

Linguistic Development through  
**POETRY MEMORIZATION**  
Teacher's Manual

**Poems 1–5**  
*by Andrew Pudewa*

Also by Andrew Pudewa

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# Introduction





# Prerequisites for Effective Communication

As I have traveled the country during the past ten years, working with homeschool students and their parents as well as with teachers and administrators in public and private schools, it has been most gratifying to be able to share an approach to teaching writing that has significantly helped raise the written and oral communication skills of countless children of all ages. The many effective methods and techniques of the *Blended Structure and Style* syllabus, which we use to teach composition, have made a huge difference in the lives of thousands of students, parents, and teachers.

However, no matter how brilliant and effective at teaching writing one may become, a frighteningly true and significant fact keeps raising its ugly head. It's simple; it's obvious; it's terribly important, and that is this:

You can't get something out of a child's brain that isn't in there to begin with.

*You can't get something out of a child's brain that isn't in there to begin with.*

If you have no Chinese in your brain, you can't get any Chinese out of your brain; if you don't have any music in your brain, you can't get any music out; if you don't have any geometry in, you won't get it out. This is just as true for one's native language as it is for less familiar subject matter. Getting something into the brain is clearly a prerequisite to getting it out. Now, to be a competent writer or speaker of English, a student need not be well equipped with an extensive knowledge of grammar, nor is it necessary for him to do great loads of worksheets and exercises designed to teach usage and mechanics. It is not necessarily even true that the more time spent writing, the better a writer he becomes.

If he is a native speaker of English, he needs one thing above all else, and that is this: **a large database in his brain of reliably correct and sophisticated language patterns.**

## Building the vocabulary database

Reliably correct and sophisticated language patterns are the core of linguistic competence, especially in English, where the "rules" of grammar are less than perfectly consistent, and usages vary greatly because of the uniquely rich multilingual origins of the English language. Vocabulary, of course, is critical—but even more vital than knowing a lot of words is knowing how those words naturally, correctly, even artistically fit together in phrases and clauses.

The students who write well are always the ones who possess an extensive repertoire of words, an intuitive understanding of when and how those words can be used in idioms and combinations, and an automatic sense of when they

have been used correctly or awkwardly. What enables this type of sophisticated linguistic talent is not a conscious knowledge of “rules,” but the database of language information that has been stored in the brain.

This brings us to the next question—where do students acquire their database of linguistic patterns? What is the main source of language in children’s lives?

Although it certainly varies from family to family, for most of the children in this country today the top two sources of linguistic input would likely be the media (TV, radio, Internet, billboards, magazines, and newspapers), and peers (children of approximately the same age). Sadly, as is obvious to any intelligent observer of our culture, neither media nor peers are likely to be a consistent source of what children most need: reliably correct and sophisticated language patterns. Other sources of language in children’s lives would be adults—primarily parents and teachers (most of whom are very busy and find that even their communication with children often leans more toward the expedient than toward the sophisticated), and lastly the books that children read or that adults read out loud to them.

Much can be said about why children need to be read to aloud—in much larger quantity than they usually get, even—or especially after they reach an age of being able to read by themselves. However, there is another vital but oft-neglected source of powerful and sophisticated linguistic patterning available to children: memorized language, especially memorized poetry.

For more on language development, watch or listen to “Nurturing Competent Communicators.” The DVD is included with the audio CDs, and the MP3 is available as a download with this book. See the blue page at the front of this book for download instructions.

“Last weekend my husband watched “Nurturing Competent Communicators” with me. After watching the DVD, he said to me, “I missed so much when I was a kid, but our children won’t.”

Garrell in Texas

“We started the new poetry program this week and have covered the first two poems. Since Celery was written by Ogden Nash, I decided to read some other poems by Nash.

Now my children (ages 5–17) are running around repeating those poems over and over. The next thing I know they will be demonstrating reliably correct and sophisticated language patterns! What’s a mother to do?!?”

Suzanne in Oklahoma

# Why Memorization?

Memorized (or “by heart”) language was a mainstay of education for almost all of recorded history until about sixty years ago, when misguided educationists began to promulgate the idea that memorization, along with other types of “rote” learning, was harmful to children’s creativity, understanding, and enjoyment of learning. Perhaps one of the most damaging doctrines ever to invade teachers’ colleges, the concept that memorization was at best unnecessary and at worst downright harmful is now handicapping a third generation of students, who, because of the sad state of the popular media, are most in need of the linguistic foundation that memorization provides.

*The concept that memorization was at best unnecessary and at worst downright harmful is now handicapping a third generation of students.*

It is not uncommon to meet a young teacher or parent who has never even heard of the idea of having children memorize poems or speeches. If they didn’t do it as a child, and no one has taught them it would be possible (let alone beneficial), it wouldn’t necessarily occur to them. And yet the cultural, neurological, and linguistic value of memorized language is indisputable.

Young children will naturally memorize language patterns from their cultural environment. If teachers and parents don’t provide high quality models, kids will automatically internalize and memorize random stuff from their environment—mainly TV advertisements and songs on the radio, most of which we would not find to be “reliably correct and sophisticated.” A child’s instinctive desire to memorize is intrinsic to language acquisition, yet for the most part we ignore it or allow it to happen so haphazardly that we miss out on one of the greatest opportunities to build sophisticated language patterns.

Poetry has long served a critical role in the transmission of culture, as it tends to convey the “rhyme and reason” of life in a concentrated and memorable form. But if we don’t provide the content and opportunity for organized memorization, kids will let popular culture be their teacher. In other words, if we don’t provide them with Belloc, Stevenson, and Rossetti, they’ll memorize McDonald’s commercials and Justin Bieber lyrics. Memorization is not only natural for young children; it is culturally powerful and educationally essential.

## The science of memorization

Neurologically, memorization develops the brain in a way nothing else can. Neurons make connections through frequency, intensity, and duration of stimulation.\* When children memorize (and maintain the ability to recite) interesting poems, all three of these variables are involved in a powerful way, strengthening the network of neural connections that build the foundation of raw intelligence. In short, the more neurons we have connected to other neurons, the more “RAM” we have in the CPU of our brains, and the rigor of memorization

\* *How To Multiply Your Baby's Intelligence* by Glenn and Janet Doman (Philadelphia: Gentle Revolution Press, 2001)

is a powerful tool in this process.\* Not only is organized memorization important for neurological growth, it also builds a mental discipline that will carry over into other academic areas.

Many of us may know one or more poems, rhymes, or songs from childhood, and we often take some measure of pride or pleasure in being able to recite them to this day. Frequently, the sense of accomplishment that accompanies the memorization of poetry builds linguistic and even academic confidence and spills over into other areas. Like performing a piece of music, memorization and artistic recitation of poetry requires a certain level of perfection, which only conscientious effort and consistency can bring. If a student memorizes a long poem and can recite it flawlessly, he will believe that he can learn anything, be it math processes or facts from history. “By heart” learning not only strengthens the mind; it also strengthens the heart and spirit of the child.

Like any skill, memorization gets easier with practice. Again, as with music, one’s first efforts to exactly remember every word in a poem may seem labored and difficult, but as the number of memorized poems increases, so does the ease of mastering new ones. The neural network that stores language grows, and as it does, so does the speed with which new networks of brain cells can be developed and integrated. Retention is also critical. If memorized material is not regularly reviewed and strengthened, it will be lost, and the original neural connections will begin to dissipate.

Therefore, critical to the development of any skill, especially memorization, is the all-important maintenance plan to assure that what one has worked so hard to attain is not lost by attrition. The more you have learned, the easier it is to learn more. The implications of this fact stretch far beyond the value of just knowing a few dozen poems, but indicate that memory in general can be improved from exercise—just like muscles.

