

Appendix C: More Games and Activities

Put Poetry in Motion in Your School

Try the following ideas to get your team and your school excited about poetry!

Around the World with Poetry: Use push pins on a world map to locate the origin of poets whose work students have read or studied.

Billboard Poetry: Sixty billboards in the Los Angeles area now feature something new—lines of poetry instead of advertising! Poets Anonymous is responsible for this exciting project, and the response from commuters has been overwhelming! Students could adapt this idea and place “poetry billboards” (anonymously, of course—that would be half the fun!) around the school, library or bookstore.

Cookie Poems: Wrap a cookie up with a copy of Vachel Lindsay’s poem, “The Moon is the North Wind’s Cookie.” Invite students to write their own poems about the moon, or cookies!

Gift Wrap Poems: Wrap individual poems as gifts and have a gift exchange.

Basket-of-Poems: Keep a basket of poems handy in classrooms, libraries, or bookstores for quiet times.

Coffee House Poetry: Organize a poetry reading complete with a microphone and hot cocoa. Great sites for poetry readings: schools, libraries, and bookstores.

Fabulous First Lines: Design a bulletin board, paint T-shirts, or build a mobile featuring intriguing first lines from poems. (Such as: I can fly, of course...).

Flashlight Poetry: There’s something special about listening to poetry in the dark. Dim the lights then read poems about candles, flashlights, stars, or even that crack of light beneath the classroom door.

Invite Local Poets or Poetry Lovers to share their favorite poetry. There is nothing like a “live” reading!

Loan-a-Poem: Favorite poems are laminated and posted with Velcro™ at a “child’s-eye” level outside a

classroom. Students from other classes stop to read and are welcome to “borrow” poems to share with friends and classmates.

Poetry Announcements: Invite a student or staff member to read a poem during morning announcements.

Music and Poetry: Read the poem, “Music Class” from *The Great Frog Race: And Other Poems* by Kristine O’Connell George to children. Pass out triangles, maracas, silver bells, and a tambourine. Have a “chorus!” Many poems have a musical “theme” and having a few simple instruments on hand will make reading these poems a special treat. Organize a poetry event with a musical theme.

Nursery Rhyme Writers: Older students can write original nursery rhymes and make a book to share with Kindergarten classes.

Pocket Poems: Have students carry (and be prepared to share) a poem on a specific day. Students visiting a library or bookstore who have a “poem in their pocket” could be presented with a small gift such as a bookmark.

Poet Minstrels: Invite students to stroll from class to class, reading poetry. Include a strolling minstrel at a library or bookstore event.

Poetry n’ Punch: Invite parents, grandparents, and friends to a Poetry n’ Punch celebration. Have students memorize a poem and choose props and costumes to complement their selection. Using the microphone on the stage and a contest with trophies and ribbons adds to the celebration.

Poetry Posters: Cover a large table with paper and have students write poems on it. The finished posters could then be used as a large wall display.

Poetry Survey: The students poll their teachers and family members (especially older members) for memories about their favorite poems and report back to the class. This works well with “family history” projects.

Poetry Trail: Student groups can memorize a poem and prepare for a performance using props and costumes. On the day of the “poetry trail” student groups should be posted across campus. As students follow the “poetry trail,” they stop at each group to hear the poem performed (example: the student basketball team performs a basketball poem).

Poetry Tree: Use ribbon to tie poems to the branches of a tree. Display your “poet-tree” during Arbor Day or Earth Day.

Poetry Zoo: Cut out or draw pictures of animals and find a poem about each animal. Arrange poems and pictures on a bulletin board for a catchy display.

Postcard Poems: Students can mail poems to their classmates or exchange poems with another class.

Post-it™ Poems: Each day, give a different student an opportunity to find and bookmark a favorite poem from your classroom collection. Then read the selected poem to the class.

Scavenger Hunt: Build a display of ordinary items featured in poems—balloons, kites, monkey wrenches, paperclips, shoes—have students find poems featuring the objects.

Secret Pal Poems: Have students find and share poems that a secret pal would enjoy based on the pal’s interests.

