

# *L* MOSDOS PRESS *Literature*

RUBY

Part One  
Workbook Answer Guide



**Mosdos Press**  
CLEVELAND, OHIO





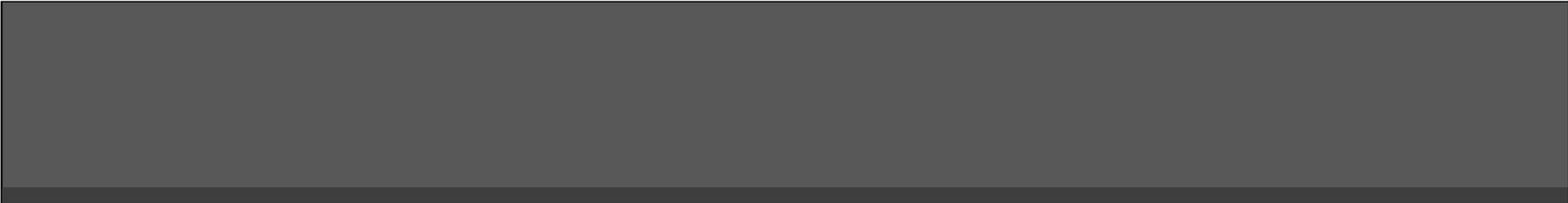
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**ISBN # 0-9801670-2-7 Teacher's Edition**

**ISBN-13: 978-0-9801670-2-3**



*L* MOSDOS PRESS  
*Literature*

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Judith Factor

CREATIVE/ART DIRECTOR

Carla Martin

DESIGN/COMPOSITION

Libby Spero

SENIOR EDITOR

Abigail Rozen

COPY EDITOR

Laya Dewick

CURRICULUM WRITER

Rifky Amsel

JILL'S JOURNALS/POETRY UNIT

Jill Brotman

LESSONS IN LITERATURE

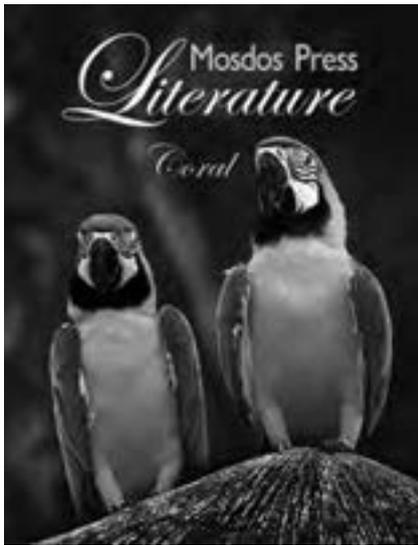
Jim Garrett

TEXT AND CURRICULUM ADVISOR

Rabbi Ahron Dovid Goldberg

# MOSDOS PRESS *Literature*

## ANTHOLOGY SERIES



RUBY

CORAL

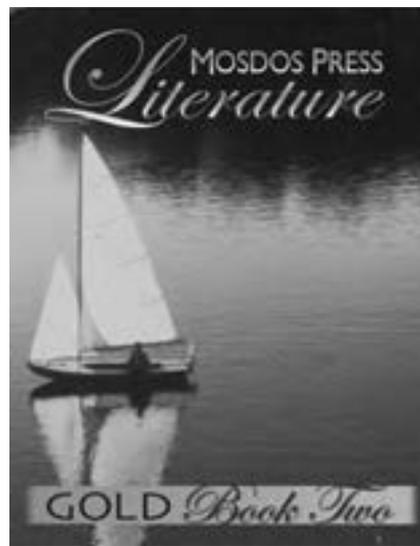


PEARL



JADE

GOLD



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## For the Teacher

The information below has been provided so that you can fully appreciate the student textbook, the accompanying workbook, and—most particularly—your Teacher’s Edition.

The curriculum for each grade level has been developed in such a way that both new and experienced classroom and home school teachers are able to teach effectively and enjoyably. When a teacher is at ease with the material, and well-informed about what is being taught, the teaching that results is vastly superior to what it would be otherwise.

Please read each of the sections below so that you will be familiar with every part of the curriculum. It will be easier to follow the descriptions if you consult your books as you read.

1. **Scope and Sequence:** *Scope and Sequence* is an overview of the curriculum. *Scope and Sequence* lists the teaching concept of each of the *Lessons in Literature*, as well as the selection theme and the target skill, unit by unit. *Scope and Sequence* also shows the components of the selection: the tie-in poem, *Jill’s Journal* and its related power skill, and the student workbook activities for that selection. *Scope and Sequence* will enable you to see where you are going—and where you have been—regarding the sequence of skills. You will also find the target skill listings very helpful for lesson plan notations.
2. **Lessons in Literature:** The *Ruby* pre-curriculum begins with *Lessons in Literature*. *Lessons in Literature* introduce the literary component, or the language arts skill, that will be taught with the literary work that follows. These lessons are good teaching tools. Use *Lessons in Literature*’s original short selections to give your students extra practice with the targeted literary component or skill.
3. **Teacher Resources Section:** Teacher Resources is located at the back of each of the two parts of your Teacher’s Edition. There, you will find additional background information for many of the selections. This data will better ground you in the cross-curricular context of the piece—historical, scientific, environmental, or social. Wherever additional resource material is provided in the Teacher Resources Section for a particular selection, it is noted in the body of the Teacher’s Edition.
4. **Reviewing Vocabulary:** Teachers should review all vocabulary given in the *Word Banks* of the textbook *before* students read the associated piece. In the Teacher’s Edition, the *Word Bank* vocabulary is listed on the *Lessons in Literature* pages that precede each selection. Students should also complete the Workbook Vocabulary Activity I *prior* to reading the selection. In the Teacher’s Edition at the bottom of the *Lessons in Literature* pages, there is also a replicated image of Vocabulary Activity I and II. If no vocabulary activities are shown, no new vocabulary is associated with the piece.
5. **Getting Started:** *Getting Started* will make it easier for you to begin a dialogue with your students regarding the selection they are about to read. As such, *Getting Started* is a springboard to the selection. It may be an activity, a question, or information that will intrigue students and generate broader interest. Often, *Getting Started* is an aural exercise that will help students to hone their listening skills.
6. **Teacher’s Answer Guide for the Workbook Activities:** The Workbook Answer Guide is located at the back of each of the two volumes of your Teacher’s Edition. Notes to the Teacher has been included with suggestions regarding how best to use the student workbook. Please acquaint yourself with the workbook at the beginning of the semester, *before* you begin using the textbook with your students.
7. **Selection Summary:** For each selection, the Teacher’s Edition gives a summary of the story—a synopsis that will be a good memory aid when you return to the selection each year.
8. **Blueprint for Reading:**

**Into...** Here, the Teacher’s Edition parallels the textbook material and both clarifies and elaborates upon the discussion of theme. Theme may be very difficult for many young readers. This fuller explanation enables you to point to specific thematic elements in the selection. *Into...* is an invaluable teaching aid.

**Eyes On...** This section of the Teacher’s Edition focuses on the featured literary component. *Eyes On...* also enables you to enlarge upon writing style, tone, and language. Here, you will also find insightful teaching hints and thoughtful questions to pose. *Eyes On...* helps your students understand the target skill being taught.
9. **Guiding the Reading:** You can guide your students’ understanding of the selection with both literal and analytical questions. These questions appear in the Teacher’s Edition below the textbook page from which they are drawn. The literal questions are based on the facts of the piece. The answer requires recall only, and can be derived from the page the class has just reviewed. Analytical questions are inferential. Again, the answer can be drawn from the page just read, but the answer is not stated explicitly, as it is with the literal questions. *Guiding the Reading* lists the literal and the analytical questions separately. However, since the questions build on one another, it makes sense to ask the questions in sequential order. Analytical questions build on literal questions, and often, each literal question builds on the one before it.

10. **Literary Components:** *Literary Components* provides a superior lesson tool. They may even be an education for the teacher. Here, numbers in the margins of the selection provide a legend to a list of descriptions of literary components. The numbered, underlined text provides examples of imagery, style, point of view, plot, characterization, setting, foreshadowing, suspense, rising and falling action, climax, resolution, irony, dialogue, figures of speech, and historical or scientific relevance (where appropriate).

The details of each literary component are not necessarily meant to be shared in their entirety with your class. Their most important function is to ground the educator in the material. Use your judgment, regarding how advanced your learners are, and how many of these insights you think your class will benefit from or appreciate. Often, the *Literary Components* serve as a way to explain a sophisticated point to the educator, so that he or she can, in turn, explain it coherently to the students.