It is sad but true: Memorization in schools has for the most part been left by the wayside, thought to be at best unnecessary and at worst harmful. So we now see a third generation of children who will likely be deprived of the many advantages of memorization—not just the neurological ones, but the benefits to heart and mind as well. Whereas students of yesteryear had the common experience of committing to memory a wide range of sophisticated poetry, prose, scripture, and great speeches, children of today often lack exposure to the most common nursery rhymes. Society will not likely notice the serious consequences of this omission until it is too late. Popular culture will continue to dictate the drivel that provides the linguistic and intellectual patterning for a generation, and we will wonder why the schools failed to produce a majority of people who can think and communicate well enough to sustain a free republic.

\* It is notable that of those who score highest on standardized tests like the SAT, a large number are music and drama students. Although this may be because smart kids are attracted to music and drama, it is much more likely due to the fact that music and drama help to create intelligence; both disciplines require large quantities of memorized repertoire.

# Why Poetry?

Acknowledging that memorization in general—and memorization of sophisticated language in particular—is a good thing, we must next ask: What should be memorized?

Rote learning and recitation of sacred texts has always been a fundamental part of religious education in all major religions from ancient times to the present day, and certainly parents and teachers who raise children to learn large chunks of scripture by heart are persuaded of its spiritual value. Clearly, memorization of classics served as the educational backbone for such thinkers as Aristotle, Saul of Tarsus, Augustine, Thomas Paine, and even more modern authors such as Gene Stratton-Porter and J.R.R. Tolkien. However, poetry has always held a unique position within scripture, classics, and literature for several reasons. Poetry is generally enjoyable, poetry can usually be remembered easily, and good poetry is concentrated—rich in meaning, sophisticated in vocabulary, and solid in structure.

Young children are naturally drawn to humorous, silly, interesting, or unusual things, and many wonderful poems have been written specifically to appeal to children—for good reason. Poets like Hilaire Belloc and Robert Louis Stevenson in the past, or Shel Silverstein and Jack Prelutsky in the present time, have all known how important it is to capture the child's interest in poetry at a young age, thereby preparing them to appreciate more serious and meaningful poems in later years. If children grow up laughing and loving poems, they are much more likely to mature into adults who can pursue and enjoy the classics. When exposure to poetry is limited, or early experience of poetry tedious, students will be unlikely to later benefit from the deeper historical, philosophical, or religious works. The *Psalms*, The *Bhagavad-Gita*, *The Odyssey*, and the sonnets of Shakespeare are all poetry in their own right (and even more so in their respective languages), but people won't appreciate their richness without appropriate orientation and experience. John Senior explained how children must read the “thousand good books” so that as adults they can appreciate the hundred Great Books.\* Similarly children need broad experience with funny, enjoyable, and dramatic poems so that they can later plumb the minds and hearts of the masters.

*If children grow up laughing  
and loving poems, they are  
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into adults who can pursue and  
enjoy the classics.*

\* *The Restoration of  
Christian Culture* by John  
Senior (San Francisco:  
Ignatius Press, 1983)

## Rhyme and rhythm

Poems by their very nature are easier to remember than prose. This is fortunate. Like songs, the rhyming and rhythmic patterns intrinsic to English poetry create a “predictable-ness” that aids and speeds memorization. Nursery rhymes exist for a reason. As children internalize those simple patterns, they are preparing for the next level of sophistication. Additionally, rhyming words help build phonetic awareness which strengthens spelling and pronunciation: *Jill/hill* and *down/crown*

are simple examples. English rhymes, possible in part because of the vastness of our vocabulary, are pleasant to the ear and to the heart. Alliteration or assonance will accentuate a statement. A solid meter is musical and engaging. Generally, we respond with joy to poetic technique simply because it is artistic, reflecting a higher intelligence, and we are drawn naturally and easily to remember it. Poems are perfect for memorization.

Because poets need to conform to their chosen rhythm and rhyme, they often need to use sophisticated words and grammatical patterns above our normal exposure or conversational usage. This is linguistic gold. By hearing—and better still by memorizing—a variety of poems, we have access to a richness of vocabulary and syntax we might never master in any other way. Again, think of the simple nursery rhyme:

*Jack and Jill went up the hill  
to fetch a pail of water.  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
and Jill came tumbling after.*

The language here, although seemingly simple, gives a young child some very sophisticated elements to work with. While the first sentence contains two prepositional phrases, the second is not only a compound sentence, but also contains dual verbs. The words *fetch*, *crown*, and *tumbling* are probably beyond the normal conversational level of the young children who would learn the rhyme, but by learning it they would acquire at least familiarity—if not fluency—with those words. They will also learn (long before they'll hear it) that the rule “never end a sentence in a preposition” isn't really true.

*Poems are almost always high  
quality language—even the  
simple, fun ones.*

Find any good poem and evaluate it for vocabulary and grammatical structure; you'll quickly see that poems are almost always high quality language—even the simple, fun ones. When selecting poems for students to memorize, try to choose those that will provide correct and sophisticated linguistic patterns for the child. (But don't be overly picky about it—kids are flexible enough to survive the occasional run-on, fragment, or made-up word.) Memorizing poetry builds effective linguistic aptitude.

## Concentrated thought

Finally, most poems have richness of meaning; they are concentrated thought. Even simple limericks can give opportunity for questions and reflections. Quality humor requires intelligence. Poems that tell a story often have an unexpected twist or embedded moral, while poems that play with words also play with ideas. Emotional poems can help us understand our own complexity of feelings.



We have an English idiom: It has no rhyme or reason. The two are intertwined towards truth; we trust the beauty of the rhyme as we trust the logic of the reason. As old as language itself, poetry is a powerful tool for communication. Many teachers who value poetry get excited about giving youngsters the opportunity to write poems, yet the children often lack the breadth of experience needed to do much with it. However, by memorizing poetry children build up a repertoire not only of vocabulary and grammar, but also of poetical ideas—the stuff from which future poems will be crafted. To focus on writing poetry without memorizing it as well is the equivalent of trying to teach musical composition without having the students learn to perform any classic pieces. The results simply won't be as good.

Memorization is the most complete form of internalization, and the best way to intimately know something is to know it so well you can communicate it effectively, fluently, even artistically to another. For depth of feeling, meaning, and beauty, poetry is powerful.

Although memorizing scripture and other forms of prose is certainly admirable, poetry holds a few distinct advantages. Not only is it fun, poetry is easy to learn and leads children to a greater depth of thought and word. Most significantly, it promotes fluency with a wide variety of vocabulary and grammatical patterns, something that cannot easily be extracted from daily conversations, from exposure to popular media, or even from books that children read by themselves. Poetry has always been a civilizing influence in society—from Ancient Greece and Israel, to Feudal Japan, to Victorian England. Poetry is the apex of literature and thus the crystallized thought of the human race. By internalizing the best of poetry, we preserve and nurture the best of ourselves.

The arts of language are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learn more about each one in the following talks:

- On Listening
- On Speaking
- On Reading
- On Writing

See the blue page in front of this book for download instructions.

“*The poetry has been such a blessing to us! My boys are 8 and 10. The morning I announced that we were going to memorize poetry their eyes rolled back in their heads. Then I read “Ooey Gooley” with all the emotion I could muster. They pealed with laughter, memorized the poem, and made parodies of it ALL day, e.g., “Ooey Gooley was a bug . . . the windshield he did not see.”*

*We find times that the perfect poem comes to us in some other context. I'll never forget the day we were in a hardware store. There was a display of stuffed (realistic) birds. My eight-year-old picked up a California Condor, flapped its wings as he walked about the store, and in his best gravelly voice recited “The Vulture” by Hilaire Belloc.*

*I am so glad I discovered this while my boys are young. They will grow into better men with this education. Everyday I am more convinced that Andrew is so right about reading out loud and mastery memorization.*

*What an incredible blessing.*

*Kathleen in Illinois*

# Mastery Learning—What is it?

Mastery learning means just that—learning for complete mastery. In the case of memorization, it means knowing every word and its correct place, and being able to recite it with excellent fluency, speed, pronunciation, and inflection. How then does one coach a child toward such perfection? The best example of how this has been done in the past can be seen in the phenomenal results of the Suzuki Method™.

