Ants’ Monday Dinner” by Helen Hunt Jackson, “The Myth of Philemon and Baucis,” “A Silent Witness: an Arabian Tale,” “The Miller’s Guest,” “The Flax,” “The Bailiff’s Daughter of Islington” (traditional ballad), “Lady Elspat (traditional ballad), “The Tar Wolf” (a Native American tale), “What Do You Have to Lose?”, “The Balloon,” “The Barber of Bagdad: A Take from the Middle East,” “An Iceberg” by Richard Henry Dana, “Good King Alfred” by Charles Dickens, “The Monkey’s Fiddle (an African Tale), “The Black Sheep” by Frank Baum, an excerpt

from Don Quixote by Cervantes, “The Selfish Woman,” “Curls in My Uncle’s Mustache,” “The Lady Arbella” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Letters by William Cowper, Queen Victoria and King Leopold I, “Tommy Torment,” “The Locked Room,” “Fidelity” by William Wordsworth, “Old Grimes” by Albert Gorton Greene, “The Tournament” by Sidney Lanier, “A New Arrival” by George W. Cable, “A Life on the Ocean Wave” by Epes Sargent.

The students developed a deeper understanding of literature by going over important literary terms, such as symbol, dramatic irony, situational irony, verbal irony, fable, nursery rhyme, Arthurian Legend, epic, satire, biography, denouement, Panchatantra, myth, hyperbole, fairytale, historical fiction, naturalist essays, poetic justice, recognition, ballad, folk tale, tall tale, drama, protagonist, antagonist, farce, slapstick, theme, plot, epistolary literature, cliff hanger, Romantic Period poetry, perfect rhyme, imperfect rhyme, eye rhyme, assonance, consonance, identity, alliteration.

Spelling and Phonics

Student studied spelling words and phonics words through dictation and spelling bees (about 672 words in total).

Vocabulary Development

Student discovered the meaning of words in context and studied the meanings in weekly quizzes (about 336 words in total).

Writing

Student had regular writing assignments inspired by the reading passages. The writing assignments included plot summaries, narratives and formal essays of various formats. Student also wrote about four book reports on assigned reading. The book reports required student to write a summary of the plot and an analysis of the characters (using textual support); to identify the genre and point of view; to write the setting, conflict, theme and the bibliography in correct bibliographic form.

Italic Handwriting

Student practiced the cursive italic hand weekly. The instruction focused on letter connections, letter formation, parallel lines and spacing.

Dictation, Grammar and Usage

Student practiced their spelling and handwriting by taking dictation. Through the dictation exercises student gained a knowledge of grammar and usage, including the following: using capitals, quotation marks and commas with direct quotations, nouns, attributive and predicate adjectives, complete subjects, simple subjects, simple and complete predicates, action and linking verbs, and adverbs.

Public Speaking

Each week student recited poetry in class. At Speech Night, student recited a poem in front of a large audience.