



SEP 50676

The
Poet and the Professor

Level

2

Poems for Building Reading Skills

TEACHER RECOMMENDED • STANDARDS & RESEARCH BASED



I'll Fly a Plane

When I grow up,
I'll fly a plane
To France or China
Or maybe Spain.

I'll fly so high,
Too high to see,
And take



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Karen McGuigan Brothers

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Developing students' reading skills is a critical skill that begins in the primary grades. As you use the poems, lessons, and activities in this book, you will not only be providing instruction based on solid educational research, but also giving students opportunities to learn and practice specific academic standards.

The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills is designed to provide high-interest instructional texts and lessons based on best practices in reading education. Each poem has an accompanying lesson plan with ideas for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension activities based on the poem.

In an effort to identify the best practices in reading instruction, the National Reading Panel (2000) reviewed thousands of studies to determine key elements of effective reading instruction. The five essential areas of reading instruction are: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The lessons in this book reflect these five elements of reading instruction.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness refers to the awareness of the sounds of language and how language sounds work together to create words. Research shows that phonemic awareness is an excellent predictor of a student's future reading success (Adams 1990; Stanovich 1986; Yopp 1988). Although many students develop phonemic awareness informally, evidence suggests that phonemic awareness can be developed through direct instruction (Ball and Blachman 1991). Activities such as identifying, isolating, and categorizing phonemes, blending sounds to make words, segmenting sounds in words, and adding,

deleting, and substituting phonemes require students to manipulate sounds in order to gain a better understanding of words (Yopp 1992; National Reading Panel 2000).

Each lesson in *The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills* provides a phonemic awareness activity to train students in this important reading skill. Using words from the poem as a springboard, students are asked to manipulate phonemes. Although most of the phonemic awareness tasks are presented orally, there are also numerous activity pages that support phonemic awareness concepts. (See the Activity Skill—Correlation Chart on page 14.)

Phonics

During phonics instruction, students connect language sounds with corresponding written letters to see how they work together to form words that can be both read and written. Based on its review of studies, the National Reading Panel reports that explicit and systematic phonics instruction is an effective way to help students gain and apply knowledge of letter/sound relationships. The poems and activities in this book provide explicit ways to teach and reinforce phonics concepts appropriate to the primary grades.

The activities and teaching suggestions provided in each lesson are designed to help students improve word recognition and spelling skills. The activities focus on words or spelling patterns found in the poems.

Vocabulary

Our vocabulary consists of the words we know and use. These words help us communicate both verbally and in writing and also assist in reading comprehension. Vocabulary instruction can have direct effects on reading comprehension (Pressley 2002). Students who understand the words they read are more likely to comprehend the texts they read.

Students expand their vocabularies in many different ways. During direct word instruction, definitions are provided, as well as modeling and practice for using specific words in meaningful ways. Providing students with as few as two direct instructional strategies, allows them to understand the word when encountering it within a text (Baker, Simmons, and Kameenui 1998). The goal is to make students comfortable using new words in their own oral and written vocabularies through multiple, meaningful encounters with those words.

The vocabulary section of each lesson provides strategies and ideas for direct, meaningful instruction of words used in the poems. Words or phrases that may be unfamiliar or challenging to students have been selected from the poems for instruction. Students may be more familiar with some words than others. The purpose of this section is to provide in-depth instruction for words in the poems, thereby teaching meanings of new words and deepening understanding of those the student knows.

Fluency

Fluency refers to a student's ability to read accurately, effortlessly, and with expression (Rasinski 2003). Fluency instruction is important because fluent readers are better able to focus their attention on comprehension. Readers have a limited amount of attention to expend for reading. Students who use too much attention on word decoding understand less of what they read because they do not sufficiently focus attention on gaining meaning from the text (LaBerge and Samuels 1974).

One method of helping students gain fluency is repeated readings of a text. Studies on repeated readings have shown many benefits for readers. Students increase their comprehension as they group words in text into meaningful segments marked by expressive reading (O'Shea and Sindelar 1983). This method also helps students remember important information from a passage, including vocabulary (Bromage and Mayer 1986). Fluency rates and accurate word recognition can increase as students read other passages of equal or greater difficulty after mastering the original passage (Samuels 1979).

Providing meaningful and fun ways for students to return to a text can be a challenge. Poems are ideal texts for reading, rereading, and performing. The fluency section of each lesson and the corresponding activity pages give suggestions for students to reread the poems in fun, meaningful, and authentic ways that will provide the benefits that research shows for repeated readings.

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