



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

K-12 Education Office

*Kindergarten
Poetry Packet*

HOW TO TEACH A POEM

Poetry Instruction in a Hillsdale Classical School

1. Consult the Hillsdale Poetry Packet for the given grade level.

- Each Poetry Packet contains a collection of the poems Hillsdale College believes students should hear and think about at each grade level. The Poetry Packet is for teacher use only, not for students.
- Teachers may introduce the poems in whichever order they choose.
- **Bold** titles indicate poems Hillsdale College recommends students learn and recite by heart.
- Teach approximately one poem per week.

2. Read the poem aloud to yourself as part of lesson preparation.

- Listen carefully and imagine the poem.
- Rest with it, without trying to analyze it.
- Then ask yourself these questions, in this order.
 1. What do I see? What is literally depicted or happening?
 2. How does the thought of the narrator proceed from beginning to end?
 3. How does the poem move in time and in physical space?
 4. Who is speaking?
 5. With which of the listener's physical senses does the poem engage?
 6. What is the rhyme or meter of the poem?
 7. What questions is the poem trying to answer? What is it saying?
- Read the poem aloud to yourself again.

3. Teach each poem in literature class.

- Days 1 and 2 | *5 minutes*
 - Read the poem aloud to the students.
 - Ask, "What do you notice in the poem?"
- Days 3 and 4 | *5-10 minutes or more, if needed*
 - For grades K-2:
 - Read the poem aloud to the students.
 - For grades 3+:
 - Project the text of the poem.
 - Read the poem aloud together as a class.
 - Ask, "What new things do you notice in the poem?"
 - Ask, "What do you think is happening in the poem?"
 - Ask, "What do you think the poem is saying?"

4. Have students learn specific poems by heart. (*Hillsdale's recommendations are in **Bold***)

- Always have students learning something by heart. That is, when one poem is known by heart and recited, have them begin to learn another.
- Students will learn at minimum one poem by heart per month.
- Steps for teaching students to know a poem by heart:
 1. Begin each class by reciting the poem line-by-line and having students repeat after you, adding lines each day until the poem is complete.
 2. At this point, begin each subsequent class by reciting the poem aloud and allowing students to join in with you.
 3. Once you determine most students are ready to recite it individually, on their own, set a date, and distribute printed copies of the poem for those who need more practice at home.
- Provide ongoing coaching and encouragement on public speaking.

5. Hold poetry recitations.

- Each student stands at the front of the class by him or herself and recites the poem individually.
- Teachers should grade recitations, with minor deductions for honest mistakes and significant deductions for what is clearly a lack of preparation.
- Scheduling:
 - Option A: Set aside one or two literature periods to conduct all recitations.
 - Option B: Over the course of a week, set aside the first 10-15 minutes of each class to have 5-6 students recite the poem.
- For students with IEPs, 504s, or who otherwise struggle with public speaking, continue to encourage and coach them. If the struggle is serious enough, the student may write-out from memory the poem or recite it privately to the teacher. But the goal should be to have the student reciting aloud in the front of the classroom by the end of the year.

WHY STUDENTS LEARN THINGS BY HEART

Memorization in a Hillsdale Classical School

Students memorize or “learn by heart” dozens of poems, songs, and excerpts from important historical figures and documents during their K-12 education. The question is: Why?

At the most basic level, knowing something by heart sharpens the abilities of the mind. Children already have a great capacity to memorize and remember, and giving them a steady stream of things to memorize keeps that ability sharp. Students can then apply this agility of mind to various bodies of knowledge and daily tasks to help them excel in anything they do.

Memorization also helps students make new connections in thought and understanding. Growing in understanding oftentimes involves the mind making connections between something it already knows and something new that the student learns. The best way to ensure there is a broad foundation of knowledge is continually to compare new information against it. And the strongest pieces of that foundation are those that are committed to memory. Additionally, once a student has something in his or her memory, it is more pliable and open to play and manipulation. We need only to recall a child manipulating a song he is singing to see this creativity with memorized content. In turn, the child’s creativity fosters flexibility, which can be applied not only to art but also to solving problems generally.

It is worth recognizing the obvious: that memorization answers to human nature. It is natural for human beings to memorize and remember. We memorize without even trying, though as with running, we of course do much better when we work at it. While we may sometimes chafe at the work of memorizing, having something in our memory to recall at will is real power—and a joyful one at that—a possession no one would refuse were it not for the practice required to gain it. At the same time, memorization helps students withstand a culture of noise and high-intensity, intrusive stimulation.

When looking at the specific kinds of things students learn by heart, we see that memorization furnishes the mind and memory with excellent things in song, story, and speech. After all, students are not memorizing the ugly or meaningless things of the world. These excellent things become the standard for good and great things of many sorts for a lifetime.

And yet, things known by heart not only establish a standard, but they also give shape to the student’s mind, forming its contours. They inform the imagination most powerfully. It is called “by heart” because memorized things become part of us and also, they teach us to love the right things. Memorized things are not only right and loveable, but they attune our desires to other goods worthy of desire, love, and emulation.

