Project Greeting Card

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Program Outline

Grade: 5 (This project could easily be adapted for grades 3-12)

Students: This project is appropriate for most students who can work independently and cooperatively. The focus on reading and responding to different forms of poetry, doing research, and developing written communication skills helps students reach higher performance criteria for the English/Language Arts Standards. This project will help to provide students with the skills, tools, and training to integrate technology into the curriculum.

Major Goals and Overview

*Project Greeting Card* will introduce our children and staff to the “genre” of greeting cards. As they study poetry and prose, teachers and students will use real greeting cards to observe how poetry and prose is used to create special, individual greeting cards. Through a partnership with With You In Mind, a retail card store within walking distance of the school, students will learn first-hand how a greeting card gets created from idea (speaking with authors and illustrators) to production through technology. This card retailer uses Designer Greetings, a card manufacturer on Staten Island. The students can visit the plant and may have visiting volunteer artists with them.

All grades and classes will benefit from this project, with the greatest emphasis in the upper grades, where we have targeted our areas of weakness. The goal of the project is to have each upper-grade student use poetry or prose to create specially designed and personalized birthday cards for each of our lower-grade students. The children will use their English Language Arts skills for a real purpose and learn computer skills including the use of the Internet (downloading graphics and translations).
Types of Assessments Used

Authentic performance assessment: Student work is judged against a list of criteria for that type of work.

Process assessment: Students and teachers reflect on, evaluate, and find ways to improve on their work process.

The success of this project will be measured by the following criteria: An increase in our standardized scores on the CTB, which will measure reading and comprehension. We will look specifically at the scores associated with the poetry and prose sections of the test. An increase in the PAL and ELA tests will indicate success in writing skills for our students. Our students maintain academic portfolios in reading and writing. The teacher and students evaluate work to be placed in the portfolio. An improvement in the quality of the writing, especially in the areas of poetry, will be deemed successful. The students will be able to place copies of the cards created into the portfolio. The quality of the products themselves as judged by the student, teacher, and recipient will also be a good indicator of success.
Lesson Plans

The lesson plans for this unit involve studying poetry and prose, studying greeting cards, and writing poetry.

Learning About Greeting Cards

1. Identifying Elements of Greeting Cards

Objective: Students will identify characteristics that greeting cards share.

Time: about two class periods but may vary

Resources needed: samples of greeting cards, chart paper, and markers

Activities:

1. Explore greeting cards through hands-on experience. Provide cooperative groups of students with a variety of greeting cards for both adults and children.
2. After reading each card, students will list on chart paper the things they notice about all cards.

2. Identifying Similarities and Differences in Greeting Cards

Objective: Students will understand the “workings” of greeting cards by comparing and contrasting elements of various cards.

Time: one to two class periods

Resources needed: greeting cards for different occasions for adults and children, markers, and chart paper

Activity:

Look at examples of greeting cards intended for children and those intended for adults. On a T-chart they will note similarities and differences between them.
1. Ongoing study of poetry and prose

*Objective:* Students read poetry and prose and identify their elements, patterns, messages, etc.

*Time:* ongoing

*Resources needed:* poems, poetry anthologies

*Activity:* This part of the project involves students in reading and discussing poetry and prose. After several weeks of reading poetry and becoming familiar with its elements and patterns, students will move toward the writing phase.

## Writing Poetry

1. **Writing a free-verse**

*Objective:* Students will move through the writing process to write a free-verse poem.

*Time:* 3-4 class periods

*Resources needed:* examples of free-verse poetry, pens, pencils, paper, “Thinking as a Poet” chart

*Activities:*

1. Share several free-verse poems with the students. This may include: “The Stars” by Nikki Giovanni; “Moon in the Pond” by Jane Yolen; and “Candle” by Myra Cohn Livingston. Discuss what each poem does. They describe something in an imaginative way. They use words creatively to describe a mood or tell the poet’s feelings or thoughts. They often make comparisons using the words “like” or “as” to describe an object.

2. Brainstorm subjects that children might be able to describe in an unusual or imaginative way. Examples might include a season, a favorite food, or going to the beach. Encourage students to select a topic that has meaning for them and that they’d want to share with others.
3. Once they’ve selected a topic, they should create a word web as a plan for pre-writing their poems. In the web, they should write down any ideas that they think of concerning their topic. Encourage use of sensory details; what they can see, hear, and feel.

