

## Tell the Story of a Poem

**Goal:** The learner will understand a poem's plot, literary devices, and the way its language functions differently than prose language.

**Objectives:** All Goal 2 & 3 Objectives apply

**Procedure:** In preparation for your session, find a poem to read for this lesson, or bring in two and let your tutee choose.

First, let your student read the poem aloud. Discuss her reactions to it, favorite parts, confusing parts, the way it makes her feel. Then ask her to try to tell the story of the poem in a few sentences (do not think that you need to choose a narrative poem for this exercise—part of the point is to see the difference between poetry and prose). For example, a poem in which the speaker spends most of the time describing the stars might have a “story” that fits into one sentence: “A girl goes outside at night and looks at the stars, and notices how they reflect on the lake.” Ask your student which is more interesting, and then compare and contrast them (you can do this either in conversation or with a graphic organizer, like a Venn Diagram). Your objective is to help your student to see that the function of language is different for poetry and prose. A story is boring if it is only about someone looking at the sky, but a poem can be beautiful.

Once you are discussing language, pick a few literary devices to focus on that are present in your poem: there might be personification, metaphor, simile, alliteration, onomatopoeia. One at a time, ask your tutee if she knows what the device is, and to find an example in the poem. Help her to learn by discovery whenever possible, for example:

You: See where it says ‘the fog crept’? Does anything seem strange about that?

Student: Yes. Fog isn't alive.

You: Right! That's called “personification” because it's pretending that a thing can do something a person can do.

**Closure:** Ask your student to tell you some of the differences between poems and stories that she learned about today. Encourage her to write a poem at home, if she is interested, and try to use one of the devices you discussed today, and bring it to show you