11. **About the Poem—Tie-In Poems:** A majority of the selections have a tie-in poem that follows the selection in the textbook. In the Teacher's Edition, the poem is analyzed and significant literary components are elucidated for the educator. In the Teacher's Edition, the analysis appears on the page just below the replicated image of the poem. These tie-in poems have been provided in the textbook simply to be enjoyed, and often share a thematic or topical link with the prose selection they follow. There is no student curriculum associated with these poems.

12. **First Impressions:** The Teacher's Edition *First Impressions* parallels the textbook post-curricular questions, and suggests possible student responses.

13. **Studying the Selection in the Teacher's Edition:**

**Quick Review** and **Focus** provide detailed answers to the questions posed in the parallel sections of the textbook. Additional material has been included for productive classroom discussion.

**Creating and Writing** is the final review element in the textbook. The activities in this section are challenging: one requires creative writing; one is grounded in the theme of the selection and its literary form; and the final activity is non-literate (a work of art, a charitable activity, a fieldwork project, for example). Precise teacher instructions for these projects and activities are provided in the textbook.

NOTE: The Workbook Comprehension Questions continue the post-curricular *Studying the Selection*. These workbook pages should be assigned after the textbook exercises are completed.

14. **Jill's Journal:** *Jill's Journal* is a unique literary device that is being introduced in *Ruby*. *Jill's Journal* follows twelve of the prose selections.

This is a four-page spread: 2 to 3 pages are devoted to *Jill's Journal*; the remaining 1 to 2 pages describe a power skill for the young reader or writer. Exercises are given for practice.

*Jill's Journal* is an "autobiographical," first-person narrative. Jill imagines herself a reporter on assignment. Her journal entries are connected topically with the selection, and place Jill the Journalist back in time or someplace in the world. These pieces are guaranteed to bring students right into the world of the story. Extensive background material is provided in the Teacher's Edition.

15. **Poetry Unit:** The Poetry Unit in the student textbook follows Unit Three. The Poetry Unit is comprised of seven lessons, meant to be taught lesson by lesson, *sequentially*, throughout the school year, interspersed with the teaching of the primarily prose units. Each of the poetry lessons builds on the other. Please let your students enjoy the poetry as it is presented.

There is extensive material in the Teacher's Edition to help the educator enjoy the poetry as well, and teach the poetry effectively. The Poetry Unit is the last unit in Part One of your Teacher's Edition. This material is intended for your edification, as it is generally much too sophisticated for elementary school students. The information is meant to make you feel completely comfortable with the poetry so that you will be grounded in its teaching. There are many suggested activities in the teacher notes for each poetry lesson. These activities will enhance both your and your students' experience. Enjoying poetry from an early age will bring your students a lifetime of rewards.

# Lesson in Literature

## What Is a Story?

### Sarah's Room

1. Until now, Sarah has had to wait. In the middle of the story her father tells her she does not have to wait—she has first choice.
2. The six characters are Sarah, her mother, her father, her two sisters and her brother.
3. The new house has a downstairs bedroom with a big window and a big closet. There is a field next to the new house. There are several bedrooms upstairs.

# Lesson in Literature ...

## SARAH'S ROOM

### WHAT IS A STORY?

- A story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Something in the story must change before the story is over.
- *What happens* in the story is called the **plot**.
- The *people* or animals in the story are called the **characters**.

- The *time* and *place* in which the events happen are called the **setting**.

### THINK ABOUT IT!

1. In the middle of the story, something changes in Sarah's life. What is it?
2. Who are the six characters in the story?
3. Describe the setting of the second half of the story.



2 Unit 1

## Vocabulary

- sow** (rhymes with now) *n.*: an adult, female pig
- gullies** (GULL eez) *n.*: small valleys or ravines made by running water
- clutched** (KLUCHD) *v.*: held onto tightly
- cultivate** (KUL tih vayt) *v.*: to help the plants grow by tending to the soil around them

**Leah's Pony**

VOCABULARY  
Activity I

---

*spruce*   *ditched*   *cultivate*   *struggle*   *sow*  
*customer*   *collateral*   *idle*   *gullies*   *withered*

1. Abe's parents owned an antique shop. He and his sister, Jean, would often make up stories about the buyers and sellers who came into the shop. If an old woman came into the shop, a bag \_\_\_\_\_ (held onto tightly) in her hand, Jean would say something like, "I bet she was born a princess, and is selling the last of her jewels because she has become so poor."
2. If a young man came in to sell something, Abe would say, "Oh! I'll bet he's gotten himself into \_\_\_\_\_ (something that is owed) by borrowing money to pay for that motorcycle parked outside."
3. Part of owning an antique shop involved going to auctions to buy antiques to sell in the store. Abe and Jean loved hearing the \_\_\_\_\_ (the person who conducts the auction) auction off the pieces for sale.
4. Often, there would be other auctions held right in the same place. One week, the auction included many tools and vehicles used in \_\_\_\_\_ (farming).
5. Some tools were to be used for harvesting; others were used to \_\_\_\_\_ (help the plants grow) the ground and ready it for planting.
6. All sorts of interesting characters turned out for the farm auctions. One week, a farmer brought a big, fat \_\_\_\_\_ (an adult female pig) to auction off.
7. The other farmers laughed. "What kind of tool is that?" hollered one. "It ain't a tool," he hollered back. "It's \_\_\_\_\_ (property promised as guarantee for a loan) that I'm putting up if someone will give me the loan of their tractor."
8. "What happened to your tractor?" bellowed another farmer. "Well," said the farmer, "first we had no rain at all. We had a regular \_\_\_\_\_ (a long period of dry weather)."
9. "The crops died up and \_\_\_\_\_ (shriveled). The ground was as hard as rocks."
10. "Then the rains came. They made all kinds of holes and \_\_\_\_\_ (small valleys and ravines made by running water) in the ground. My poor old antique tractor just can't handle that kind of job." My parents, hearing the word "antique," bought the old tractor to use as part of a display in front of their store, and a farmer loaned him a tractor. Everyone went home happy.

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2 Unit One: The Things That Matter - (Textbook p. 4)

## Workbook

**Leah's Pony**

VOCABULARY  
Activity II

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Words are tools that we use to express our thoughts. If we organize words into groups the way a worker organizes his tools, we will be able to find them when we need them. In *Leah's Pony*, you learned six words having to do with farming. Put them in the middle drawer of your tool chest. You learned three words connected to money. Put them in the bottom drawer of your tool chest. One last word remains. Put it in the top drawer of your tool chest.

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3 Unit One: The Things That Matter - (Textbook p. 4)

## Workbook

Sarah didn't like being the youngest in the family. With an older brother and two older sisters, Sarah always had to wait for them to do things first. On the playground or in the backyard, she had to wait. "Wait your turn!" her sister Emily said when Sarah wanted to go first. When her parents gave her brother permission to ride his bicycle to the park, Sarah asked, "Can I go too?"

"Sarah," her mother said, "you're too young. You have to wait until you're old enough."

"But when will I be old enough?" Sarah asked.

"Soon," her mother said.

Sarah thought about it. When she was younger, she had to wait to go to school. She had to wait to learn to read. She had to wait to ride a bicycle. She had to wait to swim in the pool. Now at twelve she still had to wait. She had to wait to sit at the adults' table for dinner. She had to wait for her older sisters to grow out of their clothes, and she was still waiting for her own room. Sarah didn't want to share a bedroom with her sister Emily anymore. When she asked her father about a room of her own, all he said was, "Sarah, you just have to wait."

So when her family moved into a new house, her father surprised them all when he said, "Sarah has waited long enough. In this house she gets her own room." He smiled at her. "Sarah, you get first choice. What room do you want?"

Her whole face smiled back at her father, but she didn't feel happy. She felt the eyes of

her brother and her sisters staring at her. She didn't have to wait anymore, but now they had to wait.

"I like the downstairs room," she said. It was the best room in the house. It had a big window that opened to a field of tall grass behind the house. It had a big closet, too. It was also the only bedroom on the first floor.

Once the movers left, everyone in the family helped with the unpacking, carrying boxes upstairs to the other bedrooms or to the rear of the house to Sarah's bedroom. After a while Sarah noticed that her sister Anne took a long time climbing the stairs with her boxes. Ever since her hip surgery Anne used a cane. She walked slowly and couldn't carry very much, and Sarah's heart jumped when she saw Anne almost fall coming down the stairs.

Sarah liked the downstairs room. She liked the sunlight from the window and the view of the field. She even liked the big closet. But she especially liked first choice. So when her father walked past with a box, she stopped him. "I can't wait to tell you," she said. "I changed my mind. My first choice is to share a bedroom upstairs with Emily. I want Anne to have the downstairs room."

When he heard her new choice, Sarah's father immediately held out his arms to hug his youngest daughter. "You didn't wait to do the right thing," he said. Sarah didn't wait to be hugged, either. She ran into her father's outstretched arms, happy she didn't have to wait for a hug.

