

GRADE 4 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 6

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\Rightarrow) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 6:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a poem,
- practice test-taking strategies,
- practice answering short-answer questions, and
- practice answering multiple-choice questions.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 6 – 1 and 6 – 2
- Pencils

Preparations before beginning Lesson 6:

- You will read aloud the poem “Whatif,” which is found on page 59.

LESSON 6: Reading and Responding

Following your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today's lesson is about reading and responding to poetry. There is poetry all around us.

**Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are.**

**Remember this one by Bill Martin, Jr.?
Brown Bear, Brown Bear, what do you see?
I see a red bird looking at me.**

We are surrounded by poetry! Poetry is meant to be enjoyed! Some boys and girls say they don't like poetry, but it may just be that they aren't really sure how to read and understand a poem.

So, today we are going to practice reading and understanding a poem.

Say:

When you read a poem by yourself, you need to *hear* it. Yes, you hear it in your head. Sometimes when we read a poem silently, we end up just looking at the words. We aren't really concentrating and thinking about how the words sound. Sound is really important in poetry.

What do you listen for? Pause.

(Response: rhyme. Somebody might say rhythm or repetition.)

If no one responds, give the following hint:

Listen to the following poem and tell me what you hear.

Brown bear, Brown bear, what do you see?

I see a red bird looking at me.

Red bird, Red bird, what do you see?

I see a yellow duck looking at me.

Yellow duck, Yellow duck, what do you see?

I see a blue horse looking at me.

Practice listening to the poem in your head! It really works.

Poems often have a pattern. Did Brown Bear, Brown Bear have a pattern? Pause. (Response: yes)

Yes, and if you are listening to yourself read, you can hear patterns in poems. You can also hear the rhyme and the rhythm.

One thing you can do when reading poetry is to *hear* it in your head.

Another trick to use when reading a poem is to *see* it in your head. Try to image what the poet is describing.

Today we are going to use a poem by Shel Silverstein called “Whatif.” Take your time and read the poem.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 6 – 1.
Allow time for students to read the poem.

Then say:

**Let’s examine this poem. It looks as if the first four lines go together.
“Last night while I lay thinking here,
Some Whatifs crawled inside my ear
And pranced and partied all night long
And sang their same old Whatif song:”**

Do you agree that those four lines seem to go together? Pause.
(Response: yes)

Yes, those four lines seem to go together to introduce the poem. Then what’s next in the poem? What did Mr. Silverstein do for the next twenty lines? Pause.

(Response: asked questions; lists things people worry about)

There is a series of questions or worries.

**Now, look at the last two lines. “Everything seems swell, and then
The nighttime Whatifs strike again!”**

In those two lines, the poet concludes or ends the poem.

**It is helpful to look at the poem. You can begin to see the pattern that
the poet uses. Listen as I read it aloud.**

Read the poem aloud to the students.

Say:

Were you listening? Did you hear the rhyme in this poem?

(Response: yes)

**Let’s read the rhymes together. Let me warn you: there is a tricky
rhyme. I will give you a minute to see whether you can find it.**

Pause to allow students to skim the poem.

There is actually a near-rhyme toward the end. It involves three words
rather than the typical one word rhyme - start a war, get divorced.

Okay, let’s read the rhymes. Don’t read too fast.

here, ear / long, song / school, pool / up, cup / cry, die /

test, chest / me, me / taller, smaller / bite, kite /

WATCH OUT! HERE COMES THE TRICKY ONE!!

start a war, get divorced /

late, straight / pants, dance / then, again.

Then say:

Let’s read the poem together, please.

You may find the first reading awkward. Students will need to read it a
second or third time to *feel* the rhythm of the poem.

**It usually takes three or four readings to understand a poem fully. If
you try to answer the questions without really reading and
understanding the poem, you may mess up.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 6 – 2.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Say:

Now that you have read and studied the poem, let's turn our attention to the questions. Be sure you read the questions carefully. Sometimes students make a mistake because they read the question wrong. Sometimes students make a mistake because they get in a hurry. They just want to be finished. It is very important for you to read slowly and carefully so that you won't make careless mistakes. In fact, it may be a good idea to read the question more than once.

We will begin with Number one. "How can you tell that this selection is a poem?" Then you need to read all four answer choices.

Choice A: it has rhyme and rhythm.

Choice B: all the lines begin with capital letters.

Choice C: it is funny.

Choice D: it has a title.

