



[Kidsgardening Home](#) — [Member Log-in](#) — [Store](#)
[Click here](#) for printer-friendly version.

Growing Poems Contents

[Page 1: Classroom Project](#)

[Page 2: Curriculum
Connections](#)

[Page 3: Resources](#)

Related Articles

[Cultivating Writers](#)

[Rapping Up a Unit](#)

[Writing and Journaling](#)

Member Benefits

New Discounts

Members now save 10% on items at the Gardening with Kids store *and* NGA Garden Shop.
[Enter members area.](#)

Free Courses

Take all 5 online courses ... FREE.
[Enter members area.](#)

Answers to Your Gardening Questions

Our gardening experts will tackle your growing dilemmas.
[Enter members area.](#)

Special Opportunities

We will draw from our pool of members for testing new curricula, participating in online projects, and exchanging with other members at conferences.

COMMENTS?

We welcome your questions and comments about this newsletter or your membership. Please reply to: [Growing Ideas editor.](#)

Curriculum Connections

Figurative Speech: Analogies, Similes, and Metaphors

Literacy standards addressed: [use of personal expression](#), [use of figurative speech](#); [creation of stories](#).

Analogies, metaphors and similes are staple ingredients of poetry. The plants, gardens, and the outdoors are rife with inspiration for these expressions that invigorate the imagination, encourage creative use of words, and help kids see things anew.

- An **analogy** notes similarities between or among objects, and may back them up with explanations: "A morning glory blossom reminds me of a horn because is it shaped like the bell on a trumpet. It reminds me of a long skirt, flowing from a narrow waistline to a wide hem. It reminds me of the summer sky, blue and clear."
- A **metaphor** is an expression that substitutes one object or event with another that shares a resemblance. Here are a couple of examples, using the sunflower seed analogies mentioned in the paragraph below:
"The sunflower holds a circling zebra herd."
"Inside its cocoon, a baby plant sleeps until spring."
- A **simile** is an expression that likens one object to another, usually linking them with the words *like* or *as*. The photo above might inspire the following:
"The bee is like a cargo plane, flying supplies back to the base."
"She's as single-minded as a bee on a blossom!"



Start your exploration of figurative speech by challenging students to choose something in the garden and identify at least five analogies -- things it reminds them of. For example, "A sunflower seed reminds me of a zebra ... a shield ... a butterfly cocoon." Next ask them to consider, *Why does it remind me of that? If it reminds me of something, it might function in a similar way?* For instance, if a seed coat resembles a shield, might it in any way act like a shield for the seed inside? If it resembles a cocoon, how might it help the seed if it also acts like a cocoon? From here, invite them to create related metaphors and similes to work into their poems.

Students can use the analogy exercise as a warm up, or to help them hone their works when they rewrite. Beyond poetry, using these tools helps foster curiosity, encouraging kids to see familiar things and experiences in a new light.

Process Poems Maintain Memories



Literacy standards addressed: [comprehension and expository expression](#); [recognition and use of characters, settings, events](#); [use of figurative speech](#).

The water cycle, the nitrogen cycle, and photosynthesis are complex physical and chemical processes that are brought to life in the garden, but students' memories of the specifics may drift away before the next growing season.

To help children extract and retain the importance of these things, students draw diagrams of simplified versions of these processes, and even find ways to relate them to their own lives or those of their community (e.g., our garden soaks up more water when we use mulch between rows; excess lawn fertilizer pollutes our streams; we all depend on the oxygen produced by plants). Writing poems can help kids develop more connection to these sometimes dry topics, especially if poetry is included -- and read aloud as it is composed -- from the beginning of the unit or lesson.

They can even use their poems as mnemonic tools, especially if they incorporate original and accurate imagery, sounds, movements, and personifications. For instance, to spark more interest in photosynthesis, give all the players (carbon dioxide, chlorophyll, and sunlight) distinct personalities, voices, and costumes and have them bake a birthday cake (made of carbohydrates, of course) for a newly emerged seedling. Who is left when the party's over? Oxygen!

The Poet's Toolshed

Literacy standards addressed: [recognition and use of point of view](#); [expression of phonemic awareness](#); [use of personal expression](#); [creation of stories](#); [use of complex sentences](#); [use of figurative language](#); [use of different parts of speech](#); [application of grammatical rules](#); [use of characters, settings, events](#); [use of the writing process](#).

Read the poem on the right by eminent nature poet Gary Snyder, and see if you don't agree that the mind collects mental material the way a compost heap collects organic matter. If it's given the right care – a bit of aeration, a handful of the right ingredients – it starts cooking into something rich and fertile! Invite kids to try out some of these tools to turn over accumulated garden-related ideas, images, and feelings to see what might emerge.

- **Point of View** -- imagine yourself as something in the garden: a lady beetle, a pole bean, an evergreen tree -- and write what it's like to be that thing. What do you see? What do you do? What do you feel? Or, take on the identity of an extraterrestrial from a barren planet experiencing trees, grass, flowers, or butterflies for the first time, and describing it to others back home.
- **Rapping Rhymes** -- The word "rap" stands for "rhythm and poetry." Create a rap -- and perhaps an accompanying hip-hop routine -- illustrating a gardening activity or natural process (e.g., pulling weeds, metamorphosis).
- **Garden-Grown Tongue-Twisters** -- Use a garden theme to create challenging twisters for classmates. Here's a classic example: "A big bug bit the little beetle but the little beetle bit the big bug back!"
- **Patchwork Poems** -- Draw columns on a sheet of paper and label them "nouns," "verbs," and "adjectives." Write down all the words you can think of associated with a gardening topic, such as butterfly gardening, in five minutes, putting them in the correct column. Cut the words out, mix them up, and use them to create phrases and questions, inserting articles (a, the) and other words as needed to make coherent phrases (even if they are silly phrases!) Once kids have had practice coming up with their own lists of words, you can show them [Online Garden Poetry](#) -- a project of NGA and Magnetic Poetry -- where they can use existing lists of garden-related words to make poems online.

These are just a few of the myriad exercises kids can try to help germinate creative expression. In our [Resources](#) you'll find more Web sites for you and your students to explore as you delve the into universe of poetry.



Previous Page

Next Page

On Top by Gary Snyder

All this new stuff goes on top
turn it over, turn it over
wait and water down
from the dark bottom
turn it inside out
let it spread through
Sift down even.
Watch it sprout.

A mind like compost.

[Online source for this poem](#)