**Unit Theme:** *The Things That Matter*

**Target Skill:** *Discussing plot, character, setting, and theme*

**Genre:** *Realistic Fiction*

The following are some discussion ideas.

- Did your family read to you as a young child? Do you still have stories read to you? Do you/did you enjoy the experience? Why?
- Do you have the opportunity to read or 'make up' stories for younger siblings or other children? Does your audience enjoy your stories? Do you ever have difficulty creating a story? Why do you think so?

If the students do not bring it up on their own, mention that being creative and organizing a story requires a lot of skill. Perhaps they have been in a situation where they started telling a fictional story and, having reached the middle of it, found they had "painted themselves into a corner." Explain that this is why the planning and organizing stage of story writing is so important.

## Getting Started

To begin this unit, have an open discussion about stories. Ask your students to think about some stories they have read or heard over the summer. Use the following to guide the discussion.

- What are the different parts of the story? (Acknowledge proper terminology, but do not limit the comments to that.)
- What makes a story interesting or memorable?
- In their eyes, what makes a story a good one or not such a great one?

Convey the idea that one may or may not like a story. Some of this is dependent on the individual's tastes, while some may be a response to the author's talent and style of writing. Throughout the year, if students express an opinion about a story, encourage them to support it with examples from the story and their familiarity with story elements.

## Into . . . Leah's Pony

The theme of *Leah's Pony* is life's challenges and how we respond to them. As the story unfolds, many crucial lessons about growing up and what truly matters in life are learned.

What are challenges? A challenge is something that tests one's abilities or resources. Have the students describe situations that, to them, seem challenging. After various responses are given, make it clear to the class that everyone views situations differently—what is challenging to one person may be only slightly inconvenient to another. Here are a few examples of circumstances that will determine how varying challenges will be viewed:

- A wealthy person vs. a poor person  
(How will each react when \$100 is stolen?)
- A three-year-old child vs. a ten-year-old  
(A favorite toy is broken beyond repair.)

The next example is of a different nature and can be used as a springboard for the next part of the discussion.

- Becoming seriously injured in an accident

Of the above scenarios, some present greater challenges to certain individuals. No one will argue that point. In some situations, however, the challenge is great for everyone.

There are some challenging situations, though, in which we can control or alter circumstances. Often we cannot change the situation, and a good deal of how we manage stems from our attitude. Point out to students that, despite everything, we can “put on a different pair of glasses” and see things from another perspective.

Students can provide suggestions as to how one might react to any type of challenge. Some examples:

**Negative:** sulk, complain constantly

**Positive:** ask others for assistance, share your problem with others, ask for advice

Now, let's examine how the characters dealt with their 'hard times.' Papa did his best to improve things when he took a loan from the bank. When this wasn't enough, he realized he had to auction off his goods to repay the loan. While he was sad, he taught his daughter to be responsible and brave. Mama recycled items and kept everyone's spirits up.

For her part, Leah thought beyond herself. She recognized how the situation affected everyone and she wanted to do something about it. Putting her own feelings aside, she sold her only precious belonging—her pony. Without consulting with an adult, Leah made a mature decision. Her selflessness had an even greater impact when others followed her example.

Every family living in the Dust Bowl was enduring the same brutal weather conditions. Despite the fact

## Blueprint for Reading

### INTO . . . Leah's Pony

After many years of comfortable farm life, Leah's family falls upon hard times. People react in different ways when faced with a challenge. One person may react with anger. Another person may react with determination. As you read, think about the way Leah, her family, and her neighbors deal with the difficulties that come their way. Leah has no concern for herself, as she inspires others to behave with kindness and generosity.



### Narrative Elements

Why do we tell stories? There are many reasons. A story can have important messages, help us remember something, or create an imaginary world. In order for a story to work properly, a number of **elements**, or parts, must be present. You will learn about these elements, such as plot and setting, in the coming pages. As you read *Leah's Pony*, think about what makes the story interesting. Does anything in the story surprise you?

that they themselves were struggling, they stepped up to help another farmer in his time of need. The author depicts an atmosphere of caring and warmth. The sense that something special is happening is highlighted by the reaction of the auctioneer, who was not accustomed to seeing this type of generosity.

There are daily opportunities for a fourth grader to perform selfless and kind acts. Explain that some situations require inner strength and selflessness while others call only for a measure of sensitivity and thoughtfulness, without any sacrifice on their part.

## Eyes On Narrative Elements

You can start this *Eyes On* discussion by talking, just briefly, about the elements of a story. A story starts with: a **beginning**, or **exposition**, when we are introduced to the **characters** (the people in the story), the **setting** (the time and the place), and the situation.

Then there is **rising action**, as events unfold, and we see what sort of conflict or problem the main character has. Is the main character having a problem with another person? With a set of circumstances? Within him- or herself, as in a personal struggle over what is the right thing to do?

# LEAH'S PONY

Elizabeth Friedrich



The year the corn grew tall and straight, Leah's papa bought her a pony. The pony was strong and swift and sturdy, with just a snip of white at the end of his soft black nose. Papa taught Leah to place her new saddle right in the middle of his back and tighten the girth<sup>1</sup> around his belly, just so.

1. A *girth* is a band that passes underneath a horse or other animal to hold a saddle in place.

Leah's Pony 5

At some point, the **main character** has to make a decision, or take action, in order to deal with the conflict. When the main character does this—or decides to do it—this is the **turning point** in the story.

The turning point may or may not be the **climax**, or highest moment, of the story. In the story that follows, the turning point is not the climax. This is because the emotional climax for the main character is not the situational climax of the story.

After the climax of a story there is **falling action**, as the story unwinds, and events come to a **resolution**, or **conclusion**. It is this cycle of opening, rising, peaking, falling, and resolving that makes stories so satisfying.

In the *Literary Components* that are given page for page, the elements of the story are indicated in the appropriate places.



## Selection Summary

It is the early 1930s, somewhere in the south central United States, and Leah's father buys her a pony. Leah loves the pony and rides it all over the family farm and into the nearby town, where it is dubbed "the finest pony in the whole county." When the drought that created the Dust Bowl strikes, the farm begins to fail. Leah's father, almost bankrupted, agrees to auction off his livestock and farm implements. When he does that, he will be finished as a farmer, for even if the drought ends, he will have nothing to start over with.

Leah devises a plan. On the day of the auction, she asks the storekeeper who had admired her pony to buy the pony from her. He does so reluctantly. Clutching the few dollars she now has, Leah runs to the auction, where she witnesses her father's prize livestock being sold. When the auctioneer offers Papa's tractor, Leah raises her hand and bids one dollar. No one in the audience will bid against her. The farmers, inspired by Leah's selflessness, purchase the rest of the tools and livestock for almost nothing, and return them to Leah's father. At the end of the story, the storekeeper returns Leah's pony to her, and the author lets us know that the family recovers and lives to see good times.

## Literary Components

**1 Exposition; Imagery:** The first sentence provides a visual image—a picture that tells us a number of things. We learn that the story will take place in a rural setting. We learn also, that times are good; food and money are plentiful.

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: What did Papa buy for Leah?**

A: Papa bought her a new pony.

**Q: Describe Leah's pony.**

A: Leah's pony was strong, swift, and sturdy. He had just a snip of white at the end of his black nose.

**Q: What did Leah need to do before riding the pony?**

A: Leah had to place the saddle right in the middle of his back and tighten the girth around his belly. Papa showed her how to do it just right.

### Analytical

**Q: Why do you think it is important to mention that the pony was purchased during the year the "corn grew tall and straight"? What does that mean?**

A: When the corn grew tall and straight, crops were growing well and earning a profit on the market. Papa was able to afford extras like a pony for Leah.



6 Unit 1

## Literary Components

**2 Alliteration; Visual Image:** The musical sound of *cloud-capped cornfields* helps us feel the tranquility and satisfaction that a fruitful field inspires. The reader can visualize the white of the clouds against the blue of the sky and the green and gold of the crop.

**3 Simile:** The pony's smooth shining coat is compared to satin.

**4 Exposition:** It is important to the story's plot that the reader be aware how very fine this horse is. (It will help us appreciate, later on, just how great a sacrifice Leah is prepared to make.)

**5 Imagery:** Contrast this phrase with the opening one. Again, the author uses a visual image to describe the economic/agricultural situation. *The corn* determines prosperity or failure for the farmer.

**6 Sensory Images:** Instead of telling the reader directly that times are hard and people are frightened and sad, the author uses sensory images (word pictures that appeal to the reader's sense of touch and sound) to portray the atmosphere.

**7 Repetition:** The repeated phrase illustrates how the drought affected the lives of all the characters, even though each one had a different objective.

