

# Bear Poetry

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**Grade Level:** 1–6

## Standards:

### Minnesota Academic Standards in Science Codes

- 1.4.1.1.1, 3.4.1.1.2, 5.4.1.1.1 – Living things are diverse with many different observable characteristics that enable them to grow, reproduce and survive
- 1.4.2.1.1, 1.4.2.1.2 – Natural systems have many components that interact to maintain the living system
- 1.4.3.1.1, 1.4.3.1.2 – Plants and animals undergo a series of orderly changes during their life cycles
- 3.4.3.2.1, 3.4.3.2.2 – Offspring are generally similar to their parents, but may have variations that can be advantageous or disadvantageous in a particular environment

### Writing Benchmarks K-5 (Common Core Writing Standards K-5, 6-12)

- 3.6.4.4 - 5.6.4.4, 6.7.4.4, 3.6.5.5 - 5.6.5.5, 6.7.5.5, 3.6.6.6 - 5.6.6.6, 6.7.6.6 – Production and Distribution of Writing
- 3.6.7.7 - 5.6.7.7, 6.7.7.7, 3.6.8.8 - 5.6.8.8, 6.7.8.8 – Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- 3.6.10.10 - 5.6.10.10, 6.7.10.10 – Range of Writing

## Link Resources:

[www.bear.org](http://www.bear.org)

[www.bearstudy.org](http://www.bearstudy.org)

Online Interactive Poetry Resource:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource\\_type=16&q=poetry&sort\\_order=relevance](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource_type=16&q=poetry&sort_order=relevance)

ABCs of Black Bears – book versions:

[http://www.bear.org/website/images/stories/education-outreach/resources/ABCs\\_100dpi.pdf](http://www.bear.org/website/images/stories/education-outreach/resources/ABCs_100dpi.pdf) (low res)

[http://www.bear.org/website/images/stories/education-outreach/resources/ABCs\\_300dpi.pdf](http://www.bear.org/website/images/stories/education-outreach/resources/ABCs_300dpi.pdf)

Online Interactive Poetry Resource:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource\\_type=16&q=poetry&sort\\_order=relevance](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/?resource_type=16&q=poetry&sort_order=relevance)

## Goal:

Students learn scientific facts about bears and communicate those facts in one or more written poems.

## Curriculum Focus:

Science, Written Language

## Lesson:

Read the ABCs of Black Bears as a class read-aloud. Discuss various facts as you read. Provide a 'bear book area (use a milk crate to hold the books) so that students can research additional facts as they write. Choose one or more types of poetry to model and write together as a class or to have students write individually. If the class makes several poems or types of poems, they could be gathered into a class book or displayed with bear facts in the hallway.

## **Acrostics**

Sample:

**W**hen the winter winds blow  
**O**ver the forest  
**O**lder bears find their  
**D**ens and  
**S**leep soundly till spring.

Help the students choose a bear word from the book for the acrostic. Short words are easiest!  
Write a whole-class poem first to model the writing process.

Brainstorm words that could be used for each letter in the chosen word. Younger students might write only one word for each letter. Older students or those more able might be able to write a longer phrase or sentence and connect the ideas throughout their poems.

The first letter of each line should be capitalized and might be colored to emphasize the hidden word. Experienced poets might choose to write more acrostics with their own word choices after the class poems are finished.

## **Limericks**

Sample:

There once was a bear named Lily  
She peered out of her den and looked silly,  
Her cub nestled close  
And tapped Lily's nose  
And together they slept on the hilly.

Limericks are a bit trickier. The pattern of the poem is based on syllables and rhymes –

1. la da da da da da da da
2. la da da da da da da da
3. la da da da da
4. la da da da da
5. la da da da da da da da

Lines 1, 2 and 5 should rhyme the final word.

Lines 3 and 4 should rhyme the final word.

Use poetic license if the rhymes and the syllables don't quite work out – if it sounds good, go for it. Limericks are often funny but try to include some true facts in your poems.

I teach the students to say the pattern out loud, and they catch on quickly. I also give them paper marked in blank spaces for writing the syllables in the correct number for each line.

Choose a bear topic from the book and together brainstorm possible first lines. Then find as many rhyming words as you can with that line. Change the line if you need to, and use a thesaurus. Let the students suggest lines/phrases and work it out together to get a "class" limerick.