Also known as Talent Education or Ability Development, Dr. Shinichi Suzuki's original method was called the “Mother Tongue Method of Education” and was based on his observations about how children learn their native language. Suzuki realized that children as young as six or seven years were able to learn to speak a language easily and fluently, but that adults studying a foreign language could seldom reach such a high level of ability even after ten or twenty years of study.

He concluded that not only do children have an amazing aptitude for learning anything, but also that the way they best learn is very different than what takes place in traditional education. By observing how children acquire fluency in their mother tongue, he identified the following four principles, or pillars:

## Talent Education Pillars

1. the earliest period
2. the best teacher
3. the best environment
4. the best method of learning

*Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki (Tokyo: Suzuki Method International, 1986)

## Pillar 1: The Earliest Period

Suzuki noted that children begin learning their native language from the earliest possible age; before birth they begin hearing their mother speak. From birth onward they are hearing, trying to understand, and attempting to imitate the language in their environment. He proposed that the young child absorbs language most easily, which concurs with the observations of Maria Montessori,\* Glen Doman, and many others. Additionally, Suzuki noticed that young children are able to acquire a nuance of expression in dialect that adults are never able to achieve—no matter how many decades of study and practice. He therefore proposed that whatever you want to teach—be it language, music, art, or mathematics—the younger the child is when instruction begins, the more effective the instruction will be.

\* *The Absorbent Mind* by Maria Montessori (NY: Owl Books, 1995)

Until Suzuki began demonstrating his amazing results with children as young as three and four years old, music educators generally held that it was best to wait until the child was mature enough to show some potential talent before investing time and money in music lessons. Suzuki claimed and later proved that “talent” is not only inborn, but that every child has a sprout of talent which can be nurtured from the youngest possible age if the proper methods are used.

## Pillar 2: The Best Teacher

Who teaches children to speak? They don't go to school (and certainly don't have to take any multiple-choice tests) to learn their native tongue; they learn it



one-on-one, most often from their mother. Mothers are superbly well qualified to teach their children to speak their language, as they know what they are teaching, and they have time, patience, and love. Dr. Suzuki realized that when mothers are involved, education is at its best, even going so far as to state, “A nation’s prosperity depends on women’s strength.”\*

\* *Young Children’s Talent Education & Its Method* by Shinichi Suzuki (New York: Birch Tree Group, 1999)

The Suzuki Method of music instruction requires a parent to learn all about playing the violin (or cello or piano, etc.) and become the “home teacher,” guiding the child’s practice each day according to the instructions of the music teacher. Educators today still know that results are better when parents are involved, and homeschooling families have found that in most cases they can easily teach children the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic in a fraction of the time required in a typical classroom setting.

### **Pillar 3: The Best Environment**

Environment is critical. Anyone who has tried to learn a foreign language as an adult is well aware how much easier it is to gain fluency when living in the country or with people who speak it. The classroom/textbook approach to learning a foreign language is notably ineffective, as can be seen by the millions of adults who have “taken” Spanish or French in high school but couldn’t carry on a conversation with a five-year-old native speaker. Suzuki saw how the environment of children was saturated with language—auditory, visual, even kinesthetic—and determined that creating an intensely musical environment was requisite for effective music education. Thus he promoted the use of recordings, so that children could listen every day to the music they were going to be learning to play.

Although some traditional music educators considered this to be “cheating” (claiming that students shouldn’t hear the melody before figuring it out from the printed notes), Suzuki knew that young children of three or four years old wouldn’t be able to read notes for some time, and that to reach a high level of ability, starting young and saturating the environment with music by way of recordings was essential. Now the results are in—Suzuki’s methods have produced all the top musicians in the world; the traditionalists are light-years behind. True ability development requires an environment where the student can be deeply immersed in what he is learning.

### **Pillar 4: The Best Method of Learning**

The fourth pillar of Talent Education, and perhaps most significant for us, is a correct understanding of the method of skill acquisition since it is so very different from what most of us experienced in our schooling. Suzuki modeled his pedagogy after the way children gain their language ability—one word at a

time, while never ceasing to practice and use the words they've learned so far. When children begin to talk, they will begin with one word—usually “mama,” and then use that word constantly, even incessantly for everything they want, until using that word has become very easy. That may take days or weeks, but when using that one word has become easy, they will add another word and then use those two words—constantly—until using two words has become easy. That may take days or weeks, but when both of those words can be used easily, fluently, effortlessly, the child will add another, and when using three words is easy they add a fourth, etc., but never stopping the use of the words they have acquired so far. This process continues naturally until by the age of six or seven, an average child has a vocabulary of many thousands of words, which can be combined into phrases, clauses, and sentences, and they do so effortlessly, easily, fluently—to a degree that no one else can do it.

Suzuki applied this system to music education, and it is particularly needed in the arts, but the truth of the basic concept is what allows mastery learning in any area of study. We don't, however, truly realize the brilliance of the method until we juxtapose it against our standard textbook-style approach, or what one might call the “non-ability development” method of education.

## How modern learning fails to teach

In a typical school setting, subjects such as history, science, and grammar are generally divided into units and chapters, sections and lists, presented to the students by way of text and lecture/discussion, possibly enhanced with an occasional written paper or project, and finally testing. Once the unit is complete, the curriculum moves on, seldom addressing that chapter's content again (although in high school and college courses, there may be a midterm or final exam) and it is sooner or later forgotten, until it comes again with the next round of history or science or grammar years later. You probably remember the “chapter test” and how you could cram for that quiz by holding a few dozen miscellaneous facts in your head for a short time—long enough to pass the test—and then safely forget most of it. Overall, retention was poor; lasting benefit was minimal. Unless those bits of information were amazingly interesting to you, there simply wasn't enough frequency, intensity, or duration to allow for permanent retention.

This can be painfully apparent to parents on a daily basis, as evidenced by a child's response to the question, “What did you do in school today?” to which they answer, “Nothing” or “I don't know.” This also becomes very clear at the end of the year when the only thing they remember from seventh grade is the very last chapter of the textbook or the last unit done in science. Typical spelling tests as we may have experienced them are another stunning example of non-ability development education; you get the list on Monday, the pre-test on Wednesday

To learn more about mastery education, listen to “Mastery Learning” and “Ten Thousand Times and Then Begins Understanding.” See the blue page in front of this book for download instructions.

or Thursday, the final test on Friday, and whether a student gets 100, 80, or 60 percent on the final, they get a new list on Monday. Repeat.

## Mastery learning

Mastery learning would require the student to score 100 percent, probably twice in a row, before moving on to a new list, but that would require individualized instruction, which is so very difficult in a classroom setting. Certainly there are exceptions—students who learn and remember more easily, and teachers who cleverly engage students in more effective ways of learning—but they are uncommon. Sad but true: This “non-ability development” method of education is so prevalent today that we have essentially institutionalized it in universities where courses are taken mainly for requirements, credits, and grades, and students don’t really expect to remember much after the final is passed and the semester is over.

Shinichi Suzuki proved through music education that every child can learn, and that how well they learn can be accelerated by starting at a young age, having the best environment, being coached by the best teacher, and most significantly, using the best method of skills acquisition. When children are taught by good Suzuki Method teachers, they don’t stop playing a piece of music just because they’ve memorized it and are now learning a new piece; no, they play every piece they’ve learned every day until playing it is easy, effortless, and pretty much perfect. Even then they continue to review regularly, so that they never forget a piece they’ve learned. That’s how—at the age of five or six or seven—a properly trained Suzuki student can perform—nonstop and probably without error—a dozen or more pieces for a Book One graduation recital, making it look simple, easy, and fun—an achievement few adults could even imagine. This is true ability development. This is Talent Education. This is mastery learning.

