

Tractor Power Poetry

Grade Level: 4-8

Lesson Overview

When students are directed to write a poem, do you see their eyes glazing over and hear heavy sighs? This lesson will introduce or increase students' poetry writing skills while focusing on a farm machine they should all recognize. After exploring types and uses of tractors via images and videos, students will write about tractor using simple, poetic forms.

Student Objectives

1. Compose original poetry based on perceptions and research-based information about a tractor.

Materials

- ✓ small brown paper bags
- ✓ pictures of various types of tractors such as lawn tractors, antique tractors that used steam, utility tractors, tractors with tracks, tractors with specialized attachments, skid loader tractors, etc. (several examples are provided)
- ✓ index cards, paper and writing utensils
- ✓ Writing Webs Worksheet (simple)
- ✓ Writing Web Sample
- ✓ Sample Poetry Types Students Information Sheet
- ✓ internet access

Vocabulary

- **acrostic** - a poem where the first letter of each line spells a word that can be read vertically.
- **cinquain** - a short poem consisting of five, usually unrhymed lines containing respectively two, four, six, eight and two syllables or words.
- **diamante** - a type of poem that is shaped in the form of a diamond, words are related through shades of meaning from one extreme to an opposite extreme, following a pattern of parts of speech.
- **free verse** - poetry that is written material freed from paragraph form and has rhythm but no rhyme.
- **haiku** - three lines of five, seven and five syllables each, emphasizing syllables, not rhymes.

- **limerick** - a humorous nonsense verse consisting of a triplet and couplet, making it a five-line poem. Lines one, two and five are the triplet and rhyme. Lines three and four form a rhyming couplet.
- **machine** - an apparatus using or applying mechanical power and having several parts, each with a definite function and together performing a particular task; a device used to help make work easier
- **tractor** - a motor vehicle used to pull heavy loads and to provide power to operate, carry, push, and/or pull agriculture implements.

Procedure

A Tractor's Tangled Web Interest Approach: Read aloud the poem, *Flight Plan* by Jane Merchant or another poem about a machine of the teacher's choice.

Discuss the poem. What does the machine in the poem sound like? How does it look? What does it do? How does the poet help you to imagine this machine?

Flight Plan

Of all the ways of traveling in earth and air and sea
 It's the lively helicopter that has captivated me.
 It hovers anywhere in air just like a hummingbird.
 Flies backward; forward, up or down, whichever is preferred.
 It doesn't pierce the stratosphere as zipping rockets do
 Nor pop sound barriers and puff fat jet streams through the blue.
 It isn't first in speed or weight or anything but fun
 And deftly doing dangerous jobs that often must be done.
 When anyone is lost in storm or flooded river's span
 And other planes can't help at all, a helicopter can.
 It lights on snow or mountaintop—wherever it is needed.
 The plane that's like a hummingbird will not be superseded
 By satellite or Stratojet. No supership has topped her.
 And just as soon as ever I can I'll fly a helicopter!

Jane Merchant

POWER POETRY WARM-UPS: Use either of these Interest Approaches to encourage students to find descriptive words and phrases that will be used to compose poetry about a machine that is used for many different uses in many different settings.

Power Poetry Bags

Materials Needed:

- small brown paper bags
- pictures of various types of tractors such as lawn tractors, antique tractors that used steam, utility tractors; tractors with tracks, tractors with specialized attachments, skid loader tractors, etc. (several examples are provided)
- index cards, paper and writing utensils

Procedure:

1. Place students into small groups.
2. Provide each student with an index card and each group receives one of the Tractor Power Poetry bags.
3. Instruct students to individually write 2-4 adjectives about their group's tractor. When each student is done, they should place their card in the bag.
NOTE: Remind students that tractor adjectives can cover the sights, sounds, sizes, types of power, etc.
4. Each group will present their bag of descriptive words to the class after showing the Power Poetry Bag picture they used.

Tractor's Tangled Web

Materials Needed:

- Writing Webs Worksheet (Simple)
- Writing Web Sample
- pictures of various types of tractors such as lawn tractors, antique tractors that used steam, utility tractors; tractors with tracks, tractors with specialized attachments, skid loader tractors, etc. (Optional)

Procedure:

1. Using prior knowledge, reference materials and the internet, direct individuals or groups of students to complete a writing web about tractors. An example of a writing web is included in this lesson. Encourage students to include as much information as possible about the tractor. NOTE: The pictures that were suggested for the Power Poetry Bags may also be used to provide inspiration
2. After writing webs are complete, students should share their information with the class. Students may also provide pictures to illustrate their ideas.
3. Provide wall space for students to place their webs so students can see that there are many different perceptions about a tractor.

