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# Indulging in Poetry No 3: The Beach by William Hart-Smith



## Lesson Sequence Overview

Poetry draws on the heart and imagination and fortunately we have an abundance of poems to introduce to students. This can be for the sheer joy of sharing, to focus on teaching appreciation of meaning and language through reading, or to express feelings and identity through writing or performing orally.

In Indulging in Poetry No 3 we look at [The Beach](#) by William Hart-Smith. The poem can be described as a metaphor poem as the beach is described as a slice of melon being eaten. The following learning sequence has been designed to focus on how the poet has used metaphor to show his appreciation and wonder of the beach. Students make connections and inferences when interacting with the poem as well as looking closely at metaphor as a poet's tool for taking a reader into their imagination.

Students are supported through carefully designed tasks before, during and after reading the text. Through the strategies and interactions learning has been designed to link reading and writing through use of the teaching and learning cycle (Derewianka & Jones, 2016 and Rossbridge & Rushton, 2015).

## Poem context

[The Beach](#) written by William Hart-Smith (1911–1990) is a well known Australian poem often included in Australian poetry anthologies (Hathorn, 2010). William Hart-Smith is considered one of Australia and New Zealand's more important poets and writers. He was born in Kent, England, and at the age of 12 moved to New Zealand for 13 years. He then moved to Australia. From 1970 he lived in Western Australia for nearly 8 years. During this time his poetry focused particularly on places, and the flora and fauna as he enjoyed the Australian environment. He returned to New Zealand in 1978 and published many poetry collections. Further background information on the poet can be found on a range of poetry sites including, [Austlit](#) and [My Poetic Side](#).

## Overview of teaching strategies

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading	Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connecting to place</li><li>• Metaphors and similes</li><li>• Connecting to experience</li><li>• About the poet</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading without interruption</li><li>• Reread with think alouds</li><li>• Reread whole text</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drawing the poem</li><li>• Analysing layers</li><li>• The sustained metaphor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modelling / text deconstruction</li><li>• Joint construction</li><li>• Independent construction</li></ul>

## Before reading

### Connecting to place

Tell students that they will be engaging with poetry, particularly around places and how an author can use language to convey their feelings and observations about a place. Small groups brainstorm places that they are connected to or are important to them in some way. This might include their backyard, local parks, places they have visited on holidays or famous landmarks. Encourage students to bring or search for photos or images of these places and display on an image wall. Students can also add their own artworks of places to the display. Old calendar pictures may also be useful. This display will be used when students begin their own poetry writing.

Place a selection of the images on the floor in a circle and ask students to add post it notes to



images that remind them of something else. Examples may need to be modelled by the teacher first. For example, the waterfall reminds me of bubbling lemonade.



## Metaphors and similes

Based on student ideas from the post it notes and images, use their examples to construct and explain the difference between similes and metaphors. Explain that similes and metaphors are figurative language used to describe in many contexts but often in poetry to paint a picture for a reader.

Model recording examples and discuss which are most powerful in helping a reader to imagine another world. For example:

The waterfall is like bubbling lemonade. (simile)

The waterfall was as quenching as lemonade. (simile)

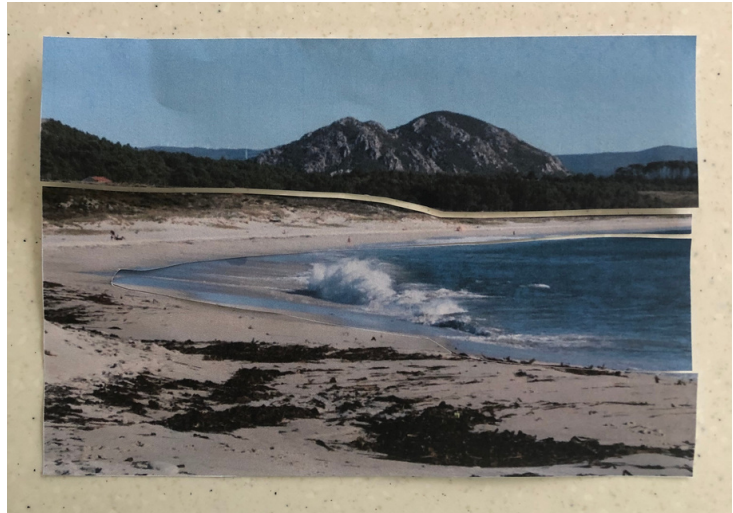
The waterfall is bubbling lemonade. (metaphor)

Further explain that a metaphor implies a relationship to show a significant similarity or difference in a feature and states that something is something else. A simile compares one thing with another using 'like' or 'as' to make a comparison. We often hear similes in everyday conversations. In poetry such choices are often used as a way to use words economically to describe and to take the reader into their imagination.