Memorization, therefore, gives students something beautiful and meaningful to carry with them in their lives. Things that are memorized take up a kind of existence within the student which forms his or

her thoughts, feelings, and attentiveness to beauty and meaning in the world. This interior possession also ensures that no matter their situation or environment, students have access to beauty, meaning, and the joy of these possessions, real boons to life. Poems, songs, and quotations are possessions—and reminders—about goodness and justice and happiness that can never be taken away from them.

To conclude with an example and a relevant quotation, consider these lines from the great American poet Robert Frost's "Choose Something Like a Star." The poet asks a star to

Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat...
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

And these lines from the renowned Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, which apply equally to things that are memorized as to memories:

"[T]here is nothing higher, or stronger, or sounder, or more useful afterwards in life, than some good memory, especially a memory from childhood, from the parental home. You hear a lot said about your education, yet some such beautiful, sacred memory, preserved from childhood, is perhaps the best education. If a man stores up many such memories to take into life, then he is saved for his whole life. And even if only one good memory remains with us in our hearts, that alone may serve some day for our salvation."

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“Jack Sprat”	“Early to Bed,” Benjamin Franklin
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“Old King Cole”	“Time to Rise,” Robert Louis Stevenson
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Note: Hillsdale K12’s recommendations for which poems should be memorized are bolded. Given that the amount of poems a class can memorize will vary from one classroom to another, teachers should use their discretion in choosing additional poems for memorization.

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP

Mother Goose

Baa, baa, black sheep
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full.
One for the master,
And one for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

DIDDLE, DIDDLE, DUMPLING

Mother Goose

Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John,
Went to bed with his breeches on,
One stocking off, and one stocking on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.

A DILLER, A DOLLAR

Mother Goose

A diller, a dollar,
A ten o'clock scholar;
What makes you come so soon?
You used to come at ten o'clock,
But now you come at noon!

GEORGIE PORGIE

Mother Goose

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry,
When the girls came out to play,
Georgie Porgie ran away.

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE

Mother Goose

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed
To see such craft,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

HICKORY, DICKORY, DOCK

Mother Goose

Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Hickory, dickory, dock.

HOT CROSS BUNS

Mother Goose

Hot-cross buns!
Hot-cross buns!
One a penny, two a penny,
Hot-cross buns!
If you have no daughters,
Give them to your sons;
One a penny, two a penny,
Hot-cross buns!

HUMPTY DUMPTY

Mother Goose

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

IT'S RAINING, IT'S POURING

Mother Goose

It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring.
He bumped his head and went to bed,
And couldn't get up in the morning.

JACK AND JILL

Mother Goose

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.

JACK BE NIMBLE

Mother Goose

Jack, be nimble; Jack, be quick;
Jack, jump over the candlestick.

JACK SPRAT

Mother Goose

Jack Sprat could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean;
So 'twixt them both they cleared the cloth,
And licked the platter clean.

LADYBUG, LADYBUG

Mother Goose

Ladybug, ladybug fly away home,
Your house is on fire and your children are gone,
All except one, and her name is Ann,
And she hid under the baking pan.

LITTLE BO PEEP

Mother Goose

Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep,
And can't tell where to find them;
Leave them alone, and they'll come home,
And bring their tails behind them.

LITTLE BOY BLUE

Mother Goose

Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow and the cow's in the corn.
What! Is this the way you mind your sheep,
Under the haycock fast asleep?

LITTLE JACK HORNER

Mother Goose

Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner
Eating a Christmas pie;
He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said, “Oh, what a good boy am I!”

LITTLE MISS MUFFET

Mother Goose

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating some curds and whey;
Along came a spider,
And sat down beside her,
And frightened Miss Muffet away.

LONDON BRIDGE IS FALLING DOWN

Mother Goose

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down.
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady.

MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY

Mother Goose

Mary, Mary, quote contrary
How does you garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And pretty maids all in a row.

OLD KING COLE

Mother Goose

Old King Cole
Was a merry old soul,
And a merry old soul was he;
He called for his pipe,
And he called for his bowl,
And he called for his fiddlers three.

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

Mother Goose

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone;
But when she came there
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.

THE OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED IN A SHOE

Mother Goose

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children she didn't know what to do.
She gave them some broth without any bread,
She whipped them all soundly and put them to bed.

ONE, TWO, BUCKLE MY SHOE

Mother Goose

One, two, Buckle my shoe;
Three, four, Knock at the door;
Five, six, Pick up sticks;
Seven, eight, Lay them straight:
Nine, ten, A big fat hen;
Eleven, twelve, Dig and delve;
Thirteen, fourteen, Maids a-courting;
Fifteen, sixteen, Maids in the kitchen;
Seventeen, eighteen, Maids in waiting
Nineteen, twenty, My plate's empty.

PAT-A-CAKE

Mother Goose

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man;
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Pat it and prick it and mark it with a B.
And put in in the oven for baby and me.

RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY

Mother Goose

Rain, rain, go away
Come again another day
Little Johnny wants to play.

