A KICK IN THE HEAD: AN EVERYDAY GUIDE TO POETIC FORMS

Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 3-5

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Summary
This exuberant collection of poetry complemented by fantastic mixed-media collages that bound across the pages will capture the imaginations of children and inspire their own creations. The poems are by Paul B. Janeczko and other highly recognized poets. This is a wonderful book to get kids hooked on poetry. Everything about the book (design, color, form, and content) is fun and enticing. The twenty-nine poetic forms used in the book are described and explained at the back of the book.

Awards
Claudia Lewis Award for Poetry Winner 2005
Lupine Award Winner 2005 Picture Book
Parent’s Choice Award Gold 2005 Picture Books

Author’s Biography
Poet and anthologist Paul B. Janeczko taught high school English for twenty-two years. He is passionate about inspiring young people to read, write and enjoy poetry. He has written and compiled books that include his own poems, compilations of other poets’ works, and instructions about how to write poetry. He lives in Hebron, Maine with his wife and daughter where he is active in the literary community.
http://www.pauljaneczko.com/
http://www.candlewick.com/authill.asp?b=Author&m=bio&id=2178&pix=n

Other Titles by Paul B. Janeczko
Brickyard Summer
Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems in Different Voices
Hey, You!
Poetry from A to Z: A Guide for Young Writers
A Poke in the I: A Collection of Concrete Poems
Seeing the Blue Between: Advice and Inspiration for Young Poets
Top Secret: A Handbook of Codes, Ciphers, and Secret Writing
Worlds Afire

Illustrator’s Biography
Chris Raschka grew up in Chicago and says that he knew what he wanted to be when he grew up from an early age—he wanted to become a biologist! Fortunately, he shifted his focus to painting and drawing. His goal is to create artwork that embraces the idea of the book but does not overpower the text. Raschka has illustrated over forty books including the 2006 Caldecott Medal winner The Hello, Goodbye Window and the 1994 Caldecott Honor book Yo! Yes? He now lives in New York with his wife, son, and pets.
http://www.kidspoint.org/columns2.asp?column_id=1318&column_type=author
Other Titles Illustrated by Chris Raschka
The Hello, Goodbye Window (2006 Caldecott Medal)
Yo! Yes? (1994 Caldecott Honor)
Another Important Book
Charlie Parker Played Be Bop
Five for a Little One
Skin Again

Related Titles

Read a Rhyme, Write a Rhyme by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. This is another good book to help introduce the world of poetry to children.

Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems by Joyce Sidman. Illustrated by Beckie Prange. (Caldecott Honor Book) This book offers another artful look into the world of poetry.


Classroom Connections

Writing Poetry Forms

- Have the students write their own poems after instructing them about different poetic forms and reading examples from the book. Ask the students to select a specific poetic form, such as a couplet, quatrain, or clerihew.

Create Acrostic Poems (the first letter in each line spells out the subject of the poem)

- For example, “Does Only Good” DOG or “Can’t Avoid Trouble” CAT.
- In science class have students create an acrostic for the animal life or plant life they are studying. Have the children identify each letter of the word (such as the dinosaur “brachiosaurus”) and create an acrostic poem.

Concrete Poems

- Concrete poems form a shape or picture when arranged according to the subject of the poem. Show examples of concrete poems and let the children use their imaginations to create their own.
- For example, the words in a poem about a ball look like they are spiraling into a ball.
- To assist students with the idea, give them basic shapes such as squares, triangles, a crescent moon, etc. and have them start from a central dot or point in the center and write their poem outward.
List Poems
- List poems can be used to reflect the students’ personal lives.
- Using the example of a list poem from the book, ask children to respond to the topics listed or to topics of their own.

Figure Poems
- Have the students glue construction paper to create arms, legs, and a head onto an index card.
- After gluing the limbs to the index card torso, ask the students to write a short poem describing the figure they just created. Is the figure happy? Where’s he/she going? Is he/she dancing?

Poetry Tree
Lesson Plan: Pro Teacher/ Poetry/ Poet-Tree
- [http://www.proteacher.net/archive/posts/2002/06/29/40057.html](http://www.proteacher.net/archive/posts/2002/06/29/40057.html)
- Have students write poems on a piece of construction paper cutting them out to look like a leaf. Using brown paper creates a tree shape and tape on the wall. Place the children’s poetic leaves at the top of the tree. Title the art project “Poetry Tree.”

Lesson Plan: Forms of Poetry for Children/Couplets/ Lesson 21
- [http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/couplet.htm](http://volweb.utk.edu/Schools/bedford/harrisms/couplet.htm)
- Have the students write couplets.

Art
- Have students draw, paint or make collages to illustrate a poem that they like.

Web Sites

Authors On The Web
This site contains links to children’s poets and books geared to younger readers.

Poetry Books & Other Media Popular with Elementary Students: Bibliography
[http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poeheis.htm](http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/poeheis.htm)
Bibliography of poetry and other media giving recommendations to many titles. The books are appropriate for elementary grade levels.