

# Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Types of Poetry

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.

In today's elementary schools, students read and compose simple poems in class. In later grades, students experience more elaborate poetry such as epics, ballads, and sonnets. These poems are often part of history class. Students learn about pivotal historical events through such poems as *The 1492 Poem*, *Paul Revere's Ride*, and *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. The *Star Spangled Banner*, our national anthem, and *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, poems written during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars respectively, were set to music, and are thought of as national treasures.

Poetry evolved throughout the ages to include over 50 types of compositions. Children of the modern age began hearing their first poems with *Mother Goose* nursery rhymes, and later in the 20th century, *Dr. Seuss* took rhyming poetry to a new level with funny, and sometimes touching, stories like *Green Eggs and Ham*; *Horton Hears a Who*; *The Cat in the Hat*; *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*; and *Oh, the Places You'll Go*.



## Examples of Different Poetry

Here are several types of poetry you can enjoy creating with your students in grades K-5. Some of these poems help make great greeting cards, too!

**Acrostic** – a poem in which special letters spell a word and usually come at the beginning, but they can be other places too.

**B**ecky's dog  
**I**s the apple of her eye.  
**T**iny and loving,  
**S**illy and spry.  
**Y**orkie!

**W**hen will the day end?  
**O**nly seven more hours to go.  
**R**est and relaxation  
**K**udos to me cause I'm stayin'!

**Haiku** – a Japanese poem of three lines, having five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third.

*Green and speckled legs,  
Hop on logs and lily pads  
Splash in cool water.*

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(cont.)

**Couplet** – two rhyming lines with the same meter (a recurring pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables) in lines the same length.

*I go to work every day.  
At five o'clock, I go play.*

**Diamante** – a seven-line poem describing opposite word pairs that takes the shape of a diamond. Choose the opposite nouns first. This is a great poem for greeting cards.

Line 1: (noun)

Line 2: Two adjectives describing Line 1

Line 3: Three “-ing” verbs describing #1

Line 4: Two nouns about #1 and two about #7

Line 5: Three “-ing” verbs describing #7

Line 6: Two adjectives describing #7

Line 7: (a noun opposite of #1)

**Boy**

*Rough, tough*

*running, jumping, playing*

*wrestler, hunter...dancer, gymnast*

*twirling, singing, dressing*

*soft, delicate*

**Girl**

**Limerick** – a witty, humorous poem of five lines and a strict rhyming scheme (Lines to rhyme: a-a-b-b--a).

Line A *There was an old man named Heath.*

A *Who sat on his set of false teeth.*

B *He yelled with a start,*

B *“Heaven! Oh, my heart!*

A *I’ve bitten myself underneath!”*

*There once was a girl named Meg*

*Who accidentally broke her leg.*

*She fell on the ice,*

*Not once but thrice.*

*Take no pity on her, I beg!*



## Other Poetry to Consider!

For older or advanced students (parents as well), check out books from the library that contain these types of poems.

**Epic** – a long, serious poem that tells the story of a heroic figure.

**Ballad** – a poem that tells a story; often set to music.

**Free Verse** – a type of poetry with no specific structure, rhythm, or rhyme.

**Sonnet** – a poem of 14 lines and any number of rhyme schemes; in English, typically having 10 syllables per line.

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