*This “non-ability development” method of education is so prevalent today that we have essentially institutionalized it in universities where courses are taken mainly for requirements, credits, and grades, and students don’t really expect to remember much after the final is passed and the semester is over.*

“My children have been memorizing poetry for years. I cannot express how enjoyable this practice has been. We started out with poetry that I could find recorded, but finding a well-read piece can be difficult. The audio recordings that come with this program are invaluable!”

Doreen

## How This Program Is Set Up

By now, you should be convinced that memorization helps to grow the brain, build mental discipline, and strengthen the spirit; that poetry is enjoyable, easy to memorize and linguistically rich; and that a high level of ability can be developed by using the Talent Education methodology. If so, you are ready to begin a long-term program to have your students memorize many dozens of poems, be able to recite them with confidence and artistry, and retain that ability for life. The primary benefits will include giving the student not only a rich database of vocabulary and sophisticated English language patterns, but also enhanced memory and intelligence, a greater appreciation for poetry, and even an increased aptitude for writing poems.

Completing this program will likely take several years, but dramatic results should become apparent in just a few months. The method is very similar to Dr. Suzuki's plan for music instruction, with poems divided into four books, or levels. Audio recordings of the poems are included to provide easy opportunity for abundant repetition, which will also allow young children to memorize poems long before they can read them. Level One begins with very short, enjoyable verses. Gradually the length and sophistication of the poems increases. Interspersed throughout all the levels are occasional short selections, so as to give the students a break from too many long ones in a row.

It is recommended that all students, regardless of age, begin with Level One and proceed through the levels in order. If older students balk at learning some of the simpler or sillier poems, point out to them that such poems will be very handy for entertaining young children they may come across when babysitting, at family gatherings, community events, etc. They may already be teaching younger kids in some capacity, and certainly many will become parents.

Poems in this program were chosen with several criteria: humor and enjoyment, vocabulary and linguistic quality, classic and cultural literacy, character and message. However, if you disapprove of one or more of these selections, you are certainly welcome to replace them with other poems of your own choosing.

Although this compilation contains no distinctly religious content (and is therefore acceptable for purchase and use by public school programs), individual parents or teachers may wish to supplement this compendium with poetry or prose from scriptural or sacred sources of their choice. To that end, we have included space for a few Personal Selections at the end of each level. This personal selection requirement will also encourage children in the same family or classroom to individualize the program by choosing a few poems that they especially like.

### Talent Education Pillars

1. the earliest period
2. the best teacher
3. the best environment
4. the best method of learning

*Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki (Tokyo: Suzuki Method International, 1986)

*It is recommended that all students, regardless of age, begin with Level One and proceed through the levels in order.*

# How to Teach the Program

The basic principle is this: Teacher and students recite together one poem several times a day.

- Begin with Level One.
- Download the Student Book and provide a copy of the poem for the student to follow.
- Use the audio CDs to recite the poem together.
- Recite the title and author followed by the poem.
- Practice the poem every day.
- Multi-stanza poems may be learned in sections, with one stanza solidly learned before adding another.
- Repeat the recitation every school day until the poem can be recited correctly, easily, and without hesitation.

Instructions to download the Student Book are located on the blue page in the front of this book.

All students should begin in Level One. Older students will likely find the poems easy to memorize, and the practice will prepare them for the longer and more difficult poems in the levels to come.

Students may move through this program at their own individual pace, or a teacher may decide to work on one new poem each week, providing additional time for longer poems. The key is to practice memorizing the poem several times each day until the poem is memorized.

When beginning with older students, you might need to gain their trust by letting them choose their first poem or two. Once they are hooked, you can systematically work through the levels.

The twentieth poem in each level is meant to be a personal choice of the student or the teacher. Several suggestions are offered, but the choice ensures that students may add to their repertoire poems that are meaningful to them. As students progress through the level, invite them to choose what poem they will work on at the end of the level.

## Discussion and teaching moments

Some of the poems in this collection may contain words or idiomatic expressions unfamiliar to students. A good teacher will seize the opportunity to explore these words and meanings. Don't assume students have a certain level of understanding; constantly check for comprehension, and take whatever time is necessary to ensure that students get full value and benefit from the words they are memorizing.

Additionally, you may find terms or statements of social, scientific, or historical significance. Use the poem as a starting point for additional study. For your convenience, lesson enhancement suggestions to integrate other subjects into the

poetry are provided in Appendix 3 which begins on page 167. These suggestions are optional, so do not feel obligated to use them.

Since it is also beneficial for students to have some information about the poets whose names they hear and recite, short biographical statements about the authors have been included in Appendix 1 on pages 151-161. Share this information with them as is appropriate to their age and interest, and do more research together as opportunities arise.

### **Practice makes permanent.**

When the first poem in Level One is mastered, the second poem is introduced and practiced together several times each day. However, the first poem should not be forgotten; it should also be said at least once each day.

When the first two can be easily recited, a third is introduced and practiced, while the first two continue to be recited, and so on. This is the Every Poem Every Day method of practice so that by the end of Level One, the student is reciting every poem they've learned, every day.

### **Level One graduation party**

When the student has learned all the poems and is prepared, a Level One graduation party can be scheduled, where family and close friends gather and listen as the student recites, clearly and correctly, all twenty poems of Level One. This event should be accompanied by the presentation of a certificate (and a small party of sorts—perhaps with popcorn and a movie).

It is very possible that when children memorize and recite poems on a regular basis, they may from time to time fall into a “mechanical” or seemingly inappropriate attitude about recitation—either by speaking very fast, getting silly, or simply trying to rush through the poems. This is really not a problem. The goal is to maintain the memorized repertoire; a dramatic recitation each time is not expected. During a graduation event, however, the poems should be “performed” with sufficient volume, clarity, locution, and feeling as possible, and students will likely be inclined to practice in preparation for this.

To manage the poetry in a classroom, the entire class can move through the poetry at the strongest student's pace, but the practice and recitation can be individualized using the checklists. Thus, each student can master the list at an attainable pace.

### **Levels Two through Four**

After completing Level One, the student progresses to Level Two and begins to learn the next twenty poems. However, the Level One poems learned must not be forgotten, so the student continues to recite them according to the Every Other Poem Every Other Day schedule while using the Every Poem Every Day schedule for the Level Two poems as they are learned.



When ready, the student may do a Level Two graduation recitation and party, at which point he begins to learn the poems in Level Three. Level One poems are then reviewed less often while the Level Two poems go on the Every Poem Every Other Day schedule. This sounds more confusing than it is, but recitation lists are provided to help you and your students stay organized.

By following this method and regularly reciting all the poems in Levels One through Four, students will very likely have achieved a level of frequency, intensity, and duration that will give them lifelong retention of all eighty poems—a gift for which they will always be grateful. At some point in the sequence, you may determine to cut back on the review, but you should be certain to provide enough opportunity for recitation of learned poems to maintain the repertoire.

## Level Five speeches

When students have mastered the eighty poems in this book, they may move onto the Level Five speeches. The stamina that students have developed memorizing poetry should make the memorization of prose much easier.

Because the speeches are longer, plan to spend more time in their memorization, working on portions at a time. Studying the context and author of each speech will add to its value.

## Won't all this practice take too long?

Although memorizing and reciting daily so many poems may at first seem like a daunting project that will require large amounts of time, consider a few points:

- Given the huge benefits of memorizing poetry, it may well be one of the best uses of your available school hours.
- Recitation of memorized poems can easily be done away from a desk—perhaps in the car, while cooking or folding clothes, or during a walk.
- Memorizing new poems gets easier in direct proportion to the number of poems already memorized; in other words the more you have learned, the faster you can learn more.
- The CD recordings will help you use repetition, so students can memorize poems more quickly and accurately; you don't have to do it all yourself.

## You can do this!

Although it may seem like a huge undertaking, give this system a try, and read the introduction to this book as often as needed to be reminded of the importance of memorizing poetry.