T-shirt Poems: Decorate t-shirts with lines of poetry or names of poets.

Teambuilding Activities

Inspired by *Teaching Language Arts Creatively* by
Mimi Chenfeld

Below is a list of activities and games that emphasize teambuilding and creative thinking.

Bridge Crossing

To get students working as a team

Set up a course of papers on the floor, 3 wide by 6 or 7 deep. Differentiate between the papers any way you wish (e.g., colors, poems, names, etc.) then pick a path across the papers, but do not tell the students what it is. Explain that they must cross this bridge one at a time, but some of the stones are loose and if they step on them, they will fall into the river. When a child steps on a loose stone (one that is not on your chosen path) send him/her to the back of the line because he/she fell in the river. If he/she is right, let him/her continue until he/she either falls in or gets across the river. Continue until all the students successfully cross the bridge. To make this exercise even more interesting, do not let the students speak, forcing them to find an alternative way to communicate.

Double Letter Game

To expand thinking

Basically, you like things with double letters but do not like things without double letters (e.g., I like the moon but not the stars). Sometimes it takes the students a while to understand this, so, as you play, make it more obvious by choosing two completely unrelated things (e.g., I like books but not cats).

Exercise and Stretch

To get some energy out

Take 5 minutes every day to stretch with your kids. You can stretch while listening to music or while playing a game (Simon Says, Make Faces, Pantomime, etc.).

How Many Ways to Cross the Floor

To expand thinking

Ask the students how many ways they can think of to cross the floor and then have them demonstrate all of the ways. How would they get the whole team from one side of the room to the other? Vary the conditions (e.g., making stepping stones, carrying each other, moving in unison with at least one other person—shoulder to shoulder or knee to knee, a river running through the room).

Picnic Game

To expand thinking

Simply say, “My name is Jen and I’m going on a picnic. I think I’ll bring jelly beans.” Then go around the circle and ask students what they are bringing. If the first letter of each student’s food matches the first letter of his/her name, he/she can go on the picnic with you. If it does not, he/she has to bring something else. Play until everyone discovers the trick.

Pulse

To calm a group down

This is similar to the telephone game. Get the entire class in a big circle and have students grab hands with the people on either side of them. Start a pulse by squeezing the hand of the person next to you in a pattern. The person then has to pass the pulse to the individual next to him/her, all the way around the circle. Once you have gone around the circle once, make it a group challenge to see how fast you can get the pulse around the circle correctly.

Soccer Mystery

To allow students to get to know each other

Tell the students they have just become part of a big soccer game and need to introduce themselves to as many people as they can by shaking hands and telling each other their names and their best soccer skill. The mystery is that among all the players, there is only one “goal-scorer.” Choose the goal-scorer by having each student pick a piece of paper out of a bowl. The student who picks the “X” is the goal-scorer. The way the person scores goals is by rubbing his/her middle finger on the other person’s palm as slyly as possible as they are shaking hands. The other person must wait at least 10 seconds before pretending to be the goalie going for the dramatic save, and then he/she is out of the game. The game continues until the goal-scorer is discovered. A variation can be played where goals are scored by winking at the other players.

Stepping Stones

To teach students to work together

Each student is given a piece of scratch paper and is asked to write one word or statement that he/she feels is an important factor in being able to meet challenging goals. Explain that their ideas (and pieces of paper) now represent magic stones capable of solving a team challenge. Set up the challenge in an amusing way. For example, Monty (the stuffed animal) has been kidnapped. Place Monty 50 feet away. In order to save Monty from a grueling chicken noodle death, the team must ford a giant bowl of chicken noodle soup using only their stepping stones. However, the stones must never leave human contact and can only hold 2 people at a time. If either of the rules is broken, the magic is gone and the stone can no longer float in the soup. Give the students a starting line to represent the edge of the bowl. Explain that the object is to rescue Monty using the entire team. Once you begin the challenge, you will need to watch to see if either of the rules are broken and, if they are, take the stone from the students. Papers cannot be torn in two. If anyone falls into the soup (by touching the ground for more than a count of two), he/she must return to the start.

