

Guinea Pig Poetry

Objectives: Build classroom community, develop reading, writing, and listening skills. Teach responsibility through pet care and utilize our guinea pig as a muse for poetry. Address the following common core standards in writing, speaking and listening.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.5](#)

With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.6](#)

With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8](#)

Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1](#)

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 2 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.a](#)

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.b](#)

Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1.c](#)

Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2](#)

Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.3](#)

Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.4](#)

Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.5](#)

Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Time Frame:

Instruction of these lessons will be intensive at the beginning of the school year when procedures and classroom community are central themes. A classroom pet is perfect for these themes. Teaching will transition into using the subject of our beloved pet into our poetry writing that will continue throughout the school year.

Lesson 1: Introduce Hazel, the guinea pig, and teach basic care and handling by reading aloud from the book [How To Look After Your Guinea Pig: A practical guide to caring for your pet, in step-by-step photographs](#) by David **Alderton**

and outline procedures for keeping a guinea pig in the classroom using the chart below (image 1) . Discuss the role of Hazel in our classroom community. Ask the questions “Why is Hazel important?” Create a word splash using the student’s language.

Lesson 2: Utilizing a classroom discussion complete the sections of the KWL (image 2) chart labeled: KNOW and WHAT TO KNOW using student language. Next, distribute library books on pet care, small pets and guinea pigs to encourage independent research of guinea pigs. Finally, have students complete the LEARNED section of the chart in small groups referencing their research.

Lesson 3: Prior to the lesson allow time for each student to care for Hazel and hold and pet her. Once everyone has had the opportunity to get to know her review the KWL chart created in lesson two. Define an adjective by displaying the adjective chart shown (image 3). Create a word splash of adjectives that describe Hazel using student language.

Lesson 4: Begin learning poetry by reading poems about animals utilizing the following books: [Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky](#) by Georgia Heard, [Animal Ark: Celebrating our Wild World in Poetry and Pictures](#) by [Kwame Alexander](#) and [Animal Poems](#) by [Valerie Worth](#). Pause during readings to discuss vocabulary, interpret meaning, find connections, and clarify points.

Lesson 5: Provide each student with an outline of a guinea pig to create a concrete poem which utilizes a shape to be filled with words that describe the image. Provide the adjective chart created in lesson 3. Allow students to work independently before sharing with the class and displaying student work near Hazel’s cage.

Lesson 5: Provide each student with a sheet of paper with Hazel’s name written vertically (as shown in image 5) and ask each child to write an acrostic poem about Hazel. Provide the adjective chart created in lesson 3. Allow students to work independently before sharing with the class. Encourage students to illustrate before sharing and displaying student work near Hazel’s cage.

Lesson 6: Provide each student with a sheet of paper that includes a brief introduction to free verse poetry and ask each child to write a free verse poem about Hazel. Provide the adjective

chart created in lesson 3. Allow students to work independently before sharing with the class. Encourage students to illustrate before sharing and displaying student work near Hazel's cage.

Lesson 7: Present Hazel's journal and explain that the journal is a way for students to communicate with Hazel throughout the school year. Students are invited to share what have learned, how they have extended their learning, and ask questions about things that puzzle them or they are curious about. They may write to Hazel during free choice time, if they finish an assignment early, or, during inside recess. I will enlist the help of older students to check the journal on a routine basis, research answers and reply, in writing, to the entries. This will continue throughout the school year.

Evaluation:

Poems will be assessed in three criteria:

- 1) Proper use of language mechanics (grade level appropriate spelling and grammar)
- 2) Displays understanding of the style of poetry.
- 3) Displays throughout research and understanding of the subject.

These three criteria are consistent with state writing assessment rubric.

Image 1:

Piggie Care Chart								
Morning  		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Water								
Pellets								
Hay								
Veggies								
Night  								
Hay								
Veggies								
Clean poos								
Once a Week								
Replace liners and pads								
Replace fleece huts								
Wipe down cage materials								
Wash fleece materials								

Image 2:

Name: _____

—

KWL Chart



Image 3:

Adjectives

An **adjective** is a word that describes a noun or pronoun such as a person, place, thing, or idea.

An adjective can tell . . .

Color	Size	Shape	Taste
black	big	boxy	bitter
blue	huge	oval	sour
coral	large	round	sweet
green	little	square	tangy
pink	short	triangular	tart

Odor	Texture	Sound	Number	Weather
flowery	bumpy	faint	few	clear
fresh	furry	harmonious	fifty	dry
musty	slimy	loud	many	foggy
salty	smooth	pleasant	sparse	rainy
stinky	squishy	quiet	two	windy

EXAMPLE A **pleasant** purr came from the **furry black** kitten.
(adjective) (adjective)(adjective)



Image 4:



Image 5:

H

A

Z

E

L

Image 6:

Free Verse

Free Verse is poetry without rhyme

And no form to limit you.

You are free to create beautiful pictures

To share with us.

Feeling flows freely,

Poetic and meaningful,

Perfect,

Just the way it is.

Write a Free Verse about Hazel: