

Let Me Touch the Sky - by Valerie Bloom

Scheme of Work

Activity 2: *Autumn Gilt*

Poem page number: 1

Skills or topics covered: description; rhyme; alliteration; verbs

Activities: identifying descriptive elements; analysing features of the poem

Preliminary exercise:

Before reading *Autumn Gilt*, ask the class to list ten colours, or words associated with colour (2 mins). Go through; probably they will mainly be just the colours, e.g., blue, black, white green, yellow, red, etc. Some may use ROYGBIV as an acronym to give the colours of the rainbow.

Description (colours):

Read the poem and ask the class what they think it's about. Discuss the point of the poem. Shape the discussion to include the fact that it's descriptive, and that it captures the colours of autumn.

Ask them to list the terms used in the poem to describe colours (2 mins):

gilt	ebony
lime green	blue beryl
bronze	gold
yellow	sparkling rainbow
flame-like	silver

Use a dictionary to find the meanings of any word they don't know. Write out the meanings. Talk about the thing that each colour term is describing, and decide if it is a good way to describe that thing. E.g. does *glints gold on the bride's wedding ring* create a picture in their minds of sunshine catching a ring and reflecting the sunlight.

Choose one of the terms to describe colour that they like best, and explain why they like it, e.g. say what picture it evokes in their mind.

Rhyme:

Ask the class to work out the way that rhyme is used in the poem. They will see that the second and fourth lines rhyme in each verse. Explain the technique of using letters to describe a rhyme scheme, and that this can be described as ABCB. Discuss the effect that this has. Most children like rhyme, and find it satisfying when each verse ends with a rhyme. Do they agree?

Alliteration:

If this has not already been mentioned, ask if anyone can define it. If not, explain that this is where words next to or near to each other start with the same sound. Ask them to find and list examples of alliteration in the poem.

Verbs:

Revise that a verb is a “doing word,” and go through a few examples. Then do a verb search from the poem. Ask them to draw a table with two columns and four rows, as below.

Verse	Verb
1
2	
3	

Following this, they should fill out the grid. Once complete it should read:

Verse	Verb
1	burns
2	flares, is, glints
3	's (short for is), is

There are two points to make about the way verbs are used in the poem:

1. There are three unusual and interesting usages to discuss, *burns*, *glints* and *flares*, e.g.:

[The sunshine] **flares** *flame-like on the fire hydrant*

Point out how many ideas of fire are gathered together: *flares*, *flame* and *fire* are all associated with fire (and they all begin with 'f', which ties in with the earlier discussion on alliteration).

2. There aren't many verbs in the poem, and there is only one in the first verse, *burns*. Half of the verbs are just *is* (or its shortened form, 's)

Why are there so few verbs? This is a question we will return to when comparing *Autumn Gilt* with the poem from the previous activity, *Don' Do Ova Dere*.

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