**8 Characterization:** Mama is shown to be kind, thoughtful, loving, and resourceful.

**9 Alliteration; Sensory Image:** The rhythmic words describing the effects of the drought drive home the sense of monotony and endlessness created by the Dust Bowl.

### Q: What were the 'hard times' that befell Leah's family?

A: The family's source of income was almost wiped out as a result of the drought. (They had to sell cattle and other important items, once the drought ended. Leah and her family had to make do with reused items and work hard to keep things clean.)

### Q: What is the significance of the fresh coffee cake every Saturday?

A: Even though times were tough, Mama wanted to keep some semblance of routine and normalcy in their lives. This was done especially for Leah who, at this point, did not fully understand the impact these hard times would have on the family. It was a warm and touching gesture on Mama's part.

### Q: How do you think Papa, Mama, and Leah felt when they saw so many neighbors leave?

A: Answers will vary. Some answers may include: they were sad that they were going to miss their fellow farmers and neighbors; they considered moving themselves; they were looking forward to hearing good news from them in the near future; they were hoping this wouldn't last long and that they wouldn't have to leave the farm they'd built up.

That whole summer, Leah and her pony crossed through cloud-capped cornfields and chased cattle through the pasture.

Leah scratched that special spot under her pony's mane and brushed him till his coat glistened like satin.

Each day Leah loved to ride her pony into town just to hear Mr. B. shout from the door of his grocery store, "That's the finest pony in the whole county."

The year the corn grew no taller than a man's thumb, Leah's house became very quiet.

Sometimes on those hot, dry nights, Leah heard Papa and Mama's hushed voices whispering in the kitchen. She couldn't understand the words but knew their sad sound.

Some days the wind blew so hard it turned the sky black with dust. It was hard for Leah to keep her pony's coat shining. It was hard for Mama to keep the house clean. It was hard for Papa to carry buckets of water for the sow and her piglets.

Soon Papa sold the pigs and even some of the cattle. "These are hard times," he told Leah with a puzzled look. "That's what these days are, all right, hard times."

Mama used flour sacks to make underwear for Leah. Mama threw dishwater on her drooping petunias to keep them growing. And, no matter what else happened, Mama always woke Leah on Saturday with the smell of fresh, hot coffee cake baking.

One hot, dry, dusty day grasshoppers turned the day to night. They ate the trees bare and left only twigs behind.

The next day the neighbors filled their truck with all they owned and stopped to say good-bye. "We're off to Oregon," they said. "It must be better there." Papa, Mama, and Leah waved as their neighbors wobbled down the road in an old truck overflowing with chairs and bedsprings and wire.

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#### WORD BANK

**sow** (rhymes with now)  
n.: an adult, female pig

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

#### Q: What are some ways that Leah spent time with her pony?

A: Leah rode through cornfields, chased cattle in the pasture, and loved to ride her pony into town.

#### Q: Why did Leah like to ride into town?

A: She loved to hear Mr. B. tell her, "That's the finest pony in the whole county."

#### Q: Describe how life has changed for Leah's family.

A: In the beginning, they seemed very happy and now they are sad and concerned. The family is not as busy, and the tasks that must be done are

very different. Instead of their typical chores, they spend time cleaning and then cleaning again. Everything seems to revolve around the wind and dust.

#### Q: What problem was there besides the wind?

A: The grasshoppers ate the trees bare.

#### Q: Why did some neighbors leave for Oregon?

A: They hoped that the situation would be better there.

### Analytical

#### Q: In what ways does Leah show love for her pony?

A: Leah scratched a special spot under her pony's mane and brushed him until his coat glistened like satin.

## Literary Components

**10 Characterization; Theme:** Papa is strong and honest. He wants his family to be the same way. He will try to meet adversity bravely. Courage is one of the story's themes.

**11 Characterization:** Although Papa is strong, he is also human. He is a character who shows emotion and communicates with his family.

The hot, dry, dusty days kept coming. On a day you could almost taste the earth in the air, Papa said, "I have something to tell you, Leah, and I want you to be brave. I borrowed money from the bank. I bought seeds, but the seeds dried up and blew away. Nothing grew. I don't have any corn to sell. Now I can't pay back the bank," Papa paused. "They're going to have an auction, Leah. They're going to sell the cattle and the chickens and the pickup truck."

Leah stared at Papa. His voice grew husky and soft. "Worst of all, they're going to sell my tractor. I'll never be able to



8 Unit 1

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: How did Papa try to improve the situation? Why didn't his idea work in the end?**

A: Papa borrowed money from the bank in order to buy more seeds, but they dried up and blew away.

**Q: What did Papa tell Leah would happen because he was unable to pay back the bank?**

A: An auction would be held where many things on the farm would be sold.

### Analytical

**Q: Why do you think Papa wanted Leah to be so brave?**

A: Perhaps he knew that things would only get worse before they got better. He was also keenly aware of the fact that Leah would have to give up certain things because there was no money. (You can also mention the idea that knowing about a hardship in advance can sometimes be helpful.)

**Q: How would an auction help Leah's family?**

A: The profits from the auction would be used to pay back the money Papa borrowed from the bank. Even though they would be left without any farm equipment, they would still have the farm.

**Q: What does the description of Papa's voice tell you?**

A: Papa may have lowered his voice because he was not proud to be discussing the auction. Papa was not talking to Leah in a strong, confident manner but in a sad and emotional way; the huskiness in his voice was his manly way of holding back tears.

plant corn when she's gone. Without my tractor, we might even have to leave the farm. I told you, Leah, these are hard times."

Leah knew what an auction meant. She knew eager faces with strange voices would come to their farm. They would stand outside and offer money for Papa's best bull and Mama's prize rooster and Leah's favorite calf.

All week long Leah worried and waited and wondered what to do. One morning she watched as a man in a big hat hammered a sign into the ground in front of her house.

12



Leah's Pony 9

## Literary Components

**12 Alliteration; Rhythmic Repetition:** The phrase helps the reader feel the nagging, repetitive anxious thoughts that Leah had.

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: What was the worst part of the auction in Papa's eyes?**

A: Selling the tractor was the worst part. This meant that Papa would no longer be able to plant corn and might even have to leave the farm.

**Q: What did Leah do until the time of the auction arrived?**

A: She worried, waited, and wondered all week long.

### Analytical

**Q: How do you think Leah knew what an auction was?**

A: Auctions were not uncommon at the time. Many farmers were in similarly dire straits.

## Literary Components

**13 Turning Point:** Finally, Leah can do something to help her family. Her position changes from passive to active. There is always a sense of relief when one arrives at a plan of action, no matter how long the odds of success are.

**14 Alliteration; Imagery:** This is an unusual but very appropriate description.

**15 Rhythmic Repetition:** The naming of the object, followed by the refrain “sold,” evokes the sense of helplessness Papa must have had, as the fruits of his labor slip away from him in a matter of moments.

Leah wanted to run away. She raced her pony past empty fields lined with dry gullies. She galloped past a house with rags stuffed in broken windowpanes. She sped right past Mr. B. sweeping the steps outside his store.

At last Leah knew what she had to do. She turned her pony around and rode back into town. She stopped in front of Mr.

**13** B.'s store. “You can buy my pony,” she said.

Mr. B. stopped sweeping and stared at her. “Why would you want to sell him?” he asked. “That’s the finest pony in the county.”

Leah swallowed hard. “I’ve grown a lot this summer,” she said. “I’m getting too big for him.”

**14** Sunburned soil crunched under Leah’s feet as she walked home alone. The auction had begun. Neighbors, friends, strangers—everyone clustered around the man in the big hat. “How much for this wagon?” boomed the man. “Five dollars. Ten dollars. Sold for fifteen dollars to the man in the green shirt.”

**15** Papa’s best bull.

Sold.

Mama’s prize rooster.

Sold.

Leah’s favorite calf.

Sold.

### WORD BANK

**gullies** (GULL eez) *n.*: small valleys or ravines made by running water

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: How did Leah feel when she finally saw the auction announcement go up?**

A: Leah wanted to run away.

**Q: What made Leah turn around and go back into town?**

A: A new thought struck her. Leah came up with an idea of how she could help.

**Q: What offer did Leah make to Mr. B.?**

A: “You can buy my pony.”

**Q: Did Mr. B. take Leah’s offer seriously at first?**

A: He couldn’t believe that she was willing to sell “the finest horse in the county.”

**Q: What reason did Leah give to Mr. B. for selling her prized pony?**

A: She told Mr. B. that since she’d grown over the summer, she was too big for the pony.

**Q: Who was the man in the big hat with all the people around him?**

A: He was the man in charge of the auction, known as an auctioneer.