I firmly believe that our task of raising leaders, competent communicators who are empowered to speak the truth and speak it well, is an undertaking of monumental importance. Doing our best as parents and teachers, we can perhaps raise up such a generation; let us work together.

Keep in touch. Let us know how it is going—any joys, frustrations, confusions, or problems you may have with this program. To assist you as you strive to prepare your children to write and speak powerfully, our forums are provided, so you can connect with like-minded parents and teachers along with our staff. May your efforts be blessed and multiplied.

Join the IEW forums at  
[IEW.com/forum](http://IEW.com/forum).

“*When I purchased the poetry memorization program for my fourteen year old son, I knew I would have to sell him on the idea. I handed him the book and suggested that he choose any poem in the volume to memorize. He chose “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” After learning that poem he was hooked.*

*After learning most of the poems in Level One, my son had the task of entertaining a group of children in our 4-H Club. He recited all the funny poems that he knew, and the kids loved it. All this poetry was really paying off!*

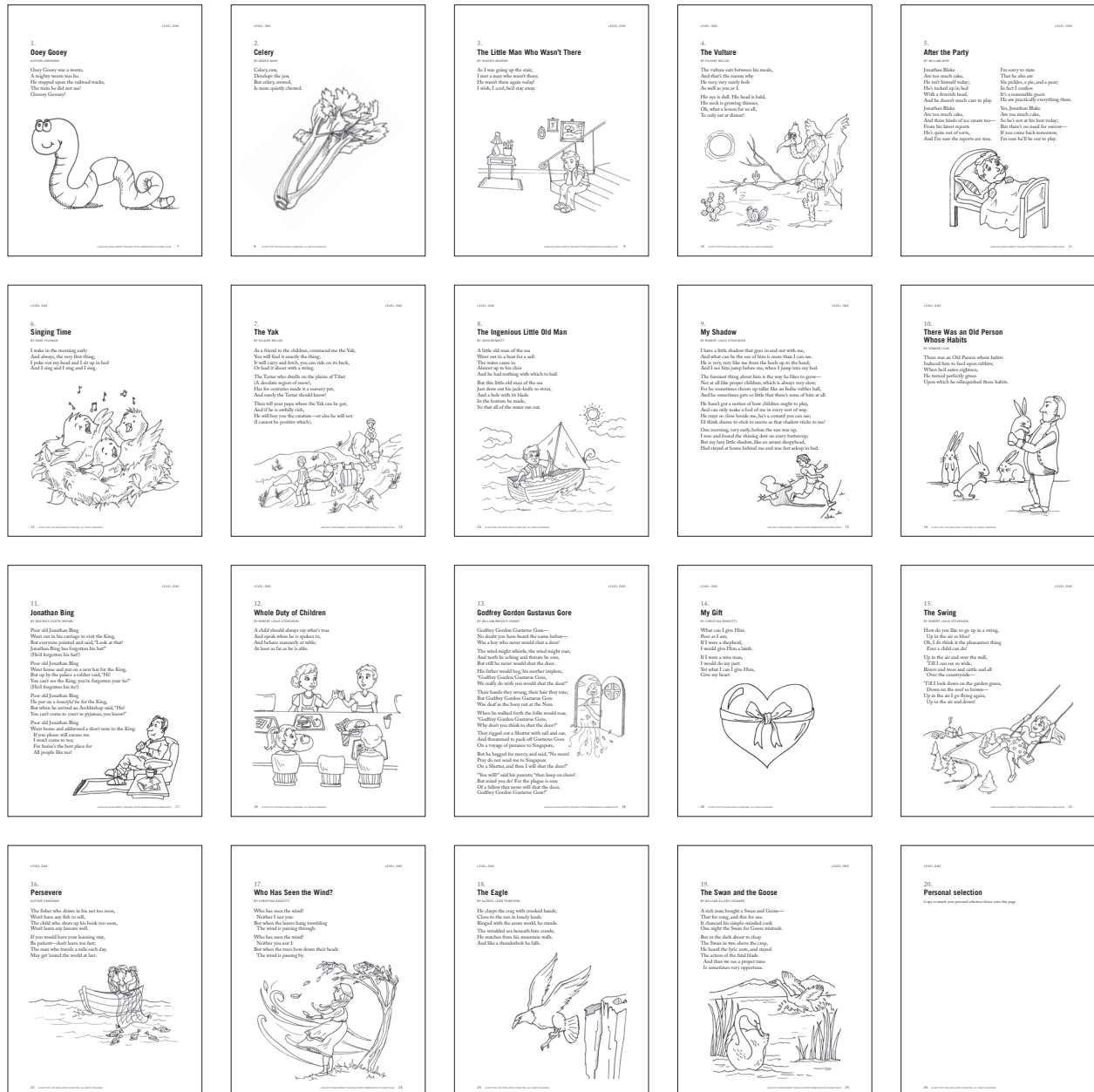
*He is now an adult and still references the poems that he learned so long ago. In addition to developing strong linguistic patterns, the poems have given him insight into human nature.*

*Now I recommend this program to all of my friends. It is one of the best investments you can make for your kids.*

*Denise in Virginia*



# Level One



# Poems

- |  |    |  |
|--|----|--|
| 1. <b>Ooey Goey</b> author unknown                         | 25 | The reproducible student pages pictured on the facing page are provided in the downloadable Student Book. See the blue page at the front of this book for download instructions. |
| 2. <b>Celery</b> by Ogden Nash                             | 25 |  |
| 3. <b>The Little Man Who Wasn't There</b> by Hughes Mearns | 26 |  |
| 4. <b>The Vulture</b> by Hilaire Belloc                    | 26 |  |
| 5. <b>After the Party</b> by William Wise                  | 27 |  |

## LEVEL ONE

### LEVEL ONE

## Getting Started with Level One

1. Begin with the first poem, "Ooey Gooley."
2. Highlight the poem in the list below.
3. Practice daily. Use the audio recording to help you.
4. Continue to memorize the poetry in the list, poem by poem. Work at your own pace.
5. Every day, recite all the poems you have learned. That is what the highlighting is for: Recite the highlighted poems daily. Use the recording to help you.
6. Record your progress on the chart below. A check for the day means that you recited all the poems that you have highlighted.

Practice all the poems learned every day.

Recite the name and author with the poem.

Break longer poems into sections and memorize one section at a time.

If you miss a day, do not try to do double the work. Just pick it up where you left off, and determine to be faithful to the task.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 <b>Ooey Gooley</b> author unknown                           | 13 <b>Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore</b> by William Brighty Rands |
| 2 <b>Celery</b> by Ogden Nash                                 | 14 <b>My Gift</b> by Christina Rossetti                         |
| 3 <b>The Little Man Who Wasn't There</b> by Hughes Mearns     | 15 <b>The Swing</b> by Robert Louis Stevenson                   |
| 4 <b>The Vulture</b> by Hilaire Belloc                        | 16 <b>Persevere</b> author unknown                              |
| 5 <b>After the Party</b> by William Wise                      | 17 <b>Who Has Seen the Wind?</b> by Christina Rossetti          |
| 6 <b>Singing Time</b> by Rose Fyleman                         | 18 <b>The Eagle</b> by Alfred, Lord Tennyson                    |
| 7 <b>The Yak</b> by Hilaire Belloc                            | 19 <b>The Swan and the Goose</b> by William Ellery Leonard      |
| 8 <b>The Ingenious Little Old Man</b> by John Bennett         | 20 <b>Personal selection</b> (8 lines or shorter):              |
| 9 <b>My Shadow</b> by Robert Louis Stevenson                  |   |
| 10 <b>There Was an Old Person Whose Habits</b> by Edward Lear |   |
| 11 <b>Jonathan Bing</b> by Beatrice Curtis Brown              |   |
| 12 <b>Whole Duty of Children</b> by Robert Louis Stevenson    |   |

Below, check off the day when you have recited all of the poems you have learned to date.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Aug																															
Sep																															
Oct																															
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Jan																															
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May																															
Jun																															
Jul																															

This page is included in the Student Book. Have students use the list and the calendar to chart their progress through Level One.