Two Truths and a Lie

To find out about your students

Give students note cards and have them write down three anecdotes about themselves (stories, memories, activities, etc.). Tell them that two of the anecdotes should be true and one should be completely made

up. Have each student read his/her anecdotes out loud to the rest of the group and let the group guess which one is the lie. The goal is to stump the group and make them think that your lie is the truth.

Without Talking

To learn how to communicate without sound

Write the following sentences on strips of paper: What time is it? Are you thirsty? Do you have a tissue? What’s your name? I like your shirt! Can I borrow a pencil?

Make several sets of these sentence strips. Fold the paper to hide the writing. Divide the class into groups of six. Give a set of sentence strips to each group. Each student must choose a “mystery sentence” and find a way to communicate the message to the rest of the group without speaking. Later, have students share the strategies they used. Ask: Which of these strategies would help you communicate with someone who cannot hear?

Additional Teambuilders

1. **ABC Tag:** Using 26 paper plates or sheets of paper, write the alphabet out with one large letter on each page, and spread them out randomly (letter side up) throughout the room. Each child gets a chance to run through the letters stepping on or bending down to touch the letters in order of the alphabet as fast as they can. To allow more students to participate, two can go at the same time. To add variation, ask the children to spell a word, find only the vowels, etc.
2. **Alliteration Introductions:** Have the students stand in a circle. Each student must think of an adjective that describes them and that begins with the first letter of their first name (i.e. Amazing Abby), as well as a unique movement or motion (e.g. jump up and turn around in the air). The first student gives his/her introduction and then the whole group repeats the alliteration and the movement. This continues until each student has had a turn.
3. **Coach May I:** Have the students stand in a line facing the coach. Explain to them that the point of the game is to try to be the first one to get to the coach. They get there by asking questions, such as “Coach may I take 4 giant steps forward?” The coach can say “Yes, you may,” or “No, but you may take 8 tiny steps sideways.” Get creative in describing the types of steps the students can take (i.e. giant steps, hop steps, baby steps, tiptoe steps, or scissor steps).

4. **Follow the Leader:** Ask everyone to stand or sit in a circle. Ask one person to leave the room/space for a minute. This person will be the guesser for the round. While he/she is gone, the coach or the group decides who should be the "leader." The leader will be the one who sets the movements for that round. When this person is chosen, he/she should begin a movement and then the coach should invite the guesser back in. The guesser stands in the very center of the circle. The leader will begin to do other movements. Everyone else must mimic the leader's actions without being too obvious to reveal who the leader is (be careful not to make prolonged eye contact with the leader). The guesser must keep turning his/her head to try and figure out which person is the leader. The guesser may make up to three guesses. If the guess is incorrect, the round continues. If the guess is correct, the leader becomes the new guesser for the next round. If all three guesses are exhausted and the leader has not correctly guessed, the round ends and the coach can either keep the same guesser or switch it up.
5. **Goal Jump:** This game focuses on having the students use their bodies to display success. Have the students verbally describe what it feels like when they make a goal or achieve something great. Give everyone a few moments come up with their own "Goal Jump/Dance" in their head. Now, go around and have each student demonstrate their "Goal Jump/Dance." The group repeats each student's movement. The students are manifesting the feeling of making a goal—they are making it real and fun! If needed, remind them this is not an action to point out other's loss or to gloat about winning. This is not an "in your face" style move. Wrap up by asking the students if they know the meaning of the word "goal."
6. **Mirroring:** Split the groups into pairs. One student is A and his/her partner is B. The students should face each other. Person A will start making motions and person B must copy their partner's motions at the exact same time, making it appear as if Person A is looking in a mirror. Switch so each student gets to be both leader and mirror.
7. **The Name Game:** Sitting in a circle, have each student take a turn saying, "Hi my name is— _____," and my favorite animal is a _____!" Explain that the animal should start with the same letter or sound as their name. Use your own name as an example, e.g. "Hi my name is Ben, and my favorite animal is a Bumblebee!" Once the student has completed the entire sentence out loud, have the entire group act out the sounds and movements of this animal. Encourage students to safely use the entire classroom/gym space and to move freely and interact with one another as the chosen animal. Say FREEZE when you want them to stop moving, and have them hold their animal pose for a couple of seconds before returning to their original position in the seated circle.
8. **Name that Jack!:** Have the students do jumping jacks while they introduce themselves and how they are feeling—"My name is _____ and I feel _____ right now." Everyone should continue jumping until each person has had a chance to speak.
9. **Outside-Inside Circle:** Go around in a circle and have each student first say, "On the outside I am...," completing the sentence with a statement about something a person could tell by looking at them. It can be a statement about what they are wearing, what they look like, how they act, etc. Next have the student say, "On the inside I am. . ." completing the sentence with a statement about something a person could not tell by looking at them. It can be about how they are feeling, a fact about their family, or something about who they are. Repeat until every team member has had a turn. The student who is speaking should stand on the outside of the circle for their first statement and step inside the circle for the second.
10. **Red Light, Green Light:** Line up all of the students so that they are facing the coach. Before starting, the coach should explain what each light color means: red light means stop/freeze; yellow light means slow down/walk slowly; green light means go (this can mean walking, hopping, crab walk, skipping, etc). Students who incorrectly move must go back to the starting line.
11. **Bust-A-Move Telephone:** Students should form a circle. Like the game of telephone, students will be passing along a movement to each other. Rather than saying a sentence and whispering it to their students, one student will create a 5 second movement or series of movements, and show it to the person stand next to them. Everyone else in the circle must keep their eyes closed until they are tapped on the shoulder and it is their turn to watch. The person doing the movement may only perform it once before it is passed on to the next person. After passing it on, that person must join everyone else in