### Analytical

**Q: Where did you first think Leah was going when she ran away?**

A: Answers will vary.

**Q: When Leah left on the pony, was it her intention to sell the pony to Mr. B.?**

A: No. We know from the words, “At last Leah knew what she had to do. She turned her pony around and rode back into town.”

**Q: Does the story actually mention that Mr. B. purchased the pony?**

A: No, but it does say that Leah walked home alone, so we can infer that Mr. B. purchased the pony.



Leah's Pony 11

## Literary Components

**16 Rising Suspense:** *What* has to be enough? Is there a plan here? A way out?

**17 Approaching Climax:** As everyone holds their breath, the reader hopes that somehow, Papa's farm can be saved. It is not yet clear how.

**18 Climax:** This is the high point of the story. Leah's plan has worked, the people are behind Papa, and the farm will be saved.

### WORD BANK

**clutched** (KLUCHD)  
v.: held onto tightly  
**cultivate** (KUL tih vayt)  
v.: to help the plants grow by tending to the soil around them

**16** Leah clutched her money in her hand. "It has to be enough," she whispered to herself. "It just has to be."

"Here's one of the best items in this entire auction," yelled the man in the big hat. "Who'll start the bidding at five hundred dollars for this practically new, all-purpose Farmall tractor? It'll plow, plant, fertilize, and even cultivate for you."

It was time. Leah's voice shook. "One dollar."

The man in the big hat laughed. "That's a low starting bid if I ever heard one," he said. "Now let's hear some serious bids."

**17** No one moved. No one said a word. No one even seemed to breathe.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this tractor is a beauty! I have a bid of only one dollar for it. One dollar for this practically new Farmall tractor! Do I hear any other bids?"

Again no one moved. No one said a word. No one even seemed to breathe.

"This is ridiculous!" the man's voice boomed out from under his hat into the silence. "Sold to the young lady for one dollar."

**18** The crowd cheered. Papa's mouth hung open. Mama cried. Leah proudly walked up and handed one dollar to the auctioneer in the big hat.

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: Did the auctioneer acknowledge Leah's "one dollar" as a true bid at first?**

A: No. He laughed it off and said, "Now let's hear some serious bids."

**Q: Describe the different reactions to Leah's purchase.**

A: "The crowd cheered. Papa's mouth hung open. Mama cried." Leah was proud. The auctioneer was upset and frustrated. Everyone else seemed to be proud of Leah and continued what she had started.

### Analytical

**Q: Where did Leah get the money that she had clutched in her hand?**

A: The money Leah had was from the sale of her pony.

**Q: When Leah said, "It has to be enough," what did she mean? Enough for what?**

A: Answers will vary. They should all indicate that she wanted to buy something at the auction or help pay off the debt in some small way.

**Q: How did Leah feel about announcing a bid for the tractor?**

A: Leah's voice shook. She was nervous about speaking in front of all the adults and afraid of what they would think of her offer.

**Q: Why did the man in the big hat laugh?**

A: He could not believe that a young girl really thought she could bid on a tractor with such a low bid. He viewed it as childish and moved on with the auction.



12 Unit 1

**Q: What caused everyone to be silent?**

A: Answers will vary. Some answers may include that they were surprised by her offer or that they were contemplating what to do next. Perhaps they were afraid to ruin the moment when this innocent girl was trying to save her family.

**Q: What do you think were some of the thoughts of the onlookers and participants?**

- A:
- They were surprised that a young girl would make a bold and ridiculously low bid.
  - Some may have seen it as an opportunity to help Leah's family.
  - Others may have thought that this was not the place for Leah to get involved.

- Perhaps some people were confused.

**Q: How was Leah's act selfless?**

A: Leah really thought beyond herself. She sold the one thing she owned and loved and used the money to try and help her family.

**Q: Remember when Papa told Leah to be brave? In what way did she show her bravery at the auction?**

A: Without knowing how her parents would react, without asking anyone for advice or approval, Leah spoke up in front of the auctioneer and all of the adults. She was nervous and her voice shook, but she was brave. Leah risked looking foolish or childish because she thought she might be able to help.



"That young lady bought one fine tractor for one very low price," the man continued. "Now how much am I bid for this flock of healthy young chickens?"

"I'll give you ten cents," offered a farmer who lived down the road. 19

"Ten cents! Ten cents is mighty cheap for a whole flock of chickens," the man said. His face looked angry.

Again no one moved. No one said a word. No one even seemed to breathe.

"Sold for ten cents!"

The farmer picked up the cage filled with chickens and walked over to Mama. "These chickens are yours," he said.

The man pushed his big hat back on his head. "How much for this good Ford pickup truck?" he asked.

"Twenty-five cents," yelled a neighbor from town.

Again no one moved. No one said a word. No one even seemed to breathe.

Leah's Pony 13

## Literary Components

**19 Conclusion:** After the tractor is sold for a dollar, the rest of Papa's possessions are sold at similar low prices. We are not as surprised, and the action slows down as the story comes to a happy resolution.

## Guiding the Reading

### Analytical

#### Q: How did Leah save the day?

A: By keeping the tractor in the family, Leah kept hope alive. They would eventually be able to plant again. Additionally, with all of the neighbors in the farming community following Leah's lead, the family didn't lose everything, as they had feared they would.

#### Q: Why was the experienced auctioneer puzzled about what bid to put up for the other items?

A: After taking a one-dollar bid for an expensive tractor, he couldn't charge the regular price for chickens. He wasn't sure what to do in this unusual situation.

#### Q: Do you think the auctioneer felt the same way as the rest of the fellow farmers at the auction? Support your answer with quotes from the story.

A: No. It was his job to conduct a proper auction and give the proceeds to the bank.

- "This is ridiculous!"
- "Ten cents! Ten cents is mighty cheap for a whole flock of chickens," the man said. His face looked angry.
- "This isn't supposed to be a penny auction!" he shouted.

## Literary Components

**20 Conflict:** The auctioneer represents those who would wish to benefit from the suffering of others. The neighbors and Papa stand on one side, and the bank and the auctioneer stand on the other.

**21 Characterization; Theme:** While Papa and Mama can feel happy and secure now, Leah must live with the sacrifice she has made. She does not regret it, but still finds it difficult to behave “bravely” as her father had instructed her to.

**22 Sensory Image:** Again, the author uses an auditory (sound) image rather than telling us directly what has happened. This draws us into the story and makes us feel as though we are living it, not just reading it.

**23 Conclusion; Theme:** As the story ends on a happy note, another theme is highlighted. It partners well with the theme of courage, because a belief that better times await us gives us strength and the ability to be brave.

## Guiding the Reading

### Literal

**Q: What was the trend that was started?**

A: The people began to not only offer low bids, but also to return to the family any purchases they had made.

**Q: What was the general attitude of the people about returning the items?**

A: They returned the items willingly and in a generous and kind manner.

**Q: Why was it “too quiet” on the farm?**

A: The familiar whinny of Leah's beloved pony was not heard.

**Q: What words show that once again Leah was brave?**

A: “Leah swallowed hard and straightened her back.”

**Q: What surprise did Leah receive in the morning?**

A: Leah's pony was back in the barn.

### Analytical

**Q: Why did the new owner of the chickens return them to Mama?**

A: He wanted to be able to assist the family instead of watching them lose everything they owned.

**Q: How did Leah inspire her neighbors to behave with kindness?**

A: While it's possible that some of the farmers felt bad for Leah's family and what they were going through, it wasn't until Leah took action that they were moved to help as well.

**20** “Sold for twenty-five cents!” The man in the big hat shook his head. “This isn't supposed to be a penny auction!” he shouted.

The neighbor paid his twenty-five cents and took the keys to the pickup truck. “I think these will start your truck,” he whispered as he dropped the keys into Papa's shirt pocket.

Leah watched as friends and neighbors bid a penny for a chicken or a nickel for a cow or a quarter for a plow. One by one, they gave everything back to Mama and Papa.

The crowds left. The sign disappeared. Chickens scratched in their coop, and cattle called for their corn. The farm was quiet. Too quiet. No familiar whinny greeted Leah when she entered the barn. Leah swallowed hard and straightened her back.

**21** That night in Leah's hushed house, no sad voices whispered in the kitchen. Only Leah lay awake, listening to the clock chime nine and even ten times. Leah's heart seemed to copy its slow, sad beat.

The next morning Leah forced open the heavy barn doors to start her chores. A loud whinny greeted her. Leah ran and hugged the familiar furry neck and kissed the white snip of a nose. “You're back!” she cried. “How did you get here?”

**22** Then Leah saw the note with her name written in big letters:

Dear Leah,

This is the finest pony in the county. But he's a little bit small for me and a little bit big for my grandson.

He fits you much better.

Your friend,

Mr. B.