## Connecting to experience

Tell students that they will soon be reading a poem about the beach. In order to activate prior knowledge and experiences or to provide students with experiences and imagery of a beach, play sounds of the beach such as [Ocean Waves Relaxation](#). Ask students to share what they hear and what the scene or place might be like. Also ask what the waves remind them of and sound like. Display pictures of a beach and ask

students what shapes they see in the images. Reform an image of the beach by placing pieces of the image together like a jigsaw puzzle, asking students about the shapes they see and what the shapes resemble. Point out if students begin using similes or metaphors in their oral language.



## About the poet

Tell students that they will be reading a poem called [The Beach](#) written by William Hart-Smith (1911-1990). Share some background about the poet. He was born in Kent, England, and at the age of 12 moved to New Zealand for 13 years. From 1970 he lived in Western Australia for nearly 8 years. During this time his poetry focused particularly on places, flora and fauna as he enjoyed the Australian environment. He returned to New Zealand in 1978 and published many poetry collections. Students may also enjoy seeing a [photograph of the poet](#). More details can be found in the Poem Context above.

Show a map of the world locating where William Hart-Smith lived throughout his life and discuss the types of environments he may have encountered and appreciated.

## During reading

### Reading without interruption

Read [The Beach](#) without interruption. The poem can also be found in Libby Hathorn's [The ABC Book of Australian Poetry](#) and a [reading of The Beach](#) by Libby herself can be found on YouTube.

### Reread with think alouds

Display the poem and reread using think alouds. The purpose of think alouds when modelling the reading of [The Beach](#) is to show engagement by being puzzled by the choices and pondering the meaning as opposed to spelling out an interpretation of the meaning, particularly the overall metaphor.

Think alouds can include:

- I wonder why the beach is described as a quarter of golden fruit.
- I can imagine some type of melon in my head.
- The use of 'sliced' and 'half-moon curve' reminds me of a shape.
- I wonder what is meant by 'rind'.
- I'm puzzled about where the teeth come from. What are they eating or devouring?

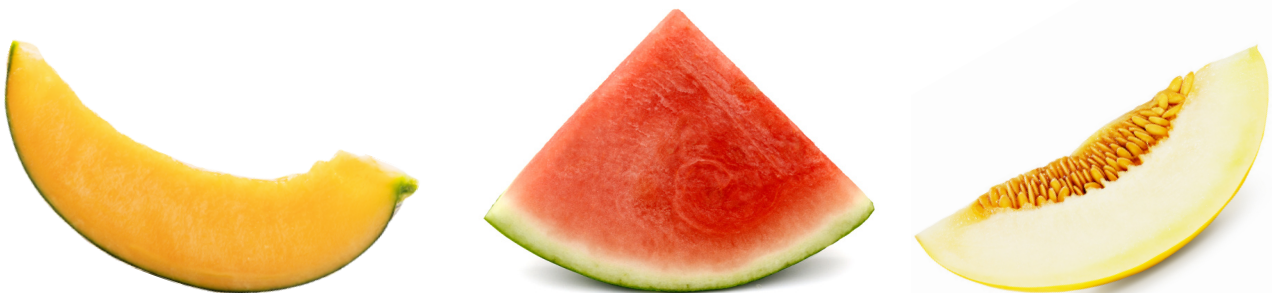
### Reread/view whole text

Reread [The Beach](#) again without teacher interruption. Students may wish to add their own responses. The poem should be read several additional times throughout the sequence.

## After reading

### Drawing the poem

Tell students that you are going to read the poem to them again while they listen and imagine the beach. Reread the poem and ask students to draw the image created by the poet. Reread a third time. Students share their images. Ask students to justify their drawing with reference to the language they have heard. Discuss what made the students draw either the beach and/or a melon. Further discussion might evolve to discuss the actual type of melon that is the beach, eg rockmelon, honeydew melon, watermelon.



### Analysing layers

Display the poem and read again. To identify the layers of meaning in and around the poem design questions based on the [Layers](#) thinking routine (Harvard Thinking Routine Toolbox), For example:

- Narrative: What is the main message?
- Aesthetic: What appeals to you or pulls you in?
- Mechanical: What techniques or choices do you notice?
- Dynamic: What surprises you or creates emotion?
- Connections: What connections can you make to your world and experiences or other texts?

Use the jigsaw groups strategy to increase participation, extend discussion and share expertise. See [Teacher Vision](#) for an introduction to the strategy.

Divide the class into small 'home groups' and allocate one of the above questions to each 'home group'. Students can take notes or just contribute and listen to group responses to their particular question. Emphasise that in their 'home group', they will develop expertise based on their question. Form 'expert groups' by ensuring a student from each 'home group' is placed in a new group. After sharing in the 'expert groups', students can return to their 'home group' and share what was discovered about the poem. See [Interacting through Reading No 5](#) for another example of using jigsaw groups.

