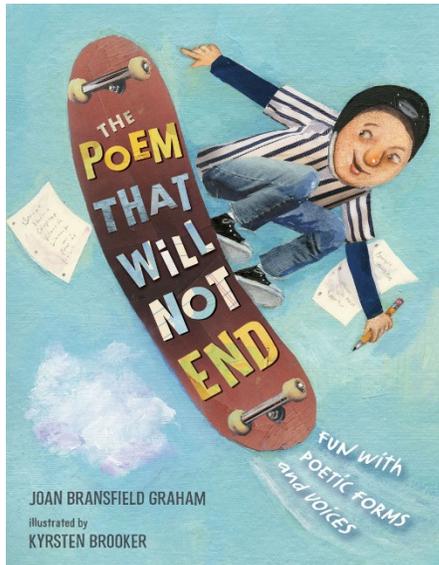


THE POEM THAT WILL NOT END: Fun with Poetic Forms and Voices



by Joan Bransfield Graham
illustrated by Kyrsten Brooker
Amazon Children's Publishing/Two Lions
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Teacher Ideas

The four anchor standards for Common Core are **Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, & Creativity.**

All of these come into play in the

creation of a children's book! My editor and I are communicating. She is communicating with the illustrator and art director. We are all collaborating on ideas, thinking critically about how to best present the poems, page breaks, covers, etc. At the core of it all is a lot of creativity—an exciting process!



Language Arts:

In art it is important to find the medium that works best for what you want to express. In poetry you need to find the *form* that best conveys your thoughts and observations. Try out many forms for the same poem to see which is the best “fit” for what you want to say.

Ryan rides his skateboard and plays soccer. Both of those poems are *concrete*, or shape, poems. What sports, hobbies, or activities do you enjoy? Create a shape poem focusing on one of your interests.

What do you do at recess? Write your own “Recess” poem. It can be an *acrostic* or any other form you like. Draw a picture of what recess is like at your school.

“Bike” is a *mask* poem, where the object speaks for itself. What object would you like to give a voice?

In a poem of *address*, Ryan talks to a “Soccer Ball.” In your own poem, *talk* to a piece of sports equipment or something in your classroom.

Like “Couplet for French Fries,” create a *couplet* for one of your favorite foods.

On p. 14 in “The bell rang and I bolted” . . . the word “bolted” is an *auto-antonym*, or *contronym*, a word that can mean two opposite things—bolt, *to secure in place*, or bolt, *to dash away suddenly*. Can you find any other words like this?

I used many different words to mean “write.” How many can you find?
(1. scribble, 2. doodle, 3. scrawled, 4. scratched, 5. wrote, 6. dashed, 7. inked, 8. stacked)

The end of the story is an example of **IRONY**.

Invite someone from a local Toastmaster’s Club to speak to students about giving effective oral presentations.

Art:

Using a collage and paint technique like artist Kyrsten Brooker, incorporate a poem that you have written, or one you enjoy, into a piece of art. Collect old magazines to cut up and scraps of fabric to use with your project.

Study artists who have used words in their paintings. (At the USC Fisher Museum of Art there was an exhibit, “Drawn to Language,” from five contemporary artists who are “inspired by and incorporate text in their visually striking pieces.”)

Social Studies:

The poetic forms *haiku* and *tanka* originated in **Japan**. Ryan also writes an *Italian sonnet* and a *French villanelle*. Create a Poetry Map or bulletin board with poems from around the world. The oral traditions of storytelling and poetry are important in many cultures. Poetry provides varied points of view. Collect poems on a similar theme, poems that contradict each other, or poems that display visual language.

Science:

Get a kick out of the science of sports! Talk about why a soccer ball sails, how a bicycle moves, and why a skateboard can go airborne.

In “Soccer Ball” Ryan uses a “solar system” *metaphor*—a comparison, saying one thing is something else (The soccer ball is the “sun”—everything revolves around it.). What is a galaxy? Discuss the sun and our solar system. Make papier-maché planets to suspend from the ceiling of your classroom. Think of other space metaphors.