**23** P.S. I heard how you saved your family's farm. These hard times won't last forever.

And they didn't.

14 Unit 1

**Q: Why couldn't Leah fall asleep?**

A: So many ‘big’ things had taken place during the course of the day. She had been reviewing all of the day's events and her role in them. Often, such thoughts prevent people from falling asleep. Mostly though, she was missing her pony.

**Q: Now that you know the true reason that Leah sold her pony, why do you think she invented a reason instead of just telling the truth?**

A: Leah was probably embarrassed to discuss her family's financial difficulties. In addition, maybe she didn't want to make a big fuss about selling her pony.

**Q: Do you think Mr. B. intended to return the pony originally or was he also influenced by what took place at the auction?**

A: Answers will vary.

**Q: What do you think would have happened to Leah's family if the outcome of the auction had been different?**

A: They would have endured even harder times. They would have had to make do with even less. Without their essential farm equipment, they could not have hoped to work the land once the weather improved. They could have seen no purpose in staying and would have decided to move.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a child, **Elizabeth Friedrich** loved to visit her aunt and uncle's farm. There, she was allowed to ride horses and help care for some of the farm animals. Young Elizabeth thought of the farm as "a magical place." As an adult, Ms. Friedrich was able to fulfill her dream of living on a farm. She, her husband, and their two children live on a New Hampshire farm, where they are raising a small flock of sheep. In addition to writing, Ms. Friedrich enjoys traveling and collecting antiques.



Leah's Pony 15

## About *The Way* *Poetry Shows Us the Way*

*The Way* is about what it feels like to ride a horse. It asks you to sit in the saddle, feel the sun on your shoulders, sway with the horse's movement, and listen to the sound of the horse's hooves. In short, it asks you to experience, rather than to think. A poem is better equipped to achieve this than is a piece of prose. The short lines of a poem, the evocative language and imagery that a poem employs, even the rhythm, pull the reader away from analyzing and thinking and towards feeling and experiencing. *The Way* is a good companion poem for *Leah's Pony* because it encourages us to feel how wonderful it is to ride on a pony and thus, to value even more highly Leah's sacrifice.

# The Way

Nancy Springer

**The way you sway  
rocked in a cradle  
as the horse walks**

**5 The way the sun  
rides warm on your shoulders  
as they sway**

**10 The way the horse  
talks back with its ears  
to everything you say**

**10 The way the sound  
of hooves on clay  
sets you dreaming**

**15 People say, "You're back.  
So what did you see  
on the trail today?"**

**You say, "Nothing much."  
It's not what you see  
it's the way. It's the way.**



*Poetry shows us  
the way*

## Studying the Selection

### QUICK REVIEW

1. Describe Papa's precious gift to Leah.
2. What type of weather conditions brought on the 'hard times' experienced by Leah's family?
3. How did Mama recycle things to save money?
4. Who changed the direction of the auction with a very low bid?

### FOCUS

5. Leah's father told her to be brave, and Leah obeyed. What are two examples of Leah's bravery?
6. We know that a good story has a beginning, middle, and an end. Reread the story and write down one important event from the beginning of the story, the middle of the story, and the end of the story.

### CREATING AND WRITING

7. Leah acted unselfishly to help her family. Do you think the townspeople would have reacted differently if an adult, rather than a child, had done what Leah did?
8. Leah was selfless during very difficult times. Think of someone you know who gave up something important to help another person. Write a paragraph describing the situation and selfless deed.
9. Create a poster for a "One Kindness a Day" campaign. Encourage people, young and old alike, to do something for others with the understanding that small acts can make a big difference. Be sure that your poster is attractive and explains the purpose of the project.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Do you think you would have the strength to do what Leah did?

## First Impressions

Answers will vary.

Discuss the fact that, on the one hand, we often think we are capable of doing great things until we are actually faced with the reality of doing them. On the other hand, when a difficult situation does present itself, we often rise to the challenge and find strength we did not know we possessed.

Encourage the students to relate personal stories of strength and triumph.

## Quick Review

1. Papa bought Leah a strong pony with a "snip" of white on its black nose. The pony was swift and sturdy. The pony's coat glistened like satin when Leah brushed him. Mr. B. said, "That's the finest pony in the whole county."
2. The weather was hot, dry, and dusty. This was a period of severe drought with the wind constantly blowing dust and dirt.
3. Mama used flour sacks to make underwear and dishwater to water the flowers.
4. Leah made a bold offer of one dollar for the tractor and no one had the heart to outbid her.

## Focus

5. She tried to sell her most precious possession—her pony.  
When she was talking to Mr. B, she bravely pretended that the pony was just too small for her—concealing her despair at having to sell him.  
"Leah's voice shook." Making a ridiculously low bid in front of the entire crowd took courage.
6. Answers will vary.

## Creating and Writing

7. Answers will vary. Remind students to include responses to all of the questions.
8. Answers will vary.
9. Provide enough craft materials so that students can do more than just write their message in marker. Tell your students that content is as important as art.



**Most pages are omitted from this preview.**

*This content is included with purchase of the book.*

**MOSDOS PRESS**

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# LESSON one



## What Is Poetry?

### **Poetry Is Sound and Rhythm.**

Sound is what we hear when we speak,  
when we hear the voices of others,  
the noises of the world around us, and  
the beating of our own hearts.

Some noises are harsh and hurt our ears.  
But poetry is not harsh! Poetry is a song.

Think about this:

When we try to make little children and babies happy, if they are crying or they need a nap, we speak in songs, nursery rhymes, animal sounds, and lullabies.

*Meow meow woof woof quack quack and mooooo  
of Old MacDonald's Farm,  
One Potato Two Potato  
Hickory Dickory Dock  
rock-a-bye baby—*

These are poetry.

Poetry sounds are  
*repeated repeated repeated re re re pea pea pea ted ted ted.*



Poetry 287

You can best prepare yourself to share these poems with your students, if you:

- read the poem silently several times
- speak the poem out loud softly
- speak the poem out loud loudly
- beat out the rhythm of the poem with your hand or foot, if the poem has a regular (or irregular) pattern of rhythm

When you are finished reading one poem, think about these questions:

How did the words feel in your mouth?

What sounds did you hear?

Which sounds did you hear repeated?

How did the poem leave you feeling?

Poets repeat sounds just as composers repeat notes. Repetition enchants us and enables us to remember oral histories, poetry, and songs. Repetition calms and reassures us. This is why poetry is an ancient tradition in nearly all cultures.

Poetry, then, is closest to our favorite literary forms and to comforting and entertaining experiences of sound: songs, lullabies, nursery rhymes, tongue twisters, and all forms of wordplay. One of the ways we talk to very little children is through the use of nursery rhymes and funny songs with funny sounds and animal noises. Poetry should be second nature to us.

When it comes to your students, remember that poetry not only *must* be read out loud, at some point in the semester it needs to be memorized and performed. As children, we like to speak dramatically and make dramatic gestures. Now your students can relearn these behaviors!

## Lesson One

### What Is Poetry?

What is the key to poetry? Poetry uses the pleasure we take in sound and the repetition of sound. Poetry is also often about rhythm: a beat that is inherent in the syllables of each line of verse. Both the patterns of sound and rhythm are the primary building blocks of most poetry.

Poetry is not taught. It is shown. It is revealed. We show children a celebration of sounds. Read each of the poems in the Poetry Unit first to yourself and then to your class, or before the students themselves begin reading an assigned poem. Show that you enjoy the poem as you read aloud. Remember: Keep time where there is a beat, use dramatic expression where you are able, speak loudly, and pace yourself. Make certain your students know the meaning of all the words the poet uses.

Lesson One has four poems:

*Birds' Square Dance* by Beverly McLoughland

*Thistles* by Karla Kuskin

*Whirligig Beetles* by Paul Fleischman

*This Is the Key* by Anonymous

## Birds' Square Dance

### New Words

**cassowary:** large birds of New Guinea, Australia, the Aru Islands, and Ceram, closely related to the emu

**chachalaca:** tropical birds that live in trees and resemble wild turkeys but are longer legged and have a well-developed feathered crest, that are native to Central America and Mexico

**kittiwake:** a type of gull

**noddy tern:** any of several stout-bodied terns, chiefly of tropical and subtropical seas

**do-si-do** (doe see doe): Two dancers begin by facing each other, then move clockwise so as to first pass right shoulders ("pass by the right"), then back-to-back, then left shoulders, ending where they began.

*Cockatoo, bluefoot booby, marabou, cassowary, toucan, noddy, oriole, chachalaca, bobolink, kittiwake, loon, puffin, parakeet, curlew, crow, pipit, and tern* are the names of seventeen different kinds of birds.