To help students remember which poems to practice, have them highlight each poem they are working on. Each day they should practice all of the highlighted poems.

Using the audio CDs is helpful since students can recite along with the audio and also listen to the poems while in the car or eating lunch.

Whatever you do, keep the program light and fun. If your students are struggling to keep up, then modify how you are using the program so that it will continue to be a joy.

1.

## Ooey Gooley

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Ooey Gooley was a worm,  
A mighty worm was he.  
He stepped upon the railroad tracks,  
The train he did not see!  
Oooey Gooey!

See Appendix 3 for optional lesson enhancements for each of the poems.

Several versions of “Ooey Gooley” seem to be floating around, and even the spelling of the title is in question. I have chosen the one I like most, but don’t be surprised if you come across variations.

2.

## Celery

BY OGDEN NASH

Celery, raw,  
Develops the jaw,  
But celery, stewed,  
Is more quietly chewed.

For your convenience, poet biographies are located in Appendix 1.

3.

## The Little Man Who Wasn't There

BY HUGHES MEARNS

As I was going up the stair,  
I met a man who wasn't there;  
He wasn't there again today!  
I wish, I *wish*, he'd stay away.

4.

## The Vulture

BY HILAIRE BELLOC

The vulture eats between his meals,  
And that's the reason why  
He very, very rarely feels  
As well as you or I.

His eye is dull. His head is bald,  
His neck is growing thinner,  
Oh, what a lesson for us all,  
To only eat at dinner!

## 5.

**After the Party**

BY WILLIAM WISE

Jonathan Blake  
Ate too much cake,  
He isn't himself today;  
He's tucked up in bed  
With a feverish head,  
And he doesn't much care to play.

Jonathan Blake  
Ate too much cake,  
And three kinds of ice cream too—  
From his latest reports  
He's quite out of sorts,  
And I'm sure the reports are true.

I'm sorry to state  
That he also ate  
Six pickles, a pie, and a pear;  
In fact I confess  
It's a reasonable guess  
He ate practically everything there.

Yes, Jonathan Blake  
Ate too much cake,  
So he's not at his best today;  
But there's no need for sorrow—  
If you come back tomorrow,  
I'm sure he'll be out to play.





# **Appendix 1**

## **BIOGRAPHIES**



## A

Growing up in New England surrounded by her father's peers—among whom were Hawthorne, Emerson, and Thoreau—the prodigious author **Louisa May Alcott** (1832–1888) wrote books, plays, poems, and short stories. Her outstanding novels wove charming tales about families like her own. Her greatest books, *Little Women*, *Little Men*, and *Jo's Boys*, are considered classics of American Literature.

► *A Song from the Suds*, page 105

**Dave Arns** is achieving literary notoriety with his amusing thesaurusoetry. His recent collection *Mother Goose, Ph.D.*, was imagineered in 1987. Thesaurusoetry challenges the reader to translate intellectual, technical verbiage into what are actually familiar rhymes that have been cleverly obscured through the use of synonyms.

► *Scintillate, Scintillate, Globule Vivific*, page 69

## B

**George Linnaeus Banks** (1821–1881) was a British journalist, editor, poet, and playwright. His wife, Isabella, was also a published poet and novelist. His father was a horticulturalist, which may explain his middle name.

► *What I Live For*, page 70

**Hilaire Belloc** (1870–1953) was a prolific writer of novels, poetry, and essays; a captivating speaker, he toured the United States. Belloc, usually embroiled in controversy, held a seat in Parliament. Along with his contemporary G.K. Chesterton, he espoused moral and economic theories that denounced Socialism and favored both small farmers and businesses.

► *The Vulture*, page 26

► *The Yak*, page 28

► *Rebecca, Who Slammed Doors for Fun and Perished Miserably*, page 42

► *Matilda, Who Told Lies, and Was Burned to Death*, page 68

**William John Bennett** was born in 1943 of a middle-class family. He grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and became a scholar and a teacher, stating that heroic American men such as Abraham Lincoln and Roy Campanella were his role models.

► *The Ingenious Little Old Man*, page 29

**William Blake** (1757–1827) was artistically gifted in writing, engraving, drawing, and painting. He was born and raised in England, and he reported that his mystical writings and spiritual works of art followed from the visions he received of the angels and saints. “The Tiger” is his most famous poem.

► *The Tiger*, page 94

## APPENDIX 1: BIOGRAPHIES

Most of her publications were serious: British writer and poet **Beatrice Curtis Brown** (1901–1974) authored at least eleven books including a history of England and biographies of inspirational British women. But she could write very funny poems, too, such as “Jonathan Bing.”

‣ *Jonathan Bing*, page 31

Intriguingly reputed as a “haughty and aristocratic genius,” **George Gordon, Lord Byron** (1788–1824) is one of the most important English poets. He wrote tender love ballads like “She Walks in Beauty” as well as exciting battle poems such as “The Eve of Waterloo.” He died from a fever when he was only thirty-six after being caught in the rain while horseback riding.

‣ *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, page 80

## C

**Sir Lewis Carroll**’s real name was Charles Dodgson. Having been homeschooled in England by his mother until the age of twelve, he wrote essays, short stories, books, and poetry from his earliest adolescence and created such characters as the Mock Turtle, the Cheshire Cat, and the Jabberwocky. The heroine of his phenomenally successful book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* seems to have been named after a favorite sister. He lived from 1832 to 1898.

‣ *How Doth the Little Crocodile*, page 41

‣ *Jabberwocky*, page 45

**Guy Wetmore Carryl** (1873–1904) was an American humorist. He authored over a dozen books including novels and poetry collections. Some critics have called him flippant. The parody “The Embarrassing Episode of Little Miss Muffet” is from a larger work, *Fables for the Frivolous*.

‣ *The Embarrassing Episode of Little Miss Muffet*, page 93

‣ *The Sycophantic Fox and the Gullible Raven*, page 104

Authors George Bernard Shaw, C.S. Lewis, and T.S. Eliot were deeply influenced by **G.K. Chesterton** (1874–1936). He has been called one of the greatest writers and apologists for the Christian faith in the twentieth century. He authored some one hundred books including the classics *The Everlasting Man* and *Orthodoxy*, and also wrote poetry, the Father Brown mystery series, and humor. Chesterton observed, “A good novel tells us the truth about its hero, but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author.”

‣ *The Hunting of the Dragon*, page 111

Another English writer, **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** (1772–1834), co-authored a volume of verse with William Wordsworth. He originated the phrases, “water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink” and “an albatross around one’s neck.” He is best known for his poem “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.”

‣ *Epigram*, page 103

## D

**Walter de la Mare** (1873–1956) is remembered for his children’s literature. He first began writing seriously while working as an accountant, jotting down poems during free moments. “The Listeners” is probably his most famous poem.

► *Some One*, page 43

In this century, **John Dryden** (1631–1700) is recognized for translations of works by Virgil; he is also known for his poetry having to do with the politics of England during the Tudor monarchies and following. However, while he was alive, he achieved fame through his plays. “Grand Chorus” is the final verse of a larger work entitled “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day.”

► *Grand Chorus*, page 109

**Paul Laurence Dunbar** (1872–1906) was the son of two freed African American slaves; because they passed on their oral tradition, he was able to champion black Americans by way of his songs, fiction, and poetry. He has been called the Poet Laureate of the Negro Race, and during his lifetime Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington praised his work. Other outstanding poems include “We Wear the Mask” and “Sympathy.” In the latter, Dunbar penned the poignant words, “I know why the caged bird sings.”

► *Conscience and Remorse*, page 54

## E

**Max Ehrmann** (1872–1945) became a successful lawyer; however, he chose to write full time when he was forty. The prose-poem “Desiderata” first gained him literary acclaim; in addition to poetry he published books, essays, and pamphlets.