RIDE A COCK-HORSE

Mother Goose

Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a fine lady upon a white horse;
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
She shall have music wherever she goes.

RING AROUND THE ROSEY

Mother Goose

Ring-a-round the rosey,
A pocket full of posies,
Ashes! Ashes!
We all fall down.

ROCK-A-BYE, BABY

Mother Goose

Rock-a-bye, baby on the tree top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
Down tumbles baby, cradle and all.

ROSES ARE RED

Mother Goose

Roses are red
Violets are blue,
Sugar is sweet
And so are you.

SEE-SAW, MARGERY DAW

Mother Goose

See saw, Margery Daw,
Jacky shall have a new master:
Jacky must have but a penny a day
Because he can work no faster.

SIMPLE SIMON

Mother Goose

Simple Simon met a pieman
Going to the fair;
Says Simple Simon to the pieman:
“Pray let me taste your ware.”

Says the pieman to Simple Simon:
“Show me first your penny;”
Says Simple Simon to the pieman:
“Indeed I have not any.”

SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

Mother Goose

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye,
Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie;
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing,
Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the king?

The king was in the parlor counting out his money;
The queen was in the kitchen eating bread and honey;
The maid was in the garden hanging out the clothes,
There came a little blackbird and nipped off her nose.

STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT

Mother Goose

Star light, star bright,
First star I see tonight.
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish I wish tonight.

THERE WAS A LITTLE GIRL

Mother Goose

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good,
She was very very good
But when she was bad
She was horrid.

THIS LITTLE PIG WENT TO MARKET

Mother Goose

This little pig went to market,
This little pig stayed home,
This little pig had roast beef,
This little pig had none.
This little pig went “Wee, wee, wee” all the way home!

THREE BLIND MICE

Mother Goose

Three blind mice. Three blind mice.
See how they run. See how they run.
They all ran after the farmer's wife,
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife,
Did you ever see such a sight in your life,
As three blind mice?

APRIL RAIN SONG

Langston Hughes

Let the rain kiss you
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops
Let the rain sing you a lullaby
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk
The rain makes running pools in the gutter
The rain plays a little sleep song on our roof at night
And I love the rain.

EARLY TO BED

Benjamin Franklin

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

HAPPY THOUGHT

Robert Louis Stevenson

The world is so full of a number of things
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

I DO NOT MIND YOU, WINTER WIND

Jack Prelutsky

I do not mind you, Winter Wind
when you come whirling by,
to tickle me with snowflakes
drifting softly from the sky.

I do not even mind you
when you nibble at my skin,
scrambling over all of me
attempting to get in.

But when you bowl me over
and I land on my behind,
then I must tell you, Winter Wind,
I mind . . . I really mind!

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Sara Josepha Hale

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,
But still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.

Why does the lamb love Mary so?
The eager children cry;
Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,
The teacher did reply.

THE MORE IT SNOWS

A.A. Milne

The more it snows (Tiddely pom)

The more it goes (Tiddely pom)

The more it goes (Tiddely pom)

On snowing

And nobody knows (Tiddely pom)

How cold my toes (Tiddely pom)

How cold my toes (Tiddely pom)

Are growing

MY NOSE

Dorothy Aldis

It doesn't breathe;
It doesn't smell;
It doesn't feel
So very well.

I am discouraged
With my nose:
The only thing it
Does is blows.

RAIN

Robert Louis Stevenson

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

THE THREE LITTLE KITTENS

Eliza Lee Follen

Three little kittens
They lost their mittens,
And they began to cry,
Oh, mother dear,
We sadly fear
Our mittens we have lost.
What! lost your mittens,
You naughty kittens!
Then you shall have no pie.
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow.
No, you shall have no pie.

The three little kittens
They found their mittens,
And they began to cry,
Oh, mother dear,
See here, see here,
Our mittens we have found.
Put on your mittens,
You silly kittens,
And you shall have some pie.
Purr-r, purr-r, purr-r,
Oh, let us have some pie.

The three little kittens
Put on their mittens

And soon ate up the pie;
Oh, mother dear,
We greatly fear
Our mittens we have soiled.
What! soiled your mittens,
You naughty kittens!
Then they began to sigh,
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
Then they began to sigh.

The three little kittens
They washed their mittens,
And hung them out to dry;
Oh! mother dear,
Do you not hear,
Our mittens we have washed.
What! washed your mittens,
Then you're good kittens,
But I smell a rat close by.
Mee-ow, mee-ow, mee-ow,
We smell a rat close by.

TIME TO RISE

Robert Louis Stevenson

A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon my window sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
"Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head!"

TOMMY

Gwendolyn Brooks

I put my seed into the ground
And said, 'I'll watch it grow.'
I watered it and cared for it
As well as I could know.

One day I walked in my back yard,
And oh. what did I see!
My seed had popped itself right out
Without consulting me.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

Jane Taylor

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
How could he see where to go,
If you did not twinkle so?

In the dark blue sky you keep,
Often through my curtains peep
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.