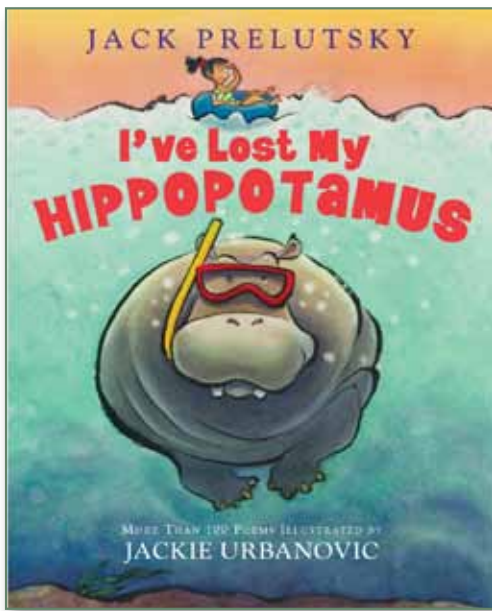


I've Lost My HIPPOPOTAMUS

BY JACK PRELUTSKY • ILLUSTRATED BY JACKIE URBANOVIC

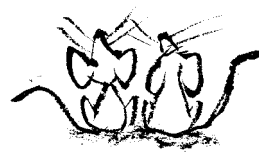
a GUIDE TO TEACHING POETRY IN THE CLASSROOM



ABOUT THE BOOK

Jack Prelutsky, the country's first Children's Poet Laureate, has written yet another zany, whimsical collection of poems for young readers. Illustrator Jackie Urbanovic's spirited drawings lend humor and verve to each page.

Jack Prelutsky includes limericks, haiku, and rhymes galore in this anthology that will entertain readers young and old.



Illustrations copyright © 2012 by Jackie Urbanovic.

ACTIVITIES: I've Lost My Hippopotamus

- 1. Amazing Words.** Jack Prelutsky incorporates a rich vocabulary in this poetry collection. Set up a bulletin board in the classroom with the heading "Amazing Words" and the subheadings "Nouns," "Verbs," and "Adjectives." As you read the poems in this collection, keep a running list of new words that you discuss and define. Include words such as "elation" (p. 18), "intricate" (p. 38), "discern" (p. 54), "fluidity" (p. 58), "frivolous," "abhor," and "jocosity" (p. 69).
- 2. Let's Go Shopping!** In "Shopping at a Dragon Store" (p. 28), a boy searches for a special dragon to bring home. Have students brainstorm their own idea for a unique and unusual store and then write a poem about it. Math can be integrated into this activity by asking students to design a large poster of their store and to add prices to the objects they've drawn, using small Post-it notes. Then students can visit one another's stores and use coins to "purchase" something from each store.
- 3. Peculiar Plants.** In the poem "I Planted a Whistle" (p. 31), the speaker plants a part of something and grows the whole thing. "My beautiful garden/Is better than most," he declares. Create a class collage of this unusual garden. Then have students describe the pattern (planting a part, growing the whole), and challenge them to continue this pattern in a poem of their own, while also maintaining the rhyming scheme.
- 4. I Have Feelings Too!** Read the poems "I'm Running Away from Home Today" (p. 35) and "The Afternoon My Hamster Died" (p. 91). Discuss the feelings portrayed in these poems (anger and sadness). Have students think of a time when they felt angry or sad and encourage them to write a poem about the experience.

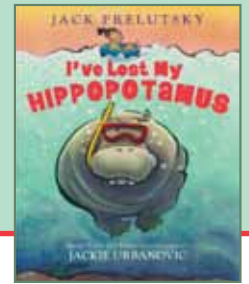


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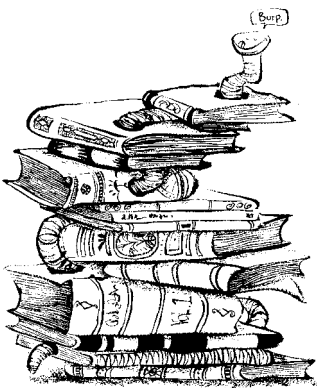
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5. **Crazy Critters.** In many poems in this collection, Jack Prelutsky combines animals with objects or other animals to create hilarious new creatures, including wiguanas (p. 38), halibutterflies (p. 40), a boomerangutan (p. 57), pelicantaloupes (p. 71), and flamingoats (p. 87). Have students work in pairs to create their own “crazy critter” and compose a poem about their new creature.
6. **Do the Twist.** “Two Sea Horses” (p. 59) is an example of a tongue twister—verse that is difficult to say clearly and rapidly. Challenge your students to read this poem quickly and correctly. Then have them write their own tongue twisters, discussing how alliteration is a key part of a tongue-twister poem.
7. **Picture Poetry.** In “On the Road to Undiscovered” (p. 64) and “I Can Yo-Yo” (p. 114), the words of the poem are written in a form or shape that matches the subject of the poem. Encourage students to make their own “picture poem” (or concrete poem) by writing the words of their poem in the shape of the subject of the poem.
8. **Out of the Ordinary.** An unusual phenomenon occurs in “It’s Raining in My Bedroom” (p. 72) when raindrops pour from the speaker’s bedroom ceiling. Discuss why this is an entertaining poem (it’s surprising, it’s the opposite of how things usually are, etc.), and then brainstorm a list of other surprising, unusual, opposite occurrences that could be the topic of an original poem. Have students choose from the list and compose a poem of their own.
9. **Just Joking Around.** Many of the poems in this collection contain puns or subtle humor that younger readers might not understand, but older readers can decipher. Ask students to identify and explain the joke, pun, or wit found in the following poems: “My Brain Is Unbelievable” (p. 22), “My Snake Can Do Arithmetic” (p. 25), “Two Hats Began a Journey” (p. 51), “A Centipede Was Thirsty” (p. 85), “A Cowboy Had a Lazy Horse” (p. 90), “A Couple of Silkworms” (p. 107), and “It’s Noisy in My Garden” (p. 124).
10. **Fabulous Forms.** Introduce the students to the limerick form used in “Burton” (p. 19) and in “A Skinny Young Lady Named Grace” (p. 89). Also familiarize the students with the haiku poems on pages 44–49 and discuss their form. After exploring the poems, have students compose their own poem using either the limerick or haiku form.
11. **Hidden Homophones.** Read the poem “When” (p. 136). Then define *homophones* (two or more words having the same pronunciation but different meanings and spellings, e.g. dear/deer). Reread the poem and ask students to record the inferred homophone on the whiteboard. Then have the students brainstorm a list of other homophone pairs they know.
12. **Spectacular Sports Card.** Go to www.jackprelutsky.com and explore this colorful, creative website. There are suggested activities for teachers and parents in the “Grown-ups” section, as well as poetry and fun for children. Click on “About Jack” (at the bottom of the screen) and then “Sports Cards.” Show the sports cards Jack Prelutsky designed for himself and read the accompanying poems with the class. Then have students create their own sports card and matching poem about themselves.



