



## An Acrostic Idea Page for National Poetry Month

By Monica Romig

**A**sk local poets to share their poetry and host a Q & A afterwards for your class.

**P**lay music and improvise lyrics on the spot. Record the songs you create.

**R**eflect! Have students keep a journal to write one poem every day about how they feel.

**I**nvoke older adults to write letters to your class about their favorite poems.

**L**isten to spoken-word performances on CD or online. Write your own!

**I**nvestigate some famous poets by visiting their homes or historical sites.

**S**kype a grandparent or grand-friend and write a poem together online.

**N**umbers play a role in haiku poetry. Write a haiku with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern.

**A**lphabet poems have each line starting with the next letter of the alphabet.

**T**ry to write a found poem, where each phrase is a line from another piece of writing.

**I**magine yourself on an adventure and write an epic poem describing it.

**O**ccasional poems are for a specific event. Write about a significant time in your life.

**N**ames can be used in acrostic poems, or sentences like the poem on this page!

**A** diamond poem starts with a subject and transforms into another one, all in one poem.

**L**imericks are short, often funny poems that have the rhyming pattern A, A, B, B, A.

**P**aint the words of a favorite poem adding illustrations and designs.

**O**bserve nature and write a poem inspired by your observations.

**E**mbody a poem by performing it like a dramatic monologue.

**T**alk about poems. Have “poem club” like book club. Read poems together and discuss.

**R**econstruct a poem to change it and make it special to you.

**Y**our poems can become song lyrics—just add music!

**M**emorize poems in other languages and have an international poetry party.

**O**rganize an intergenerational poetry slam. Seniors and kids take turns reciting poems.

**N**avigate a group through the library to show where the poetry books are kept.

**T**ell stories line by line going around a circle. Try to make lines rhyme when possible.

**H**onor older adults—display their poetry in public spaces for everyone to enjoy.

## Poetry Ideas

By Monica Romig

The preceding pages contain an *acrostic* poem: each line starts with the letter from a word or sentence. Each vertical word contains ideas for different settings, but with a little creativity they can be used in almost any situation. Each line, which presents a different idea for a celebration of poetry, is prompted by a letter in the sentence “April is National Poetry Month.”

### For classrooms and teachers

The first five ideas (spelling “April”) are geared towards classrooms and teachers. These ideas invite poetry and intergenerational relationships into the classroom by encouraging students to write their own poetry and by having individuals from the community participate.

- You can find local poets on websites like [poetry.meetup.com](http://poetry.meetup.com). Invite seniors from the community to listen to the presentation.
- Try different types of music to create poetry. Have some slow songs and some faster songs to inspire different students. Play the same song more than once to help them learn the rhythm patterns; this will make it easier for them to come up with words. They can do this activity individually or in groups. Have older adults come to the class to participate and use songs they enjoy from a previous decade for inspiration.
- Journaling is a helpful tool to boost reflection. Giving time and a quiet space every day in the classroom for students to write builds a habit they can use at home too.
- Pen pals are a great way to begin to build intergenerational relationships. Letter writing is a skill that is quickly diminishing as communication technology becomes more pervasive. After having the students and seniors write back and forth a few times, consider inviting the seniors to your classroom for a meet and greet.
- Spoken-word performances can be found on iTunes or [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com).

### For individuals and families

The two ideas forming the word “is” are for individuals and families.

- Find historical sites near you at websites like [pw.org/literary\\_places](http://pw.org/literary_places).
- If a grandparent or grand-friend lives close enough for a visit, consider making a special time for sharing favorite poems and writing poetry together. Ask ahead of time if they have any poems from their past. You never know what treasures they might have connected to poetry from their life.

## Different types of poems

The eight lines that form the word “national” recommend different types of poems.

- Haiku poems originated in Japan. They have a distinct syllable pattern of five syllables for the first line, seven syllables for the second line, and five syllables for the third line. For help counting syllables, place your hand underneath your chin and speak aloud. Each time your chin drops down, count one syllable.
- Alphabet poems encourage thinking outside the box. They help build vocabulary as you look for different words that start with each letter.
- Found poems can use lines or phrases from famous pieces of literature, newspaper articles, or from personal letters or journal entries. Reading these items with poetry in mind can shed new light on them, even with something you have read many times before.
- Epic poetry has been around for thousands of years. Many high school students read excerpts from Homer's *Illiad* or *Odyssey*. Other examples include *Beowulf* and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.
- Occasional poetry marks a particular event or occasion. For both sad and happy life events, writing poetry can help process feelings and capture emotions.
- Acrostic poems make lovely gifts for grandparents or grand-friends. Write a poem with their name or title, “grandma” or “nana” for example, and use adjectives to describe them for each line.
- Diamond poems form the shape of a diamond. The first and last line are different nouns, the second line contains two adjectives describing the first noun. The third line contains three verbs related to the first noun. The fourth line has four common traits of the top noun and the bottom noun. The fifth line contains three verbs related to the bottom noun. The sixth line has two adjectives that describe the bottom noun.
- Limericks have a specific rhyming pattern and often humorous themes. They have first, second, and fifth line rhyme, and the third and fourth line are a short couplet.

## Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences

Each line that forms “poetry” connects to one of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. All of these ideas use word smart as they involve poetry!

- Picture smart: depicting poetry in a visual way.
- Nature smart: using nature as inspiration for a poem.
- Body smart: acting out a poem like a theater piece.

## Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (Continued)

- People smart: encouraging dialogue with others about poems.
- Self smart & logic smart: reconstructing a poem using the same words requires logic skills, and making it personal involves self reflection.
- Music smart: adding music to written poetry to make them into song lyrics. You can borrow music from songs that already exist, or compose your own.

### For libraries

The lines forming the word “month” are especially for libraries—a natural place to celebrate National Poetry Month!

- Many cultures have unique types of poetry. Reach out to seniors in the community who speak another language or come from another country. Invite them to hear others recite poems in different languages and make your international party intergenerational as well.
- Reciting poetry can be practiced and enjoyed by all ages. Some people might want to learn a new poem, and many might have poems they remember from their youth.
- Introduce children and older adults to poets they may not know otherwise, especially poets like Shel Silverstein, A. A. Milne and Jack Prelutsky who write poems that are fun for all ages.
- Poems do not always have to rhyme, but trying to rhyme words in a story can invite new and funny twists and turns.
- Displaying poetry written by older adults gives an opportunity for younger generations to appreciate their elders as transmitters of knowledge and culture. Consider giving the displayed poems to the senior poets at a special ceremony after the display changes.