### About the Poem

This exuberant Beverly McLoughland poem is meant to be danced and shouted, and uses a traditional square dance beat. Each line has four beats, with the stress on beats one and three. In Lines 2 and 4 of all five stanzas, the fourth beat is implied.

The listing of birds, here, is a kind of repetition, a kind of counting out (as in *One Potato, Two Potato*). The poem opens and closes with traditional square dance words: *Swing your partner* and *Do-si-do*. *Swing your partner* sets the tone of the poem and *Do-si-do* concludes the story.

*Birds' Square Dance* has no theme. It is a celebration of sound, beat, and movement. In addition to the repetition of birds' names, the author repeats the vowel sound *oo*: *Cockatoo, Bluefoot, booby, Marabou, Toucan, Loon, Curlew*.

When this sort of vowel repetition occurs within words it is called **assonance**. The author also rhymes the final words of Lines 2 and 4 of each stanza:

*Cockatoo... Marabou*  
*toe... Oriole* (an almost rhyme called a *slant rhyme*)  
*right... tight*  
*feet... Parakeet*  
*crow... Do-si-do*

What other forms of repetition does the author use?

Syllable sound:

*Marabou... Cassowary... noddy*  
**Chachalaca**  
**Bobolink**

Beverly McLoughland

## Birds' Square Dance

Swing your partner  
 Cockatoo  
 Bluefoot booby  
 Marabou

5 Cassowary  
 Heel and toe  
 Toucan, noddy  
 Oriole

Chachalaca

10 To the right  
 Bobolink and  
 Hold her tight

Kittiwake and  
 Tap your feet

15 Loon and puffin  
 Parakeet

Flap your feathers  
 Curlew, crow  
 Pipit, tern, and

20 Do-si-do.

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Initial and Internal Consonant:

Words with a **k** sound:

**Cockatoo, Cassowary, Toucan,**  
**Chachalaca, Bobolink, Kittiwake,**  
**Parakeet, Curlew, Crow**

The repetition of initial consonants is called **alliteration**. The repetition of internal consonants is called **consonance**. The author also repeats other consonants:

**b** **Bluefoot booby, Bobolink**  
**t** **Cockatoo, toe, Toucan, tight, tap,**  
**tern**  
**f** **feet, Flap, feathers**  
**p** **puffin, Parakeet, Pipit**



Karla Kuskin

# Thistles

Thirty thirsty thistles  
 Thicketed and green  
 Growing in a grassy swamp  
 Purple-topped and lean  
 5 Prickily and thistley  
 Topped by tufts of thorns  
 Green mean little leaves on them.  
 And tiny purple horns  
 Briary and brambley  
 10 A spikey, spiney bunch of them.  
 A troop of bright-red birds came by  
 And had a lovely lunch of them.

Rhythmically, the poem is as follows:

*Thirty thirsty thistles*

6 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*Thicketed and green*

5 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*Growing in a grassy swamp*

7 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5, 7)

*Purple-topped and lean*

5 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*Prickily and thistley*

6 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*Topped by tufts of thorns*

5 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*Green mean little leaves on them.*

7 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5, 7)

*And tiny purple horns*

6 beats (stress on syllables 2, 4, 6)

*Briary and brambley*

6 beats (stress on syllables 1, 3, 5)

*A spikey, spiney bunch of them.*

8 beats (stress on syllables 2, 4, 6, 8)

*A troop of bright-red birds came by*

8 beats (stress on syllables 2, 4, 6, 8)

*And had a lovely lunch of them.*

8 beats (stress on syllables 2, 4, 6, 8)

The effect of the poet's altering the stress pattern of the poem is not a fourth grade discussion, but you certainly will want to point out to your students that this occurs, in order to help them keep time.

Ask your students to find the repetition of these letters: *th, ir, istle, ick, gr, p, t, sp, and br*. Are there any other repeated initial consonants they see?

The poet also uses internal rhyme (words within lines rhyming): *green mean* and then the matching assonance of *leaves*.

You may want to point out that the color *red* in the next to the last line comes as a shock, after all of that green and purple, just as we are surprised that along come some birds who make quick work of the well-armed thistles.

## Thistles

### About the Poem

Clearly, this poem is a tongue twister, with lots of alliteration and consonance thrown at us every which way (which is how tongue twisters twist our tongues). *Thistles* is a lesson in the repetition of consonants. The author also threads this one-stanza poem with vowel repetition (another way to trip a tongue, in combination with the tricky consonant combinations).

Does the poem have a theme? Perhaps. We learn a lot about those thistles in ten lines. And then they are eaten and gone in one fell swoop (just two lines!) by a troop of bright-red birds who come to dine. In nature, that which seems solid and stable can disappear in an instant!

Alternating lines rhyme (2 with 4, 6 with 8, and 10 with 12). The last rhyme is sweet: *bunch of them ... lunch of them*.

## Whirligig Beetles

Do you students know that *whirl* means to turn in a circle?

The word *whirligig*, which is a noun, is something that continuously whirls, moves, or changes.

Whirligig beetles are a family of water beetles that have a firm oval, usually dark, body with a bronzy luster. Most of the time, they live on the surface of water where they move swiftly about in curves. They swim rapidly in circles when alarmed. They are also distinguished by their divided eyes, which can see both above and below water.

Their grouping behavior helps them avoid being hunted and is a survival mechanism. They have a bubble of air trapped underneath their abdomens which allows them to dive and swim under the water for a long time.

### About the Poem

This poem for two voices (or two groups of voices) captures the seemingly ecstatic, compulsive whirling of whirligig beetles. The poem, incredibly, conveys the *feeling* of whirling. One is almost whirling as one reads it and is dizzy by its end.

The poem is to be read by two groups in a fashion similar to a round. Group I starts the poem and has five stanzas or separate sections of the poem. For Group I, stanza 1 has three lines. Stanza 2, six lines. Stanza 3, six lines. Stanza 4, only one line! Stanza 5 has nine lines.

Group II starts one line later than Group I. For Group II, the poem has only three stanzas. Stanza 1 has six lines. Stanza 2 has six lines. Stanza 3 has sixteen lines!

Your students will need to be very clear about the rhythm. Each line consists of two slow beats on the stressed syllables or six fast beats matching each syllable. For most of the poem—up to Line 22—the stressed syllables are syllables 2 and 5.

Make sure your students are also clear about how many lines they are silent (while the other group speaks). They should continue beating out the rhythm when it is their turn to be silent. Then they will be able to come in on cue. See the chart on the far side of the following page (p. T291). All the lines in the poem are counted as long as one group is speaking. The poem has 33 lines.

The poem does not rhyme. Repetition comes from the counterpoint of the two voices, which weave in and out of the poem, very nearly saying all of the same words and echoing each other, and from all of the *ing* endings.

Since the author uses lots of alliteration (repetition of initial consonants), you may want to ask your

## Whirligig Beetles

Paul Fleischman

We're whirligig beetles  
we're swimming in circles,  
black backs by the hundred.

We're spinning and swerving  
as if we were on a  
mad merry-go-round.

We never get dizzy  
from whirling and weaving  
and wheeling and swirling.

The same goes for turning,  
revolving and curving,  
gyrating and twirling.  
The crows fly directly,  
but we prefer spirals,  
arcs, ovals, and loops.

"As the whirligig swims"

circular  
roundabout  
backtracking  
indirect  
serpentine  
tortuous  
twisty,  
best possible  
route.

We're whirligig beetles  
we're swimming in circles,  
black backs by the hundred.  
We're spinning and swerving  
as if we were on a  
mad merry-go-round.

We never get dizzy  
from whirling and weaving  
and wheeling and swirling.  
The same goes for turning,  
revolving and curving,  
gyrating and twirling.

The crows fly directly,  
but we prefer spirals,  
arcs, ovals, and loops.  
We're fond of the phrase  
"As the whirligig swims"  
meaning traveling by  
the most circular  
roundabout  
backtracking  
indirect  
serpentine  
tortuous  
twisty and  
turny,  
best possible  
route.

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students to identify the repeated letters. Make sure they know what a consonant is.

The poem shows what can be done poetically with a lot of synonyms. If you or your students want to mimic this piece at some point, a thesaurus will be invaluable.

Does the poem have a theme? If one knows that these beetles whirl in order to avoid being eaten by predators, then the variety of movements they can make to survive stands in sharp contrast to the vulnerability of the thistles.

Make sure your students know what *serpentine* (like a serpent or snake; wind-

ing or turning one way and another) and *tortuous* (marked by repeated twists, bends, or turns; winding) mean.

In the chart the stressed syllables are in bold.