4. Summarize the webs (tractor characteristics, perceptions, and uses) with the students.

Tractor Power Poetry

1. Students will compose a poem about tractors, either working individually, in pairs or small groups.
2. Students are randomly assigned a poetry type (acrostic, cinquain, diamante, haiku or limerick). Students should have general knowledge of poetry types, gathered by either: research; textbook; library resources, or teacher furnished information.
2. Students will compose a poem, following the format for each composition. (Samples of poetry found in this lesson).
3. Upon completion, students will present their poems orally. The audience will evaluate composition based on proper format, word usage, and clarity.
4. Written compositions and visual examples may be displayed for additional reference.

Extension Activities

1. Students may research and compose other types of poetry such as a list poem, cascade poem, or poems that highlight synonyms or opposites.
2. If the Power Poetry Bags were used, groups will write a poem about their tractor using the adjectives in their bag. Adjectives that were repeated must be used the number of times they were repeated.
3. Students may research additional types of agricultural equipment.
4. Class may sponsor a poetry contest for other classrooms. Students would act as teachers (each pair/group responsible for teaching a different pair/group) for their specific poetry type. The entire classroom could evaluate the poems and award prizes.
5. Students may compile their poetry into a booklet that is shared with other classes or families.

Additional Resources

- The following materials may be available from your local agriculture literacy coordinator.
(http://www.agintheclassroom.org/AGLitCoord/contact_your_county_agricultural.shtm)
 - *Fantastic Farm Machines* by Cris Peterson; ISBN 978-1590782712

- *Usborne Big Book of Big Tractors and some little ones too* by Lisa Jane Gillespie; ISBN 978-0794515522
- *Usborne Big Machines: Tractors* by Lisa Jane Gillespie; ISBN 978-0794515522
- *How John Deere Tractors & Implements Work* by Roy Harrington; ISBN 978-0929355887
- *Simple and Complex Machines on the Farm* - DVD
- *Modern Marvels: Farming Technology* – DVD
- **How Do Tractors Work? – Explain that Stuff:** If you could have only one vehicle in the entire world, what would you pick? Many of us would opt for an amazing sports car or even a race car. Some would go for a four-wheel drive or a pickup. Given the choice of absolutely any vehicle, I think I might go for a **tractor**. Armed with a powerful diesel engine and huge chunky tires, I could go anywhere and do anything! Tractors are truly amazing vehicles, but have you ever stopped to consider what makes them so great? Let's take a closer look!
<https://www.explainthatstuff.com/tractors.html>
- **Economic History of Tractors in the United States:** The farm tractor is one of the most important and easily recognizable technological components of modern agriculture in the United States. Its development in the first half of the twentieth century fundamentally changed the nature of farm work, significantly altered the structure of rural America, and freed up millions of workers to be absorbed into the rapidly growing manufacturing and service sectors of the country. The tractor represents an important application of the internal combustion engine, rivaling the automobile and the truck in its economic impact.
<https://eh.net/encyclopedia/economic-history-of-tractors-in-the-united-states>
- **Tractor Timeline - A History of Tractors:** A culture of innovation in America's farming industry has taken us from the steel plow blade to today's smart devices. Take a journey through the history of tractors and these incredible milestones in this tractor timeline. <https://www.fastline.com/v100/tractortimeline.aspx>
- Many videos may be found that show the work tractors do. These videos can also be explored to listen to the sounds and to see the different sizes.
 - https://youtu.be/jOW8N9H_4m4 - Big Tractors Working Spring Tillage (audio and video from outside several different tractors doing tillage)
 - https://youtu.be/_jo0aDAqVpw - Learning to Plant Corn (audio of beeps and alerts in cab, conversation between father and son, tractor noise faint in background)

- <https://youtu.be/2umz7RAO-AA> - John Deere Tractors Mowing, Raking, Baling Hay (audio and video from outside tractor)
- Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom has lessons to expand the poetry experience further:
 - **Bacon Blackout Poetry:**
<https://beyondthebarndoor.files.wordpress.com/2021/06/bacon-blackout-poetry-1.pdf>
 - **Ode To A Vegetable:**
<https://beyondthebarndoor.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/odetoavegetable.pdf>

Standard

Illinois English Language Arts Standard

W.5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

The **M**ultidisciplinary **A**gricultural **I**ntegrated **C**urriculum (mAGic) was created in 2004 under the leadership of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education Project (FCAE). Funding was made available through the FCAE grant budget from the agricultural education line item of the ISBE budget. This revision, as printed, was developed in September 2021.