Be sure that you take the time to read all four choices. What do you think is the correct answer?

(Response: Choice A: it has rhyme and rhythm.)

What's wrong with Choices B, C, and D? Pause.

(Possible responses: using capital letters, being funny, and having a title could be true of fiction and nonfiction; those characteristics aren't just characteristics of poetry.)

Students often have difficulty explaining their answer choice. Give clues and hints as necessary. They want to say, "I just knew that was the answer." Guide them to give the support for their response.

Number two. "From reading this selection, you can tell that the author is Choice A: dangerous; Choice B: carefree; Choice C: a musician, and Choice D: a worrier.

Say:

Is there anything in the poem that makes you think the author is dangerous? Pause. (Response: no)

Put a dot on *dangerous*. That dot let's you know that *dangerous* isn't the answer. Pause.

Is there anything in the poem that makes you think the author is carefree? Pause. (Response: no)

Put a dot on *carefree*. Pause.

Do you think the author is a musician? Pause. (Response: no)

Put a dot on *musician*. Pause.

Is there anything in the poem that makes you think the author is a worrier? Pause. (Response: yes)

Right! How do you know the author is a worrier?

(Response: any of the whatif lines support this answer.)

Good job! You may sometimes want to put a dot on an answer to let yourself know that it is wrong. Don't make the dot really big or really dark. Just mark the dot so that you can see it!

Look at Number three. What kind of question is Number three? Pause. (Response: short-answer)

Yes, Number three is a short-answer question. Just be sure your answer isn't too short! Write enough so that whoever reads your answer can understand it.

What are Whatifs? I believe you can answer that question in one sentence. Write your sentence on the lines provided right now.

Pause to allow time for students to respond.

(Response: Whatifs are things we worry about.)

Ask for volunteers to read their responses. Students should read from their papers, not just tell you the answer. Encourage students to write a complete sentence. As you observe their handwriting, encourage them to write legibly.

Say:

Let's look at question number four. "The poet uses a list of questions. Why do you think he wrote the poem as a series of questions?"

This question is another short-answer question, so be sure you write in a complete sentence. Why do you think he asked all those questions?

Pause to allow time for students to respond.

(Possible responses: to show things people worry about; because a lot of times we say *whatif* when we worry; it is repeated to show how silly worrying is.)

Look at the last question. "What is the main idea of this poem?"

Read the four choices and mark your answer.

Pause.

What is the main idea of the poem?

(Response: Choice B: worrying won't change things.)

Why didn't you choose Choices A, C, or D?

(Response: because those answers are not the main idea: those answers are only details from the poem.)

Then say:

You have done a great job today with this poem. Even though the poem is silly, it really has an important message for all of us.

Don't worry!

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 6 – 1

WHATIF
Shel Silverstein

Last night while I lay thinking here,
Some Whatifs crawled inside my ear
And pranced and partied all night long
And sang their same old Whatif song:
Whatif I'm dumb in school?
Whatif they've closed the swimming pool?
Whatif I get beat up?
Whatif there's poison in my cup?
Whatif I start to cry?
Whatif I get sick and die?
Whatif I flunk the test?
Whatif green hair grows on my chest?
Whatif nobody likes me?
Whatif a bolt of lightning strikes me?
Whatif I don't grow taller?
Whatif my head starts getting smaller?
Whatif the fish won't bite?
Whatif the wind tears up my kite?
Whatif they start a war?
Whatif my parents get divorced?
Whatif the bus is late?
Whatif my teeth don't grow in straight?
Whatif I tear my pants?
Whatif I never learn to dance?
Everything seems swell, and then
The nighttime Whatifs strike again!

“Whatif” by Shel Silverstein, from *A Light in the Attic*, Copyright © 1981 by Evil Eye Music, Inc. Used by permission.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 6 – 2

NAME _____

1. How can you tell that this selection is a poem?
 - A. It has rhyme and rhythm.
 - B. All the lines begin with capital letters.
 - C. It is funny.
 - D. It has a title.

2. From reading this selection, you can tell that the author is
 - A. dangerous.
 - B. carefree.
 - C. a musician.
 - D. a worrier.

3. What are Whatifs?

4. The poet uses a list of questions. Why do you think he wrote the poem as a series of questions?

5. What is the main idea of this poem?
 - A. Worrying makes you a better student.
 - B. Worrying won't change things.
 - C. Worrying makes you grow taller.
 - D. Worrying makes you popular.