# This Is the Key

- This is the key of the kingdom:  
 In that kingdom there is a city.  
 In that city there is a town.  
 In that town there is a street.  
 5 In that street there is a lane.  
 In that lane there is a yard.  
 In that yard there is a house.  
 In that house there is a room.  
 In that room there is a bed.  
 10 On that bed there is a basket.  
 In that basket there are some flowers.
- Flowers in a basket.  
 Basket on the bed.  
 Bed in the room.  
 15 Room in the house.  
 House in the yard.  
 Yard in the lane.  
 Lane in the street.  
 Street in the town.  
 20 Town in the city.  
 City in the kingdom.  
 Of the kingdom this is the key.

Anonymous



Poetry 291

## This Is the Key

### About the Poem

*This Is the Key* is a mysterious and probably very old nursery rhyme. We are led into a town, down a street, a lane, into a yard, into a house to find a basket of flowers. There are no verbs other than *is*, and yet one has the sense of motion, of moving through all of these places.

Apparently, the basket of flowers is the key to the kingdom. Why would a basket of flowers be the key? Could natural beauty and the blossoming of life be an answer to some of the puzzles of life? Discuss this with your students. Whatever you come up with—that is the theme.

Talk with your students about the meaning of the word *key*. Of course, most of us know that a key is a metal object used to lock or unlock something. But *key* is also used in the abstract as something that reveals the solution to a problem or mystery.

The poem has twenty-two lines: Lines 11 and 12 form its center, both in terms of the structure of the poem and thematically. Here lies the basket of flowers that are the key to the kingdom and the key to the poem.

Group I	Group II	Line
We're <b>whirligig</b> beetles	1-2-3 4-5-6	1
we're <b>swimming</b> in circles,	We're <b>whirligig</b> beetles	2
black <b>backs</b> by the <b>hundred</b> .	we're <b>swimming</b> in circles,	3
1-2-3 4-5-6	black <b>backs</b> by the <b>hundred</b> .	4
1-2-3 4-5-6	We're <b>swimming</b> and <b>swerving</b>	5
We're <b>swimming</b> and <b>swerving</b>	as <b>if</b> we were <b>on</b> a	6
as <b>if</b> we were <b>on</b> a (6 beats)	mad <b>merry-go-round</b> . (5 beats)	7
mad <b>merry-go-round</b> . (5 beats)	1-2-3 4-5-6	8
We <b>never</b> get <b>dizzy</b>	1-2-3 4-5-6	9
from <b>whirling</b> and <b>weaving</b>	We <b>never</b> get <b>dizzy</b>	10
and <b>wheeling</b> and <b>swirling</b> .	from <b>whirling</b> and <b>weaving</b>	11
1-2-3 4-5-6	and <b>wheeling</b> and <b>swirling</b> .	12
1-2-3 4-5-6	The <b>same</b> goes for <b>turning</b> ,	13
The <b>same</b> goes for <b>turning</b> ,	<b>revolving</b> and <b>curving</b> ,	14
<b>revolving</b> and <b>curving</b> ,	<b>gyrating</b> and <b>twirling</b> .	15
<b>gyrating</b> and <b>twirling</b> .	1-2-3 4-5-6	16
The <b>crows</b> fly <b>directly</b> ,	1-2-3 4-5-6	17
but <b>we</b> prefer <b>spirals</b> ,	The <b>crows</b> fly <b>directly</b> ,	18
<b>arcs</b> , <b>ovals</b> , and <b>loops</b> . (5 beats)	but <b>we</b> prefer <b>spirals</b> ,	19
1-2-3 4-5-6	<b>arcs</b> , <b>ovals</b> , and <b>loops</b> . (5 beats)	20
1-2-3 4-5-6	We're <b>fond</b> of the <b>phrase</b> (5 beats)	21
"As the <b>whirligig</b> <b>swims</b> "	"As the <b>whirligig</b> <b>swims</b> "	22
1-2-3 4-5-6	meaning <b>traveling</b> <b>by</b>	23
1-2-3 4-5	the most <b>circular</b> (5 beats)	24
<b>circular</b> (3 beats)	<b>roundabout</b> (3 beats)	25
<b>roundabout</b>	<b>backtracking</b>	26
<b>backtracking</b>	<b>indirect</b>	27
<b>indirect</b>	<b>serpentine</b>	28
<b>serpentine</b>	<b>tortuous</b>	29
<b>tortuous</b>	<b>twisty</b> and	30
<b>twisty</b> (2 beats)	<b>turny</b> (2 beats)	31
<b>best possible</b> (4 beats)	<b>best possible</b> (4 beats)	32
<b>route</b> . (1 beat)	<b>route</b> . (1 beat)	33

## Think About It

- After you have read the poem to your class (beating time with your hand or foot), have your students practice the poem. You may want to give them time in class to rehearse individually and in small groups.
- In *Birds' Square Dance*, the poet uses the sound *ooo* in *Cockatoo*, *Bluefoot*, *booby*, *Marabou*, *Toucan*, *Loon*, and *Curlew*.
- Here are twenty-four tongue twisters, so that each student will have a different one to recite.
  - Sure the ship's shipshape, sir.
  - If Stu chews shoes, should Stu choose the shoes he chews?
  - What a shame such a shapely sash should such shabby stitches show.
  - A big black bug bit a big black bear, made the big black bear bleed blood.
  - Toy boat. Toy boat. Toy boat.
  - Which wristwatches are Swiss wristwatches?
  - A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.
  - The boot black bought the black boot back.
  - Six sick slick slim sycamore saplings.
  - Knapsack straps.
  - Unique New York.
  - Cheap ship trip.
  - The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick.
  - Shy Shelly says she shall sew sheets.
  - Lesser leather never weathered wetter weather better.
  - Moose noshing much mush.
  - Many an anemone sees an enemy anemone.
  - Thieves seize skis.
  - Chop shops stock chops.
  - Preshrunk silk shirts.
  - A bloke's back bike brake block broke.
  - Lily ladles little Letty's lentil soup.
  - Six slippery snails, slid slowly seaward.
  - Three twigs twined tightly.
- The six words in *Thistles* that begin with *th* are **thirty**, **thirsty**, **thistles**, **thicketed**, **thorns**, and **thistley**.
  - The three words that begin *gr* are **green**, **growing**, and **grassy**.
  - Three words begin with *br*: **briary**, **brambley**, and **bright-red**. Two words begin *sp*: **spikey** and **spiney**.
- Whirligig Beetles* takes a lot of practice. The easiest way for your students to practice is for them to clap their hands and beat their feet in time to the words. Have them practice one stanza at a time.



## THINK about it

- Read *Birds' Square Dance* to yourself, silently. Then read *Birds' Square Dance* out loud. Now read *Birds' Square Dance* tapping your foot and clapping your hands to the beat. Which sounds did you hear repeated? Write them down.
- In *Birds' Square Dance*, the poet uses the sound *ooo* (as in *boo hoo*) seven times. Write down the seven words that have the sound *ooo*.

- Thistles* is a tongue twister. Your teacher will give you a tongue twister to practice and say before your class. Which consonants are repeated in your tongue twister? Write them down.
- Write down the six words in *Thistles* that begin with *th*. (Do not include the word *them*, because it is a different *th* sound.)
  - Write down the three words (one of these is used twice) that begin *gr*.
  - Now, write down the words that begin *br* and those that begin *sp*.

- This exercise must be led by your teacher. *Whirligig Beetles* is meant to be read in two groups. During part of the reading, one group is quiet while the other recites. The easiest way to recite in the correct rhythm is to clap your hands and tap your foot as you say the words out loud. In order to keep the rhythm you have to keep clapping and tapping even when it is not your group's turn to read.
  - Your teacher will assign you to Group One or Two. Remember: When your group is not reciting, keep beating time.

- This Is the Key* goes forward and back. Which line is at the exact center of the poem? Write down your answer.
- You are going to write a poem just like *This Is the Key*. Your poem will have only ten lines. Five will go forward and five will go back. Here are some beginning lines to choose from:
 

*This is the door to the house...*  
*These are the steps to the library...*  
*This is the gate to the path...*

 You may choose to think of one of your own.

- Divide the class into two groups called Group I and Group II. Group I will start the poem and will recite five stanzas or separate sections of the poem. For Group I, stanza 1 has three lines. Stanza 2, six lines. Stanza 3, six lines. Stanza 4 only one line! Stanza 5 has nine lines. Group II starts one line later than Group I. For Group II, the poem has only three stanzas. Stanza 1 has six lines. Stanza 2 has six lines. Stanza 3 has sixteen lines.
- The line at the exact center of the poem is: "In that basket there are some flowers."
- Your students are going to write a poem just like *This Is the Key*. Here is an additional list of opening lines:
 

This is the cover that opens the book  
This is the road to the city  
This is the forest  
This is the nation  
This is the school  
This is the flag  
This is the room