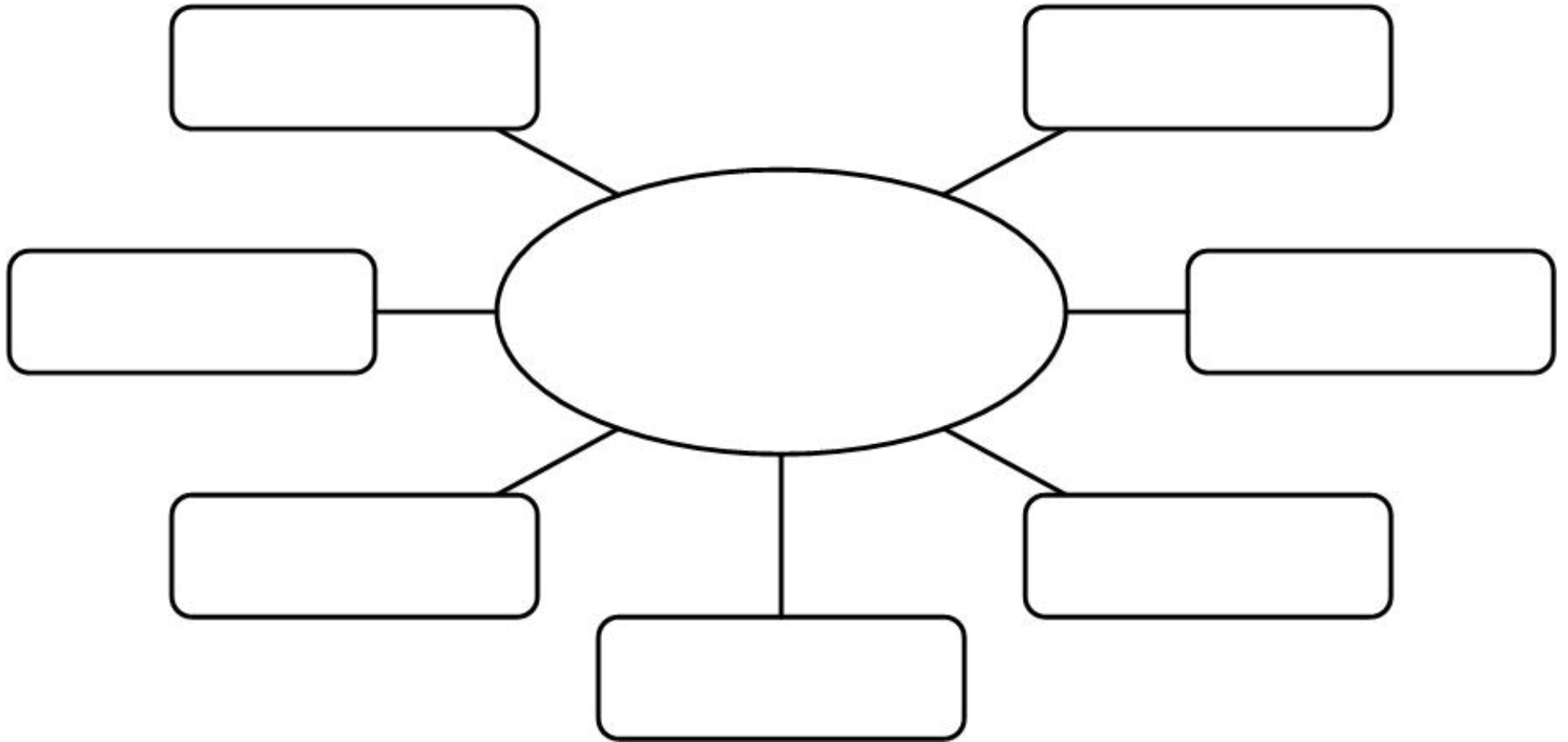


These mAGic lessons are designed to bring agriculture to life in your classroom. They address the Illinois Learning Standards in math, science, English language arts and social studies.