4. Create a first draft. Remind students that they are trying to capture a certain mood/feeling.

Revising, Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing the Free Verse

Objective: Students will reflect on the criteria for their free verse.

Time: 1-2 class periods but may vary

Resources needed: computers for word-processing, software for adding graphics, paper and color printer for publishing poems, “Thinking as a Poet” poster, editing and revising checklists

Activities:

1. Teach mini-lessons on using technology as needed. Students can teach each other as well.
2. Have students use the editing and revising checklists to think about ways to improve their poems.
3. Have students write their second drafts. The teacher should work with small groups of students or conduct one-to-one conferences to discuss revisions and provide assistance.
4. Students will publish their final drafts on the computer.

2. Writing a rhyming poem

Objectives: Students will write poems that follow specified rhyming patterns (example: AABB, ABAB, etc.)

Time: varies

Resources needed: examples of rhyming poems, chart paper, markers, pens, paper
Activities:

1. Share rhyming poems with the students. Some examples may include: “If We Didn’t Have Birthdays” by Dr. Seuss; “Dandelions” by Marchette Chute; “Sacajawea” by Ann Whitford Paul; “Rainbows” by Nikki Giovanni; “Polar Bear” by William Jay Smith; “The Chocolate Cake” by William Jay Smith; “Soft Soles” by Nikki Grimes; “Statue of Liberty” by Myra Cohn Livingston; “September Garden” by Myra Cohn Livingston; “Dreams” by Langston Hughes; “Reasons Why” by Langston Hughes; “My Father” by Mary Ann Hoberman; “Four Generations” by Mary Ann Hoberman; and “In Hardwood Groves” by Robert Frost.

2. As they read each poem, children should be able to identify the rhyming patterns in each. When they are familiar and comfortable with this type of poetry, children will write their own rhyming poems on a topic of their choice. Encourage children to select a topic that has meaning for them.

3. Once they’ve selected a topic, brainstorm words that describe it. Once they have a list of words that describe their topic they should try to come up with another list of words that rhyme with the ones they’ve just brainstormed.

4. Students will write a first draft. Remind them that they’re trying to capture a certain mood or feeling.

Revising, Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing the Rhyming Poem

Objective: Students will reflect on the criteria for the rhyming poems.

Time: 2-3 class periods

Resources needed: computers for word-processing, software for adding graphics, paper and color printer for publishing the poems, editing and revising checklists

Activities:

1. Have groups of students work together with revision-editing checklists to see how they can improve their poems.

2. Teach mini-lessons on using technology as needed. Students can also teach each other.

3. Have students write their second drafts. The teacher should work with small groups of students or conduct one-to-one conferences to discuss revisions and provide assistance when needed.

4. Students will write their second drafts.

5. Students will publish their poems on the computer.
Creating a Greeting Card

Objective: Students will use what they know about greeting cards and poetry to create a personalized birthday card for a lower-grade student.

Time: varies

Resources Needed: rhyming and free-verse poems, markers, crayons, colored pencils, drawing paper, greeting cards, chart paper

Activities:

1. Groups brainstorm lists of things younger children enjoy and might like seeing on their birthday cards. Record these ideas on chart paper.
2. With a partner, students will take a birthday card from idea to production. They will plan what graphic designs belong on the card and where they will be placed. They will select an appropriate font and write an original greeting inside the card.
3. Student groups create first drafts of their birthday cards. On drawing paper they will sketch what will appear on the front of their cards. On the reverse side, students will write their birthday greeting. Remind students of the audience of this particular poem.

Revising, Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing the Birthday Card

Objective: Students will reflect on the criteria of a good greeting card.

Time: 4 to 6 class periods

Resources needed: computers for word-processing, software for adding graphic designs, paper and color printer for publishing the cards

Activities:

1. Groups of students work together with the revision and editing checklists to see how they can improve their cards.
2. Teach mini-lessons on using technology as needed. Students can also teach each other.
3. Have students create their second drafts. The teacher should work with small groups to discuss revisions and provide assistance where needed.
4. Students will publish their birthday cards on the computer.
Thinking Like a Poet  (Baron & Sicinski-Skeans 115)

♫ ♫ What vivid words can I use to bring my subject to life?
♫ ♫ How can I arrange my words so that certain words and ideas stand out?
♫ ♫ Will I paint a word picture with my poem? Will I tell a story?
Revising Checklist (Baron & Sicenski-Skeans 117)

