

Lesson Plan

Figurative Writing: A Lesson on Alliteration

By Laura Campbell-Lui

Laura Campbell-Lui teaches for the New York City Department of Education, teaching students who have been identified to receive remedial support. In this lesson plan, she introduces fifth-graders to alliteration. This lesson plan is designed for struggling students, but it can be adapted and made more complex. For example, it might be used as a guided lesson to make sure that all students are fluid in using alliteration before moving on to a more complex assignment, such as writing an essay.

Grade: 5

Genre: Poetry

Common Core Standards (Refer to [ELA Standards > Language > Grade 5](#)):

- ELA-Language.5.5
Students will demonstrate understanding of figurative language word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Lesson Objective:

Students will:

- Be able to write five sentences using consistent alliteration in each sentence.
- Be able to incorporate their sentences in a poem.

Guiding Question:

- How do we write a sentence using alliteration?
- How can we turn our sentences into poems?

LESSON

Introduction: I tell students that when we were very young, we learned to speak to tell others how we felt. Now that we are older, we can use words to have fun. We know so many words; we can manipulate our words to tell jokes, a funny story or to exaggerate an experience in order to make it funny, instead of tragic.

Main Activity: On the SMART Board, I show a definition of alliteration, followed by examples. I ask students to volunteer to read the examples aloud.

Alliteration is when you use words that have the same sound at the beginning, as in:

- Stellar students synthesize sweet sentences.
- Peter's piglet pranced priggishly.
- Jesse's jaguar is jumping and jiggling jauntily.
- Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
- Quincy's quilters quit quilting quickly.
- Eric's eagle eats eggs, enjoying each episode of eating.

Next, we pick a letter and use it to find multiple words that begin with that letter. For example, in step 2, we may use the letter "B."

Writing an Alliteration Poem in Five Easy Steps:

Step 1: To write an alliteration poem, first pick a consonant. It can be any letter of the alphabet except for the vowels a, e, i, o, or u. For example, let's say you choose the letter "B."

Step 2: Think of as many words as you can that start with your letter and write them down. You're going to need nouns, verbs, and adjectives, like this:

Nouns: Banana Bumblebee Bat Baseball Boat Butter Bell Biceps

Verbs: Bake Blame Burp Buy Be Bust Beat Burn Burst Break

Adjectives: Black Bad Big Brilliant Broken Blue

You may not use all of the words from your lists, and you may think of other words as you begin writing. That's okay; this list is really just to help you get started.

Step 3: Form a sentence or two with some of your words, like this:

I bought a black banana,
And a broken baseball bat.

Step 4: See if you can add another sentence or two and a rhyme.

I bought a black banana,
And a broken baseball bat.
A burst balloon, a busted boat,
A beat-up bowler hat.

Next, we pick a second letter and repeat the steps. After that, I split the children into pairs. I give them a choice of letters that have pre-listed examples of words for them to use in a sentence.

Finally, we all put our sentences together on a piece (or two) of chart paper. This will make a continuous set of funny sentences that will cheer up the most mundane classes. I like to use this lesson during March, when the weather tends to be gloomy. It helps lift our spirits.

Here are alliteration poems written by two of my students:

Slithery, Slidery, Scaly Old Snake by *Denise Rodgers*

Slithery, slidery, scaly old snake,
surely your body must be a mistake.
You eyes, mouth and tongue wisely stay on your head.
It seems that your body is all tail instead.
You gobble your dinner, you swallow it whole --
a mouse or a frog or a turtle or mole.
Ugh!
Why don' you eat ice cream or chocolatey cake!
Oh slithery, slidery, scaly old snake.

Zzzzz by Kenn Nesbitt

I see zebras from Zimbabwe
zipping all around the zoo.
I see Zeus up in the zodiac,
a zillion zithers too.
There are zephyrs blowing zeppelins
that are zooming near and far.
There are zealots counting zeroes
in a zone near Zanzibar.
There are Zulus wearing zoot suits
eating zwieback and zucchini
plus a zombie with a zipper
on his zinnia bikini.
Yes, I always have the zaniest
most zonked-out dreams like these,
because every time I go to sleep
I try to catch some Z's.

About the Author:

For the last 20 years, Laura Campbell-Lui has been a Title I reading and writing teacher for the New York City Department of Education. Prior to working in her current position, Campbell-Lui worked as a teacher at the early children, pre-K, kindergarten, and first-grade levels. She motivates student writers with best-selling books, award-winning short stories, and famous songs. If she can get student laughing or sympathizing with characters, she can earn their trust and cooperation.