

Curiosity has its own reason for existence. The important thing is not to stop questioning.

-Albert Einstein The human mind is like an umbrella. It

functions best when open. -Max Gropius We write to

taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospect. -

Anaís Nin **Writing is thinking on paper.** -William Zinsser

You cannot depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus. -Mark

Twain To me the greatest pleasure of writing is not what it's about, but the music the

words make. -Truman Capote I wrote from a sense of need. I needed

something to do. You can't just sleep all day long. - Snoopy

IF A STORY IS IN YOU, IT HAS GOT TO COME OUT. -

WILLIAM FAULKNER There are thousands of thoughts

lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up the

pen and writes. -Mark Twain I hear and I

forget; I see and I remember. I write and I understand. -

Chinese Proverb The universe is made of stories, not of atoms. -

Muriel Rukeyser Writing is easy. All you have to do is

cross out the wrong words. - Mark Twain Writing is

an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you

go. - E. L. Doctorow Fill your paper with the breathings of

your heart. ~William Wordsworth The pages are still

blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being

there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become

visible. ~Vladimir Nabokov The best way to have a good

idea is to have lots of ideas. -Linus Pauling Words are

sacred. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones, in

the right order, you can nudge the world a little. -Tom

Stoppard

Writing

RESOURCES

- <http://www.kidsgardening.com/growingideas/projects/nov04/pg1.html>
- <http://wpconline.org/gardens/curriculum/School-Garden-Journal.pdf>
- http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/gar_lessons.html
- <http://www.kidsgardening.com/themes/literacy11.asp>

POETRY

Growing Poems

Cultivating Creativity and Communication Skills through Garden-Inspired Poetry

Though most school gardens are tucked in for the winter (except for those in the warmest climes), your students need not lose touch with plants, weather, insects, and other natural wonders. By reflecting on their gardening experiences through poetry, they can keep their gardens growing in their minds, maintaining a rich context for exploring phonics, personal expression, parts of speech, figurative language, and many other language arts standards.

The objectives of this project are to encourage students to develop more diverse ways of describing everyday objects, processes, and events, and to recognize that they each have a unique way of expressing themselves -- their own *voice*. Many children get a great deal of enjoyment from participating in plant-based lessons in school gardens, habitats, and indoor settings. They often connect deeply with plants and nature, and this serves as a rich source of material for budding poets.

Poetry is meant to be a liberating medium for expression, yet it also encourages precise use of words as kids home in on what they wish to communicate. The buried treasure kids discover is the skill to harness language to enrich their work in all disciplines. And since poetry is meant to be read aloud, it also can bolster presentation skills. Ideally, it will help them grow into effective, compelling wordsmiths and communicators.

Making Garden and Nature Poems

Part 1. Sample some poetry.

Literacy standards addressed: interpretation and summarization; recognition of figurative language; recognition of point of view; expression of phonemic awareness; building vocabulary; recognition of symbolism.

A. To prepare your class for writing their own poems, read a few aloud. First, practice alone or with another teacher so you can get a feel for each poem's cadence -- defined by Webster's as "rhythmic sequence or flow of sounds in language." Sometimes cadence does not follow the line breaks. Reading aloud demonstrates that cadence, like punctuation in sentences, clarifies the meaning of the phrases.

B. After each one, explore some of these questions together.

What do you think this poem is about?

Does the poem create an image for you?

How does it make you feel?

How do you think the poet was feeling, or trying to tell us?

Do they help you see the subject (e.g., the wind, dandelions) in a way you didn't before?

From whose point of view is it written?

Does it have a rhythm? Does it rhyme?

Are there some words whose meanings you don't know?

What about poetry is different from a news story? From a short story or novel?

