

## MY SKELETON

### COMMON CORE LESSON PLAN

Poet and educator [Jane LeCroy](#) was part of T&W's Common Core Leadership Team of writers who developed creative writing teaching resources that are aligned with the requirements of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in science and history/social studies. In this lesson plan, LeCroy offers ideas for addressing a question from New York City's K–8 framework for science: How do human body systems function to maintain homeostasis? T&W thanks the [William T. Grant Foundation](#) and The Cerimon Fund for their generous support of the Common Core resources initiative.

**Genre(s) taught:** Poetry

**Grade(s) taught:** 7th grade

#### **Lesson Objective:**

Students will increase their understanding of the bones in the human skeleton and improve their use of figurative language through reading and writing poetry.

#### **Common Core State Standards:**

(Refer to the [English Language Arts Standards > Writing > Grade 7](#))

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### **Guiding Questions:**

- What constitutes an “address” poem?
- Who is Jane Hirshfield addressing in her poem “My Skeleton”?
- What are the bones Hirshfield names in her poem?

## LESSON

#### **Introduction/warm-up activity:**

Drawing on students' previous knowledge of the skeletal system, begin with a quick singing of “Cranium, Clavicle, Patella and Phalanges,” sung to the tune of “Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.” Invite students to put their hand on the correct body part as the name the bone in the skeleton.

### **Model/Mentor Text:**

Distribute Jane Hirshfield's annotated poem "My Skeleton," read the poem aloud a few times, and define any unfamiliar words. Ask students whom the author is speaking to in the poem.

- After students have identified that the author is speaking to her skeleton define a poem of address: *A poem of address is a poem in which the author speaks directly to something. This form allows the speaker to observe the addressee and to use descriptive language, which often invites the reader to experience the object/animal/person in a new light.*
- Ask students if they noticed the skeletal bones listed in the poem: Did Hirshfield name any unfamiliar bones? Can you point to where those bones are? Ask: Where is the jaw? (in the cranium) What is another name for the "wrist bone"? (carpals) What are the bones in the "hand"? (carpals, metacarpals, phalanges) Read the poem again and invite students to point to the correct bone in their skeletons when the speaker reads the name of that bone. You could take this one step further by asking students to say the name of the bones at the end of the line. (Refer to the notations on the "My Skeleton" handout.)

### **Pre-Writing:**

- Distribute the Skeletal Pre-Writing handout. Have students think about the rest of their skeleton as they make notes and do some pre-writing. Do they have favorite bones? Have they ever broken a bone? Do they play any sports, or do any activities that move a part of their skeletal system? Do they have memories associated with certain body parts?

### **Writing Activity:**

Invite students to write address poems to their skeletons. Encourage them to use the names of the bones from their pre-writing in combination with figurative language and poetic imagery.

### **Closing:**

Ask a few students to share their poems with the group. After each writer reads his/her work, ask other students to name the bones they heard in the poem.

### **Suggested Continuation Practice for Classroom Teacher:**

Invite students to write address poems to other body systems. Encourage students to explore a writing style that sources informational text and/or facts they know about the system, combined with poetic and figurative language.

### **Materials:**

- "My Skeleton," Handout
- Skeletal Pre-Writing Handout

**Vocabulary:**

Address [poem], Metaphor, Skeleton, Flensed

**Multi-modal approaches:**

This lesson engages students with several learning styles, including **kinesthetic** (engaging students with a physical warm-up with the song), **interpersonal** (singing song as a whole group), **aural** (listening to Jane Hirshfield's poem and singing the song), and **intrapersonal** (independent writing).