► *Desiderata*, page 107

**George Eliot** was the pseudonym of British author Mary Ann Evans (1819–80), who wrote the novels *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*. She used a pen name in order to guard her privacy and ensure that her work was taken seriously. Eliot is compared to Jane Austen because she attempted to expose the hypocrisy of the social class of English country squires.

► *The Choir Invisible*, page 98

**Sister Mary Eulalia, RSM**, was a Catholic nun of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Their mission is to serve the poor and needy as teachers, nurses, and in various community outreach programs. Sister Eulalia died in 1984.

► *Courage*, page 71

## F

**James T. Fields** (1817–81) was an esteemed American publisher. He helped to bring major authors such as Dickens, Tennyson, Hawthorne, and Harriet Beecher Stowe to the public. His humorous poem “The Owl Critic” is also an enjoyable piece.

- *Ballad of the Tempest*, page 50

**Robert Frost**, dubbed America’s unofficial poet laureate, was the first poet to read at a presidential inauguration, reciting his poem “The Gift Outright” at the swearing in of John F. Kennedy. He achieved critical acclaim in his own lifetime (1874–1963) and received the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry four times. Frost typically combined solitary themes with images of nature, as in two of his beloved poems “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” and “The Road Not Taken.”

- *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, page 55
- *The Road Not Taken*, page 66

As a young schoolteacher in England, **Rose Fyleman** (1877–1957) supplied her students with the original poetry she enjoyed generating. Eventually, over sixty volumes of her poetry, fiction, and plays for children were published. Fyleman studied to become an opera singer and also gave voice lessons, which explains her charming enthusiasm for music!

- *Singing Time*, page 28

## H

**Oliver Herford** (1863–1935) was a stand-up comedian who also wrote children’s poetry and illustrated and published cartoons; he came from a large family of authors and artists. His friends nicknamed him “Peter Pan” because of his innocent, quick humor. Herford described a pest as “a man who can talk like an encyclopedia and does.” Other funny poems for the young at heart include his “The Chimpanzee” and “The Hippopotamus.”

- *Metaphysics*, page 95
- *The Hen*, page 106

Amazingly, nineteenth century American essayist, poet, novelist, and medical journalist **Oliver Wendell Holmes** achieved his literary prowess while chairing the Dartmouth and Harvard Anatomy and Physiology Departments from 1838 to 1892. His prose and poetry are celebrated as witty, brilliant, youthful, and original. He also wrote “Old Ironsides” and “The Last Leaf.”

- *The Height of the Ridiculous*, page 46
- *God Save the Flag*, page 103

As a girl, **Mary Howitt** (1799–1888) was tutored at her home in England. She grew up in a loving family as evidenced by her poem entitled “The Clock is on the Stroke of Six,” in which children eagerly await their father’s arrival home from work. Howitt translated some of the stories of Hans Christian Andersen into German and co-authored several histories with her husband, William.

‣ *The Spider and the Fly*, page 47

**James Henry Leigh Hunt** (1784–1859) was a British poet, drama critic, editor, and essayist whose radical political views not only led him into camaraderie with other poet/reformers such as Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron, but also into prison. He penned the charming “Jenny Kissed Me,” and his other well-loved poem is “Abou Ben Adhem,” which according to research seems to have been memorized by countless grade school children prior to the 1960s. Enjoy!

‣ *The Glove and the Lions*, page 53

## K

“Trees” is **Alfred Joyce Kilmer**’s most famous poem. This American writer died in battle in France in 1918.

‣ *Trees*, page 49

**Benjamin Franklin King** (1857–94) is a lesser-known American poet and journalist. He was born in Michigan, raised a family in Chicago, and gave public readings. A collection of his children’s poetry can be found in *Ben King’s Verse*, 1894.

‣ *The Pessimist*, page 75

## L

**Edward Lear** (1812–88) wrote limericks, you say? Nonsense!

‣ *There Was an Old Person Whose Habits*, page 30

‣ *A Young Lady Named Bright*, page 65

American author **William Ellery Leonard** (1876–1944) wrote many books, an autobiography, and several poetry collections. His translations of the epic poems *Beowulf* and *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*) by Roman philosopher Lucretius (50 B.C.) are considered his noteworthy achievements.

‣ *The Swan and the Goose*, page 35

The poetry of **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** (1807–1882) enjoyed large readership in its day because of its romantic treatment of simple stories, for example, “The Village Blacksmith.” He has been called the most popular American poet of the nineteenth century. Other celebrated works are “The Song of Hiawatha” and “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere.”

‣ *A Psalm of Life*, page 65

‣ *The Village Blacksmith*, page 81

## M

When he was a boy, **John Masefield** went to sea. After he published two volumes about his watery adventures, he was nicknamed “Poet of the Sea.” In addition to poems like “Sea Fever,” he is also remembered for his fine plays and novels. Masefield was Poet Laureate of England from 1930 until his death in 1967.

► *Sea Fever*, page 52

Sitting on the back step of an ambulance, anguished Canadian doctor **John McCrae** (1872–1918) put down the words of the haunting poem “In Flanders Fields” after treating injured soldiers in Belgium during World War I. The wild poppies to which he referred blossomed on the grisly battlefields of the Western Front where no other plants would grow.

► *In Flanders Fields*, page 102

Some students of literature may find the life and works of **Hughes Mearns** (1875–1965) quite interesting. This influential American was the first educator to teach creative writing as a subject in its own right, the goal of which was to foster the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual growth of students. He penned his most famous piece “The Little Man Who Wasn’t There,” also known as “Antigonish,” when he was twenty-four.

► *The Little Man Who Wasn’t There*, page 26

One of his biographers pronounced **Herman Melville** (1819–91) the greatest imaginative writer America had produced. *Moby Dick* was his masterful whale tale.

► *The Maldivian Shark*, page 100

Another American author **George P. Morris** (1802–64) is primarily remembered as a poet. He also edited a magazine and composed hymns, such as the prayerful “Searcher of Hearts, from Mine Erase.”

► *Woodman, Spare that Tree!* page 108

## N

**Ogden Nash** (1902–71) was internationally famous as an author of extremely clever and amusing poems. Nash utilized the element of surprise, absurd plays on words, and newly invented words; persons of all ages have enjoyed his work. Despite all the silliness, however, Nash had a gift for touching upon the truths of the human experience.

► *Celery*, page 25



## R

**William Brighty Rands** (1823–82) contributed to English periodicals and published several volumes of children’s poetry. “Great, Wide, Beautiful, Wonderful World” is another of his well-known poems.

‣ *Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore*, page 32

**Grantland Rice** (1880–1954) is commonly acknowledged as the greatest American sportswriter. He coined the phrase “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game” and nicknamed the “Four Horsemen of Notre Dame.” He authored many books about sports. Often inserting his own poetry into his columns, Rice wrote “Game Called” upon the death of Babe Ruth.

‣ *Casey’s Revenge*, page 83

**Billy Rose** (1899–1966) was a famous American showman. He sang, composed, and produced lavish musical plays. Rose married the Vaudeville comedienne Fanny Brice and composed the song “It’s Only a Paper Moon.”

‣ *The Unknown Soldier*, page 74

Her father, Gabbriele Rossetti, and brother Dante, also poets, were influential in **Christina Rossetti**’s success as a writer. Because she was a devout Christian, many of her poems are religious in nature. The poem “My Gift” is a stanza from “A Christmas Carol” which was set to music. She lived from 1830 to 1894 in London.

‣ *My Gift*, page 33

‣ *Who Has Seen the Wind?* page 34

## S

Internationally acclaimed author-poet **Carl Sandburg** (1878–1967) was the son of Swedish immigrants who settled in Illinois. After a college professor encouraged Sandburg to write, he became a journalist. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his four-volume biography *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*; he won a second time for *Complete Poems*. Sandburg is beloved for his free verse and down-to-earth words about the geography and the experience of the common people of America.