Music:

Long ago poetry was accompanied by the music of the lyre; this is where we get the word *lyrics*-- the *words* to songs. Create a classroom or library museum exploring "Poetry through the Ages." You might include a timeline.

In the poem "Conductor," Ryan conducts an *environmental symphony*. I plan to do this with an ocean drum, rain sticks, a thunder stick, (a chorus being the wind?) and lots of assistants participating. Use a very large pencil as Ryan's baton. Have someone read the poem while Ryan "conducts" and others join in with their instruments.

Get the *feel* of a villanelle by doing the "Fever" poem as a choral reading. Print and number the two repeating lines on strips of poster board or oak tag:

1. "I cannot stop this fever in my brain."
2. "Day in, day out, the words just fall like rain."

Invite two students up to the front of the room to hold these "refrain" signs. Whoever reads "Fever" can point to the refrain when it comes up in the poem, and then everyone can join in the chorus. The two refrains, together, end the poem.

Math:

There is a lot of counting going on in poetry! Counting "beats" per line . . . there are five stresses, or beats, in iambic *pentameter*. Counting the number of lines--an *octave* has eight lines. Counting the arrangement of lines--a *cinquain* is 2,4,6,8,2 syllables or beats on each of its five lines. Explore the *numbers vocabulary* of poetry. Poetry counts.

Make a one-page "dummy" of a book. Most picture books are 32 pages as they are printed in "signatures" of eight. How will you fold the paper to get 32 blocks/pages?

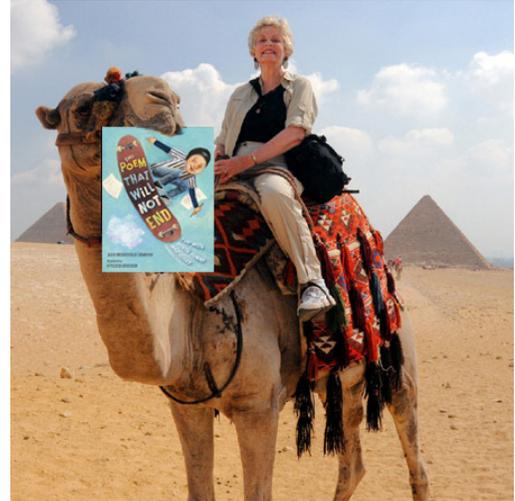
Drama:

Use the book for Reader's Theater or have fun staging your own classroom production of *THE POEM THAT WILL NOT END* with simple props—a cap or striped shirt for Ryan, a scarf and piece of chalk for Ms. Frost, a bib and banana for "Banana Baby," a baseball bat for Eddie, and a large #1 to hang around Aimee's neck with yarn (That's the number on her soccer shirt.). Someone might even want to be Ryan's dog—with "ears," a bone, and his distinguished "hounds-tooth" jacket. Various students could read, or act out, the embedded poems, perform the environmental symphony for "Conductor," and everyone could participate in the choral reading for "Fever." Poetry gives you a chance to express yourself and have fun.



My www.joangraham.com website is being revised and updated to add info about *POEM*—thanks for your patience. In March, 2014 I will be announcing details about a contest for students to suggest a creative stanza of their own

inspired by *POEM*. We'll try to “go around the world” so that the poetry . . . *will not end*. There will be prizes—books, of course—with a Grand Prize of a free one-hour Skype Author Visit for your school, plus two 30-minute Skype prizes, too. Also posted will be information about additional contests, helpful reading lists, and more. Amazon will have a Curriculum Guide, incorporating Common Core standards, available in February.



THE POEM THAT WILL NOT END: Fun with Poetic Forms and Voices debuts on Jan. 28, 2014 <http://amzn.to/18p5For> .

Other websites:

<http://canetwork.weebly.com/joan-bransfield-graham.html> (Please check here for now!)

www.childrensauthorsnetwork.com/author/JBG.htm

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