closing their eyes. Once the movement gets passed to the final person, that individual should perform it for the group, followed by the first person who created the movement performing his/her version next. Wrap up by explaining that everyone interprets things differently—movement, poetry, etc.

12. Shape Races: Start off by putting the students into two groups. The coach will say the name of a letter or geometric shape and the students will have twenty seconds to create that shape with their bodies. Encourage them to be creative—they may stand up, lay down, etc. All group members must be part of the final shape. The first team to successfully create the letter/shape gets a point. The first team to reach 3 points (the coach may choose to play this game longer and increase the number of points) wins! Finish up by combining both groups into one team. Now repeat the activity, allowing all students to work together and win as one team.

13. Show Us How You Shake It! Have the team stand in a circle and start by creating a simple rhythm with claps or snaps, then say (to the beat) “Hey _____” calling on a student in the circle. That student only should respond with a loud “YEAH?” (to the beat). Then the entire group shouts, “Show us how you shake it!” (still to the beat). The student who has been called responds by saying “I shake it like...” and then makes up a single dance move or gesture that repeats for 8 claps. Then the group repeats, “_____ shakes it like...” and they all repeat the dance move. Next the person who has just been called gets to call out the next person with a, “Hey _____!” and the game continues until everyone has gone at least once.

14. Simon Says: The coach or selected student plays the role of “Simon” and leads the students through a game that focuses on active listening. The students must do whatever Simon says, as long as the phrase “Simon says” comes before the command (for example, “Simon says do ten jumping jacks”). If Simon does not say “Simon says” before the command, students are not supposed to follow. “Simon” should use a variety of movements and include speaking in loud and soft voices.

15. The Wind Blows: Set up chairs in a circle; have one fewer chairs than the number of students. One student stands in the middle of the circle and says “The wind blows for you if...” and then says something that is true about himself/herself (For example: the

wind blows for you if... you have a sister!). If the statement is true for any of the other students, they must leave their seat in the circle and find another seat. The person in the middle must also find a seat. The person left without a seat stands in the middle and says something that is true about himself/herself. Encourage students to make statements that describe what they like to do, who they are, where they live or are from, and how they feel. Additional rules: students may not stand up and then sit back down in their same seat; they must move at least two seats over to the left or right.