- Did I use vivid, colorful words with pleasing sounds to describe a person, place, or thing?
- Did I use the words “like” or “as” to make comparisons called similes?
- Does every detail help to set the mood? Are there extra words that you don’t need?
- Does my poem have the rhythm I want?
- Do I want to include any words that rhyme?
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Editing and Proofreading Checklist
(Baron & Sicinski-Skeans 119)

Did I use a comma to separate a phrase from the rest of the sentence?
Did I use periods when I wanted to end one sentence and begin another?
Do I want to change any word form by adding a different ending?
Have I spelled all words correctly?
Conferencing With Poetry
(Heard 50-1)

Does the poem feel complete?
How does it sound? Any places where it sounded great? Any places where it “clanked”?
Did you get any more ideas? Did more images pop into your mind?
Do you have a favorite part?
Which part did you feel was most like what you felt?
Is everything you want to say here?
Do you like the ending? Do you like the way it begins?
What could you do to make this part sound better (or more like a poem)?
What about it doesn’t sound right?
Why does this part sound so great?
Assessment Sheet for Final Draft of Greeting Card

**Greeting Card Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✐ Card states the occasion it is meant for</td>
<td>1  2   3  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Appropriate graphics for the intended audience</td>
<td>1  2  3  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Appropriate inside greeting for the intended audience</td>
<td>1  2    3    4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Uses rhyming patterns correctly</td>
<td>1  2   3  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✐ Card has been proofread for spelling, grammar, and punctuation</td>
<td>1  2  3  4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

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Similarities and Differences in Greeting Cards for Adults and Children
Examples of Resources

“The Stars” by Nikki Giovanni

Across the dark and quiet sky
When sunbeams have to go to bed
The stars peep out and sparkle up
      Occasionally they fall.

They dance the ballet of the night
They pirouette and boogie down
In blue and red and blue-white dress
      They hustle through the night.

The fairies play among the stars
They ride on carpets of gold dust
And Dawn’s gray fingers shake them off
      Occasionally they fall.

“Moon in the Pond” by Jane Yolen

    Moon.
There are two, now,
One above,
hanging,
a globe, a lamp
lighting the way.
The other a paten,
a plate, a tea tray,
almost within reach.
    Moon.
“Circus Clown” by Myra Cohn Livingston

In striped pajamas,
round red nose,
a pointed cap,
patched cheeks, bare toes.

In floppy gloves,
big ears of red,
green curls around
a bald white head.

In baggy pants
and painted frown
it must be hard
to be a clown.

“Candle” by Myra Cohn Livingston

Inside the yellow
flame, a blue shadow struggles to
wriggle itself free

sending little puffs
of black smoke into the air;
waving side to side,

jumping up, changing
from fat to thin, dropping small
tears of wax,

sighing, sighing, blown
out by the wind, vanishing
into a black wick.
“If We Didn’t Have Birthdays” by Dr. Seuss

If we didn’t have birthdays, you wouldn’t be you.
If you’d never been born, well then what would you do?
If you’d never been born, well then what would you be?
You might be a fish! Or a toad in a tree!
You might be a doorknob! Or three baked potatoes!
You might be a bag full of hard green tomatoes.
Or worse than all that. . . Why you might be a WASN’T.
A Wasn’t has no fun at all. No, he doesn’t.
A Wasn’t just isn’t. He just isn’t present.
But you. . . You ARE YOU! And, now isn’t that pleasant.

“My Father” by Mary Ann Hoberman

My father doesn’t live with us.
It doesn’t help to make a fuss;
But still I feel unhappy, plus

I miss him.

My father doesn’t live with me.
He’s got another family;
He moved away when I was three.

I miss him.

I’m always happy on the day
He visits and we talk and play;
But after he has gone away

I miss him.

“Four Generations” by Mary Ann Hoberman

Sometimes when we go out for walks,
I listen while my father talks.

The thing he talks of most of all
Is how it was when he was small

And he went walking with his dad
And conversations that they had
About his father and the talks
They had when they went out for walks.
“Dreams” by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

“Reasons Why” by Langston Hughes

Just because I loves you—
That’s de reason why
Ma soul is full of color
Like de wings of a butterfly.