## The sustained metaphor

Provide small groups with a copy of the poem and the beach jigsaw pieces used before reading. With one coloured post it note students label parts of the beach, for example, the sand. Then they label the parts with the metaphor, for example, a half moon curve, using another coloured post it note. Regroup and ask students to share their labelling.

Point out to students that the poem is what is known as a metaphor poem as it uses a sustained or extended metaphor throughout the whole poem. This takes the reader into another world by imagining or representing one object or scene as another.

In a metaphor poem, metaphors can be created in a couple of different ways. Many different metaphors can be used to compare one thing with many other things or one long metaphor can be used and expanded throughout. Discuss evidence of the latter as the beach is described as a melon throughout.

Discuss how the metaphor evolves, with the flesh of the melon being the sand or shore and the rind the jungle directly behind the beach. The teeth are the waves as they crash upon the sand as if teeth were eating a melon. Point out that this is personification. The purpose is for both the poet and reader to appreciate and see the scene with more clarity (See Tunica, p82). Mandy Tunica also points out that the skilful use of metaphor not only describes but can also change perception, feelings, thoughts (Tunica, p56).

## Writing

### Modelling / text deconstruction

Display [The Beach](#) and read with students. Discuss the writer's purpose and how they respond as a reader. Display the poem with verb, noun and adverbial groups highlighted. Tell students that the poet has created the metaphor by drawing on:

- a relating verb to create a metaphor where one thing is named as another (*is*)
- extended noun groups to describe and elaborate (*a quarter of golden fruit, a soft*



- ripe melon sliced to a half-moon curve, having a thick green rind)
- personification to give non-living things human characteristics (the sea devours)
- adverbial phrase to tell how an action occurs (with its sharp, sharp white teeth)

Return to the jigsaw image of the beach from before reading and compare to an image of a slice of melon. Model annotating the text to show evidence of the above features whilst making connections between parts of the melon and features of the beach. Remind students that William Hart-Smith has used the extended or sustained metaphor.

### Joint construction

Ensure the text deconstruction is displayed. Tell students that they will jointly write a poem about a place using techniques like William Hart-Smith. Return to the image wall from before reading and as a class select an image that students think they can develop a metaphor for and choose language to change or challenge the feelings or thoughts of a reader.

Display the selected image and brainstorm what the features and actions of the image remind them of in order to select a metaphor. Ask students what type of verb helps to create a metaphor (ie. relating, The waterfall is bubbling lemonade). Label the image with noun groups that would describe the image metaphorically, eg. the sugary flow of syrup. Also label with action verbs to show personification, eg. swallows, gulps. Display the outline of the poem and draw upon the planning to create a new poem based on the image.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_,  
 a \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_,  
 and \_\_\_\_\_ it  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.



Encourage students to justify their choices and share the pen. After writing, review the poem in pairs based on the criteria:

- poem engages by creating an image, thoughts and feelings for the reader
- a relating verb to create a metaphor where one thing is named as another
- extended noun groups to describe and elaborate

- personification to give non-living things human characteristics
- adverbial phrase to tell how an action occurs

NOTE: For groups of students who require less support, reduce or remove the scaffolding. Also encourage all students to move from the patterns in the original text in order to focus on their desired meanings. In this way, they may decide to change, remove or add to the criteria as long as this is justified. The initial support exists to assist students with the writing but should not be a constraint to further creativity. This also applies to the independent writing.

## Independent construction

Revise the text deconstruction and joint construction and ask students to now write their own poem by selecting an image of a place from the image wall. Provide students with post it notes to label features and actions of the image. Also remind them to initially come up with the metaphor to be sustained across the poem. Remind students of the criteria from the joint construction. Provide different degrees of support based on student need. This might include writing in pairs or small groups or providing the complete text outline as in the joint construction or no support at all. Students can even choose the support they think they will need.

After writing, students can share their poems in small groups and discuss in regards to criteria (or adjustment of criteria). Mostly, encourage students to discuss the role of the extended metaphor and how a reader reacts with feelings or even surprise as they view a place in a different light. Display the poems on a poetry wall next to the image wall.

## Other related poems and resources

Hathorn, L (2010) [The ABC book of Australian poetry: A treasury of poems for young people](#). HarperCollins: Sydney.

[Extended metaphor poem examples](#)

[The Sea](#) by James Reeves

[Hope is the Thing with Feathers](#) by Emily Dickenson

[A Metaphor Poem](#) by Steven Herrick

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## References

Derewianka, B & Jones, P (2016) [Teaching language in context \[2nd Ed.\]](#), Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Tunica, M (2005) *A passion for poetry: Practical approaches to using poetry in the classroom*. PETA, Newtown.

Rossbridge, J (2021) [Interacting through reading No 5: This small blue dot](#).

Rossbridge, J & Rushton, K (2015) [Put it in writing](#). PETAA, Sydney.