16. Yes! Tell students to wander around the room aimlessly. In a loud, enthusiastic voice, suggest a physical activity for everyone to do (i.e., “Let’s go sky diving!”). When an activity is suggested, everyone immediately and enthusiastically shouts “Yes!”, and all the players begin to pantomime the suggested activity, being as realistic or outrageous as possible. After doing that activity for a while, another player yells out another activity (i.e., “Let’s go swimming!”). Again, everyone shouts, “Yes!” and pantomimes the new activity. Any group member can make a suggestion at any time. Play until each participant has suggested at least one activity. Get really into pantomimes instead of doing them half-heartedly; everyone will follow your lead.

17. Zip Zap Zoom: Great for team communication! Everyone on the team stands in a circle. One team member is chosen to start the game and points to someone else in the circle and says “zip.” The second person then points to a third person and says “zap.” The third person points to a fourth person and says “zoom.” It then starts over again with “zip.” If someone says one of the words out of order, takes too long to speak, or does not make eye contact, he/she is out. The game continues until it is down to two people. Determine the winner by playing Rock-Paper-Scissors. Eliminated students can help pay attention to make sure remaining players are not messing up.

18. We’re Going on a Trip: Have the group sit in a circle. Explain to them that they will be playing a game where the team will be planning a trip (how about a soccer tournament in Hawaii with SCORES!) and will need to think of all the different things they should bring with them. The trick is that the group will have to go in order of the alphabet and choose something that starts with the letter the group is on when it is their turn. For example, the first person will

start by saying, "We're going on a trip, and I will bring the Apples!" Make it a group goal to see how many fitness/nutrition items they can think of! The game stops when you get through the alphabet.

19. Circuit Training: Set up stations in the classroom, each featuring a different activity. Activities could include: jumping rope, dancing, hopscotch, yoga, push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, and jogging in place. Split up the group so there are 2-4 students at each station. Time the students so that they do each activity for 30 seconds to two minutes, depending on the number of activities included. Rotate and continue until students have done each activity at least once. Ask the group which was their favorite station and why. Explain to them that they can set up a circuit course for themselves at home. All it takes is a little creativity! Point out that the students can do any of these "circuit training activities" while watching TV, during commercial breaks, or while playing video games.

20. Fitness Charades: Before this activity, fill a bin with scraps of paper, each with a physical activity listed on it. Examples might be: riding a bike, walking the dog, playing soccer, doing jumping jacks, etc. Divide the group into two teams. Explain to the teams that they will be playing Fitness Charades where an individual will go to the front of the room and select a piece of paper from the bin and act out (without speaking!) the physical activity listed. The individual who is acting out the clue will have their team try to guess the correct physical activity. If they guess within the time limit designated by the coach, their team will win 1 point. To make it more exciting, award 2 points if the team guesses within 10 seconds. Rotate playing between the two teams for as long as time permits or until all clues have been used. The team with the most points at the end wins.

21. Look Sharp: Ask your students to form a circle standing shoulder to shoulder with their heads down. On the count of three the Coach says, "Look Sharp!" and each student must look directly up at one of their teammates in the circle. If two students are both looking at each other, they are both out of the circle. The circle should condense as the game progresses. The last student standing wins! If it comes down to 2 players, you can use rock, paper, scissors as a tie-breaker.

22. Balancing Act: Use a clock or stopwatch to keep track of how long the students can hold each pose.

Can you... (you can also start the question by saying, "What if you could only...")

- a. balance on your right foot?
- b. balance on your left foot?
- c. balance on your hands and feet (in a push-up position)?
- d. balance in a push-up position with your right foot lifted in the air? Left foot? Right hand? Left hand?
- e. balance on your right foot/left foot with your eyes closed?

23. Rhythmic Name Game: This game begins with everyone standing in a circle clapping out a slow beat. Each member will take a turn ad libbing his/her part, beginning with the coach.

Say "My name is _____."
 Everyone else responds with "Uh huh," or "Oh yeah," or "Right on," or "Go girl," etc.
 Say "I come from _____."
 Everyone responds similarly.
 Say "I like to _____."
 Everyone responds similarly.
 Continue the activity until everyone has had a chance to go.