Just because I loves you
That’s de reason why
Ma heart’s a fluttering aspen leaf
When you pass by.

“Soft Soles” by Nikki Grimes

You walk like a whisper
‘Long the hospital hall,
Tell patients you pass
Not to worry at all.

You rush to your ward
On cushions of white
To smooth and fluff pillows;
Set everything right.

You bathe fevered foreheads,
Give needles with care,
And chat with those patients
Who’ve no family there.

Truck drivers are cool,
And firemen aren’t bad,
But Kyle plans on being
A nurse like his dad.
“Polar Bear” by William Jay Smith

The Polar Bear never makes his bed;  
He sleeps on a cake of ice instead.  
He has no blanket, no quilt, no sheet  
Except the rain and snow and sleet.  
He drifts about on a whit ice floe  
While cold winds howl and blizzards blow  
And the temperature drops to forty below.  
The Polar Bear never makes his bed;  
The blanket he pulls up over his head  
Is lined with soft and feathery snow.  
If he ever rose and turned on the light,  
He would find a world of bathtub white,  
And icebergs floating through the night.

“The Chocolate Cake” by William Jay Smith

Mother decided once to bake  
A huge delicious chocolate cake.  
How nice of Mother to prepare it;  
I asked my friends to come and share it.  
They agreed, but they were late,  
And so I had to sit and wait.

Their forks were laid out on the table,  
And round the cake each empty chair  
Sat in gloomy silence there,  
Until at last I thought I might  
Dare to take a little bite.  
And so I did, and then another . . .  
And moments later, still another . . .

Then, when my friends knocked at the door,  
The cake that was was there no more.
“Statue of Liberty” by Myra Cohn Livingston

Give me your tired, your poor, she says,
Those yearning to be free.
Take a light from my burning torch,
The light of Liberty.

Give me your huddled masses
Lost on another shore,
Tempest tossed and weary,
These I will take and more.

Give me your thirsty, your hungry
Who come from another place.
You who would dream of freedom
Look into my face.

“September Garden” by Myra Cohn Livingston

Good-bye to summer.
The zinnias are gone.
Patches of brown lie dead on the lawn.

Tomato vines wither.
Daisies turn brown.
Pansies are dying. The dahlias droop down.

Impatiens are wilting.
No lilies in sight,
But chrysanthemums uncurl in purple and white.

“Dandelions” by Marchette Chute

I’m picking my mother a present.
How perfectly glad she will be
To see all the beautiful flowers
She gets on her birthday from me.
“Rainbows” by Nikki Giovanni

If I could climb
    the mountains
And rest on clouds
    that float
I’d swim across
    the clear blue air
To reach my rainbow boat.

My rainbow boat
    is oh so big.
And I could be
    so tall
As I sit
    in my captain’s chair
The master of it all

But I am just a little boy
    who’s standing on the ground
And others steer
    the rainbow past
While I just hang around

I sit on the ground
    and see
The rainbows steering
    right past me
I sit on the ground
And wonder why
“Sacajawea” by Ann Whitford Paul

Long years ago a girl embarked
with two explorers, Lewis and Clark,
to learn about uncharted land.
She crossed the plains
And climbed gigantic mountains,
Forged the rivers snaking through the woods.
She circled lakes
With her baby on her back,
alert for bear and lion tracks,
she showed them shortcuts through the hills.
When men fell sick, she nursed the ill.
She introduced them to wild plants,
when all the men were ignorant of what was food.
And when they met her kin, she said,
“Feel no threat,” in their own native tongue.
“Come trade your horses, share your meat.”
They aided Lewis and Clark.

So many hills to climb. . .
traveling on for two years time,
trudging, tramping day by day,
wending, winding on her way
with every dauntless step she took,
She walked into our history books.

“The Hardwood Groves” by Robert Frost

The same leaves over and over again!
They fall from giving shade above
To make one texture of faded brown
and fit the earth like a leather glove.

Before the leaves can mount again
To fill the trees with another shade,
They must go down past things coming up.
They must go down into the dark decayed.

They must be pierced by flowers and put
Beneath the feet of dancing flowers.
However it is some other world
I know that this is the way in ours.
Resource List

Resources for the reading of poetry and prose


With You In Mind. Retail card store, Staten Island, NY

Resources for information on writing poetry

Spandel, Vicki. Daybook of Critical Reading and Writing. Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group Inc. 2001