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ACTIVITIES: Poetry in the Classroom

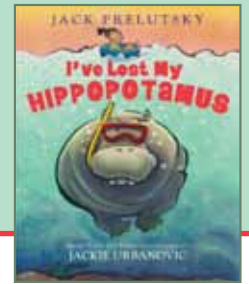
- 1. What Do You See?** Read Sandra Liatsos's "Tree House Night" or another poem that evokes imagery. Ask students to share which lines are their favorites and why. Then ask them to describe what they "see" as they listen to the poem, and discuss the power of imagery. Read several other poems containing imagery and have students draw or paint the images portrayed in the poem. Then, as a class, compose a poem containing imagery.
- 2. It Makes Sense.** Ask students to think about an activity such as riding a bike, playing in the snow, or flying a kite. Have students focus on the five senses and recount what they might see, hear, feel, taste, and smell while doing this activity. Students should jot down the sensory details, and then act out the activity while imagining that they are experiencing these details. Then students should incorporate these details into a poem.
- 3. The Write Start.** Tell students that sometimes it can be difficult to begin writing a poem, but that using concrete objects can help. Place several items (such as a rock, a flower, a coin, a shell, and an apple) on a table for students to observe and manipulate. Ask students to choose one item and make a list of details describing the object. Then have students use their list to compose a poem.
- 4. A Poet's Eye.** Explain that poets often see things in a different or special way using their "poet's eye." Read Christina Rossetti's poem "Clouds" and discuss the way she sees sheep instead of clouds as she looks up at the sky. Ask students to think of everyday sights that they might see in a new or different way, and then compose a poem around that idea.
- 5. How Do You Feel?** Brainstorm a list of feelings with the class. Discuss how poets often try to capture a feeling within a poem. Have students recall an experience in which they felt a specific emotion. Then ask students to compose a poem about their experience. Students can share their poem with a partner and have the partner identify which feeling is being portrayed in the poem.
- 6. What Wonderful Words!** Introduce alliteration to the students and as a class create lines of poetry that contain alliteration. Then have the students compose their own alliterative lines of poetry, and challenge them to see who can compose the longest lines. Finally, have students write a poem with alliteration integrated into the poem.



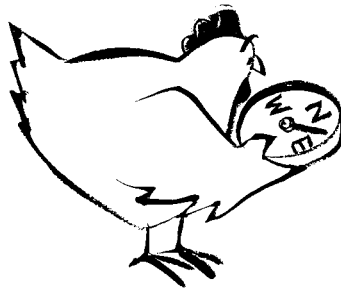
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7. I've Got the Rhythm. Read aloud some poems that clearly use rhythm. Two possible classics are Eloise Greenfield's "Rope Rhyme" and Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." Have students gently tap or clap the beat as they listen. Then students can compose their own poems with distinctive rhythms.



8. Show Me. Explain to students that poets try to show rather than tell in their writing because showing makes their poems more interesting and real. For example, instead of writing, "The girl was sad," the poet instead might write, "A tear rolled down the little girl's cheek." Present a poem that "tells," such as the following: "The truck is noisy/digging all day/it is yellow/it is big/it is loud." As a class, compose a poem on the same topic that "shows" instead of "tells." For example, "The yellow truck monster roars/dipping its head/swallowing piles of thick, black earth/From yellow dawn to blue dusk/giant truck monsters pound and grind/until at last they rest." Ask the students to describe the differences between these two truck poems. Then challenge the students to compose their own poems that "show" instead of "tell."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JACK PRELUTSKY was the nation's first Children's Poet Laureate. He has filled more than fifty books of verse with his inventive word-play, including the national bestsellers *Scranimals* and *The New Kid on the Block*. He lives in Washington State. You can visit him online at www.jackprelutsky.com.



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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

JACKIE URBANOVIC is the *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator of *Duck at the Door*, *Duck Soup*, and *Duck and Cover*. She lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, and shares her studio with two playful dogs and one lovable cat, all rescue animals who give her lots of love and attention. You can visit her at www.jackieurbanovic.com.



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