24. Queen/King of the World: Speaking rhythmically, pronouncing things clearly, varying volume and using breath to project. Have your entire team stand in a circle. Start clapping a slow beat, and then explain that you are going to pass the phrase "I am King/Queen of the World" around the circle. You will turn and say it to the person on your right they in turn will say it to the person on their right. The trick is to say it without breaking the clapping rhythm. Once you make it around the circle once, switch directions and/or speed up the beat and try it again. Tell your group to enunciate so every word is understood.

25. Moving Portraits: Explain that the students will be creating "Moving Portraits," or pieces of human art that depict a certain kind of movement. It will be up to the students to work together in order to make the picture, which they create with their bodies, come to life. Begin with the following example for practice: The students should create a Moving Portrait of a basketball game. The formation might have two people standing on opposite sides of the room, with their arms in a circle, acting as the hoops. The other students can spread out between them, some acting out the movement of dribbling a basketball, another bending down with his/her arms in the

arm, as if shooting a basket, and others running and pretending to pass the ball to each other. Next, divide your team into small groups and give them one minute to brainstorm what their Moving Portrait will be. The students should not use any props... only their bodies! Here are some suggestions:

- a. a bicycle
- b. running a race
- c. jumping rope
- d. playing soccer
- e. climbing a mountain

Each group will remain in their movement/position for about another minute, making changes if necessary, while the rest of the team guesses what they are doing.

26. Ball Toss Challenge: For this activity you'll need a ball and other small objects, such as stuffed animals. Students stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, with their hands up in front of them. One person begins by tossing a ball to another person and calling out her/his name. The students continue to toss the ball around the circle in this way in a random order. Everyone should receive the ball only one time. To ensure that this happens, a student should put his/her hands down after he/she has had a turn catching and passing. The last student to receive the ball should toss it back to the person who began the game. Now toss the ball around the circle in the same order without calling names. Everyone must remember from whom they received the ball and to whom they threw it. Repeat this toss again, and this time toss in the stuffed animals or other items. For the next few rounds, take out the other items (stuffed animals, etc.) and challenge the students to decrease their time throwing just the ball. Now challenge the students to cut their time in half. The team should begin to approach the problem differently, by considering creative options. The only rules are: the ball must be passed around in the same order as it was done the very first time, and only one person can touch the ball at a time. Encourage the students to work together to meet this challenge. When they have cut their time down as far as possible, discuss the group's process during the game.

27. Can You Build This: For this activity you'll need blocks, boxes, legos, or other building materials and, optionally, blindfolds for about half the group. Half of the group is sightless. They must close their eyes and keep them closed (Use blindfolds if needed.).

The other half of the group is sighted and cannot speak. Each person can make one unique noise such as a clap, finger snap, whistle, etc. A structure has been previously built with the building materials and hidden by the facilitator. The speechless group may study the structure for one minute. The facilitator takes apart the structure and places the pieces around the room. The sightless group may touch the building materials and may speak. The speechless people may watch and make their own noises, but they cannot touch the building materials or the sightless people. The team is to reassemble the structure as the facilitator originally built it. Debrief the activity with the following questions:

- a. How did it feel to be without speech?
- b. How did it feel to be without sight?
- c. How did your team reach the solution?
- d. What frustrations did you feel?
- e. Who took the lead and what did they do that was most effective?
- f. How was the whole group finally able to complete the structure, or why was the group unable to complete the structure?
- g. What skills seem to have been the most important during this challenge?

28. Machine: One person will start by going to the front of the room and making a clear motion with rhythm and sound that can be repeated continuously (it may help if the coach starts the game to set a standard). As the first person continues the action, another person adds onto the machine by creating a new movement and sound that complement that of the first person. Each person adds on to the machine until everyone is working in sync with one another. Once everyone is a part of the machine, you can say "freeze" for everyone to hold their motion and "relax" to get the kids to take their seats. Debrief by asking what type of machine the students think they made, and if the machine produced something specific. A variation of this activity is to start out with the intention of making something specific.