‣ *Fog*, page 43

The author **Sir Walter Scott** (1771–1832) was a famous son of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he grew up learning the ancient stories of his country. He employed this oral tradition in his lengthy narrative poems such as “The Lady of the Lake” and in his novels such as *Ivanhoe*.

‣ *Lochinvar*, page 96

**William Shakespeare** is the most widely studied British writer of all time. He lived from 1564 to 1616 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. “The Bard” penned many poems, and his matchless plays include comedies, dark histories like *Richard III*, and timeless tragedies such as *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

‣ *The Quality of Mercy from The Merchant of Venice, page 101*

The famous Southern poet **Edward Rowland Sill**, better known by the pseudonym Sidney Lanier (1842–1881), grew up in Georgia. Although he was captured and confined for five months in a squalid Union Army prison, he went on to lecture at a university, author a fiction series for boys, and compose many remarkably optimistic, faith-filled poems such as “The Symphony” and his masterpiece, “Sunrise.” Coming from a long line of gifted musicians, Lanier was acclaimed as a musical genius on the flute. Unfortunately, he died at the age of thirty-nine. In a letter he wrote, “A thousand songs are singing in my heart that will certainly kill me if I do not utter them soon.”

‣ *The Fool’s Prayer, page 76*

**Robert Louis Stevenson** was a Scottish poet, novelist, and essayist who lived from 1850 to 1894. This master storyteller initially gained fame with the swashbuckling adventure *Treasure Island*. His novel of mystery and murder, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, has been adapted for the screen twenty times. However, he is equally well known for his 1885 volume of poetry for children, *A Child’s Garden of Verses*.

‣ *My Shadow, page 29*

‣ *Whole Duty of Children, page 31*

‣ *The Swing, page 33*

‣ *At the Seaside, page 41*

## T

Literary critics throughout the years have both lauded the works of **Alfred, Lord Tennyson** (1809–92) as philosophically important and decried them as sentimental and self-involved. Nevertheless, he is currently regarded as one of the great British poets. His major achievements are “In Memoriam,” “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” and “Ulysses.”

‣ *The Eagle, page 35*

‣ *The Charge of the Light Brigade, page 51*

The American author **Ernest L. Thayer** (1863–1940) was a quiet, retiring man who wrote humor columns in the *San Francisco Examiner* for his Harvard classmate William Randolph Hearst. After he created “Casey at the Bat,” he never submitted any other poem for publication.

‣ *Casey at the Bat, page 77*

## U

New York-born **Louis Untermeyer** (1885–1977) is appreciated for the writing of his own poetry as well as for the gathering of other poets' verses into valuable compendia such as *This Singing World* and *Selected Poems and Parodies*.

► *Shoes, page 52*

## W

"The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world," wrote **William Ross Wallace** (1819–81) in praise of motherhood. Although he is not much remembered today, his patriotic poems such as "The Liberty Bell" and "Last Words of Washington" were inspirational to Union soldiers during the Civil War.

► *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Is the Hand That Rules the World, page 99*

**Myra Brooks Welch**'s masterpiece was "The Touch of the Master's Hand." She is called "The Poet with the Singing Soul." Welch came from a family of musicians and was an organist until she became challenged by severe arthritis. No longer able to play, she typed out her poetry with the eraser ends of two pencils, one in each hand.

► *The Touch of the Master's Hand, page 73*

**Carolyn Wells** (1869–1942) was an American poet and anthologist. In *Such Nonsense: An Anthology*, she penned especially comical, satirical poetry.

► *An Overworked Elocutionist, page 110*

Although **Walt Whitman**'s (1819–92) poems received mixed criticism by his contemporaries, he is an honored American writer. Primarily self-taught, he became a printer's apprentice at age eleven. By age sixteen he was helping to support his family as an editor and freelance writer. The poem "Leaves of Grass" was his life's work.

► *O Captain! My Captain! page 67*

► *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer, page 82*

**Mary Fabyan Windeatt**'s biographies of saints such as Benedict, Thomas Aquinas, and Catherine of Siena are currently best sellers in the juvenile non-fiction genre. She lived from 1811 to 1873 in England. Curiously, historians have more to report about her colorful father and her husband than about the genuinely talented member of the family—writer Mary.

► *Project, page 56*

**William Wise** (1923– ), popular with children as well as fun-loving adults, is an American author of fiction and nonfiction. He authored rhyming picture books for the very young, whimsical poetry, and historical novels.

► *After the Party, page 27*

During his day American songwriter **Henry Clay Work** (1832–84) was equally as popular as fellow Civil War composer Stephen Foster. Work wrote some one hundred songs. “Grandfather’s Clock” sold almost one million copies when the sheet music was published.

► *Grandfather’s Clock, page 72*

## Y

Winner of the 1923 Nobel Prize for Literature, **William Butler Yeats** (1819–1939) is recognized as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. Irish born, he drew inspiration from the folklore of his country. He also wrote plays and was a senator and cultural leader. Two of his other famous fantasy-like poems are “The Everlasting Voices” and “When You Are Old.”

► *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven, page 79*

# **Appendix 2**

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# **Appendix 3**

## **OPTIONAL LESSON ENHANCEMENTS**



# Level One Lesson Enhancements

These optional lesson enhancements offer suggested activities that can be used to study the elements of poetry as well as integrate other subjects into the poetry memorization. The suggestions are completely optional; do not feel obligated to do them.

## 1. Ooey Gooley

**SCIENCE.** Study kinds of worms.

**WRITING.** Use the poem as a pattern. Change the worm to another animal, and substitute other verbs and adjectives. “Ooey Gooley was a fly ... the windshield wiper he did not see.” Note: Several versions of “Ooey Gooley” seem to be floating around, and even the spelling of the title is in question. I have chosen the one I like most, but don’t be surprised if you come across variations.

**CHARACTER.** Discuss how the mighty can fall.

**IRONY.** Enjoy the irony: What happened to the mighty worm? Also, ask: Can worms step? Can worms see?

## 2. Celery

**LITERATURE.** Read the story “Stone Soup” and make a batch using a stone. Find one version of the story on the poetry help page: [IEW.com/LDP-info](http://IEW.com/LDP-info).

**SCIENCE.** Compare the vegetables before and after cooking.

**NUTRITION.** Study how fiber is important to diet.

## 3. The Little Man

**POETIC ELEMENTS.** Find the rhyming words in the poem: *stair/there, today/away*. Notice the phonograms that sound the same but are spelled differently: *air/ere*.

**VOCABULARY.** Discuss imaginary friends.

**SCIENCE.** Study the architecture of stairs. There are many different kinds.

## 4. The Vulture

**POETIC ELEMENTS.** Point out that each section of the poem is called a **stanza**. This poem has two stanzas.

Figure out which words rhyme at the end of each line. Mark the words that rhyme with different letters. For example, *meals/feels* could be “A” and *why/I* could be “B.” Note the pattern: ABAB.

**SCIENCE.** Study vultures and other carrion birds.

**LITERATURE.** Enjoy a “Hank the Cowdog” story, such as *It’s a Dog’s Life* that includes the buzzards, Wallace and Junior. The series is by John R. Erickson. The recorded books are narrated by the author and include songs.

## 5. After the Party

**POETIC ELEMENTS.** Count the stanzas in this poem. (4)

Figure out which words rhyme at the end of each line. Figure out the rhyme pattern in each stanza (AABCCB), and see if each stanza follows the same pattern. (Yes!)

**LITERARY DEVICES.** Notice the **alliteration** where several words in close proximity start with the same sound: pickles, pie, pear. Alliteration adds character to the poem and makes it fun to say aloud. Create word lists of foods that start with different letters of the alphabet.

**NUTRITION.** Make a list of foods and sort them into food categories using the food pyramid.