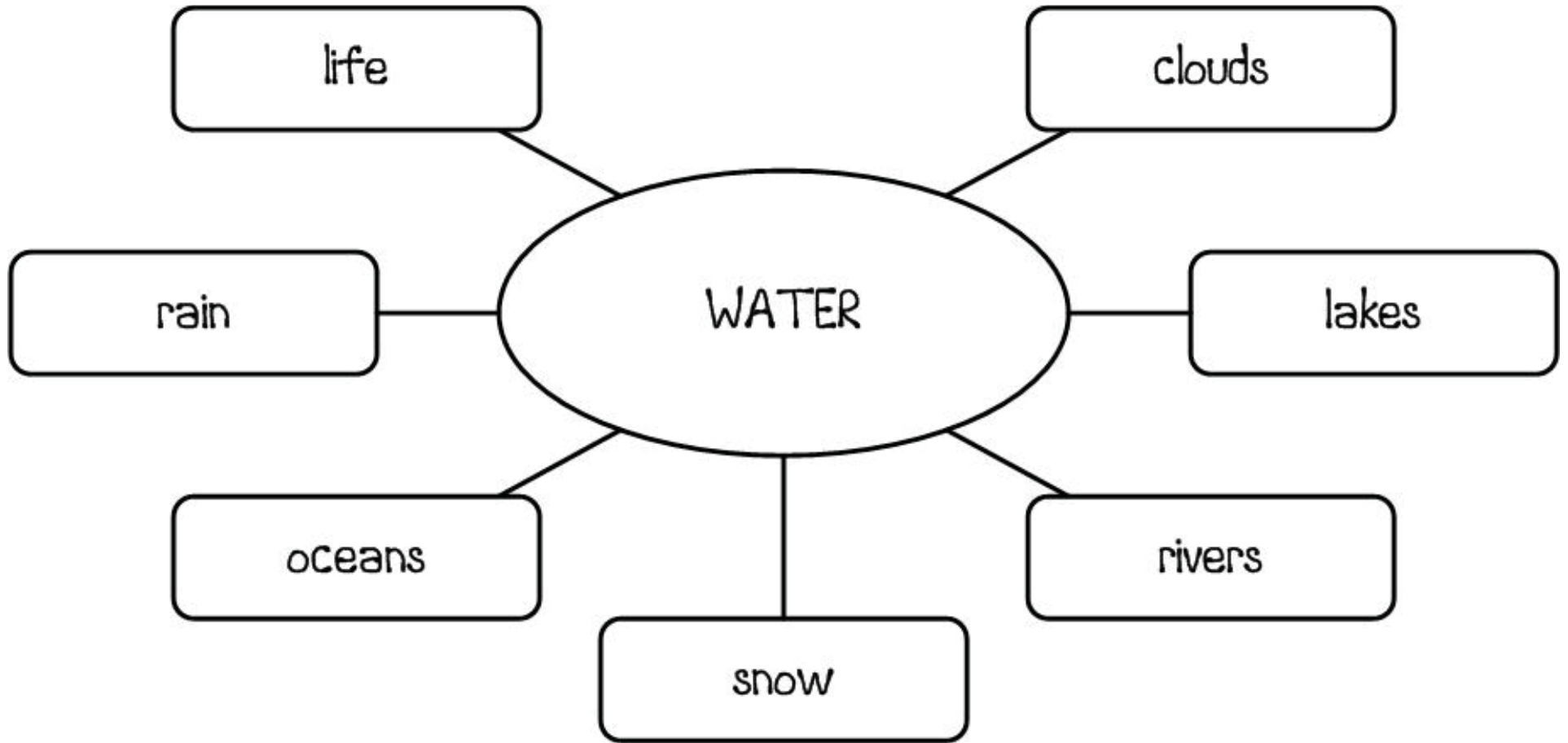
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Name _____

Simple Word Web Worksheet



Simple Word Web SAMPLE



Sample Poetry Types Information Sheet

Acrostic

Water
Amazing
Terrific
Experiments
River

Limerick

There was a swift centipede, Pete,
Who wanted to run in a meet.
But it took several weeks
To lace up all his sneaks,
By then Pete was too late to compete.

Cinquain

Agriculture
Plants, animals
Grows our needs
Provides food, fiber, fuels
Essential

Diamante

School
Busy, scheduled
Studying, working,
learning
Lessons, homework,
recess, freedom
Relaxing, playing,
resting
Short, delighted
Vacation

Haiku

Snowflakes falling down
In a whirl of dancing glee
Cold ballerinas