Now have students individually or in pairs/groups work on a different limerick.

## **Haiku**

Sample:

Bear cubs follow their mothers,  
climbing up trees and  
running through woods – WAIT!

Haiku are Japanese poems that have a strict pattern of syllables and lines. There are 3 lines. Line 1 must have 7 syllables, line 2 must have 5 syllables, and line 3 must have 7 syllables. Try to express a feeling in your haiku. These poems are usually nature related.

Provide a paper with blanks for the syllable pattern in each line. Remind students that an idea might continue into another line, but do not break a word apart into two lines. Writing a “class haiku” first together will help the students get the pattern. Then brainstorm ideas for more poems and allow the students to work with a partner or by themselves to write.

## **Free Verse**

Have the students answer these questions in phrases, not sentences, one phrase per line. They will end up with a free verse poem. Just tell them to answer the questions with their first thought, not that they are “writing a poem”. Sometimes students who struggle to write are very successful with this style. For younger students you might need to give the suggested answers orally so they have ideas to choose from – they will personalize them as they write.

1. Where would you find a wild bear? (in the woods, up high in a tree, under a log, in the berry bushes)
2. What color is the bear’s fur? (dark brown, shiny black, warm cinnamon, light blonde)
3. How does the fur feel? (soft and warm, wiry, wet?, thick, fuzzy)
4. Decide how big your bear will be. (a huge male bear, a tiny bear cub, a fat mother bear)
5. When and/or where does your bear sleep? (sleeping when the moon shines, dozing in the sunlight, piled up with brothers and sisters, snoring all night)
6. How and/or where does your bear move? (walking slowly along the path, running through the woods, shuffling through the leaves, scampering after mom, climbing up high in the pine tree)
7. What will your bear eat? (scratching ant pupae from a log, licking the pupae from under a rock, pulling berries off branches with her lips, chewing lazily on a tree branch)
8. How does your bear feel right now? (happy, hungry, curious, scared)

Sample:

In the dark quiet woods,  
A glimpse of warm cinnamon  
Fur, soft and warm.  
The tired mother bear  
Tries to sleep, curled in her den.  
When her cubs cry out, she turns over  
And lazily chews twigs while they nurse.  
Contented mama bear.

### **Diamante**

A Diamante poem is a poem in the shape of a diamond. It does not have to rhyme. It can be about one topic or two opposite topics. It uses specific kinds of words in each line.

Sample:

Cub  
tiny, brown  
sleeping, eating, humming,  
in the den together-  
nursing, waiting, licking,  
furry, warm  
Mama

Line 1 is a noun and the topic of your poem.

Line 2 is 2 adjectives describing your topic

Line 3 is 3 “ing” words that your topic would do

Line 4 has 4 nouns or a phrase that connects your topics

Line 5 is 3 “ing” words that your bottom topic would do

Line 6 is two adjectives describing your bottom topic

Line 7 is either the same word as line 1 or a synonym or antonym of that word

Diamantes are fun to type because the form looks best when the words line up correctly – use center alignment. Even young children can type these poems because there are few words.

### **Cinquains**

Cinquains have five lines.

Line 1 is one word (the title)

Line 2 is two words that describe the title.

Line 3 is three words that tell the action

Line 4 is four words that express the feeling

Line 5 is one word that recalls the title

Sample:

Ant pupae  
tiny, white,  
digging, clawing, licking,  
favorite food in springtime -  
yum!

Write a class cinquain together. For student cinquains, provide a paper with the correct number of blanks per line. Don't forget to allow poetic license – if the student is happy with it and it sounds good, adapt.

### **Rhyming Poems**

Some students may want to write rhyming poems. These are common in nursery rhymes. They can follow different patterns: lines 1 and 3, lines 2 and 4, or lines 1 and 2, lines 3 and 4, etc. Or you can write a verse, then have a refrain that rhymes, then another verse, and repeat the refrain. Get creative and enjoy! A rhyming dictionary is helpful, and brainstorm possible rhyming words before starting the poem.

Sample:

The bears climb high in trees  
When they hear a sound in the breeze.  
They can see from up high  
Till the danger goes by.  
A bear's fur might be black  
And her long claws help her attack  
The ants that live under the log  
As she feeds her cub near the bog.  
The cub chases mom all day  
While she forages food 'long the way;  
At night they seek out a pine tree  
And the cub can dream safely.

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