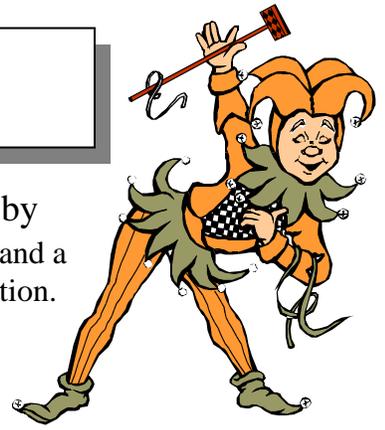


2018 4th Grade Poetry Presentations



Wednesday, March 14th @ 12:15 – 2:00 in the Sanctuary, followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. We will need parents to help carry props and a few pieces of furniture up to the 4th grade classrooms before going to the reception.

The 29th annual 4th grade Poetry Presentations is at hand. Students have been (or will soon be) given information regarding this event. Parents and siblings are invited to the Poetry Presentations to hear students recite their poems and to have refreshments in celebration.

Here is the sequence of events for the poem selection process:

- The student selects a poem. This is done on the student's own time.
- Student makes a copy of the poem and submits the copy to his/her teacher.
- Teacher approves or rejects poem.
- If rejected, process starts again.
- If approved, teacher keeps the copy and student preps for audition on that poem.

Copies of poems are to be submitted for approval as soon as possible to allow enough time for memorization. The final day for poem approval is **Monday, February 12th**. We will begin practicing and critiquing poetry recitations on that same day, in preparation for the Poetry Presentations. I suggest the student begin by practicing **reading** his/her poem aloud with expression, then start memorizing shortly thereafter. Poems should be memorized by no later than **Friday, March 2nd**.

Poem Selection Guidelines: The poem should not take more than 2 minutes to recite (due to time constraints). Students may dress up and/or use props to enhance the performance of their recital; however, the setting up of props should not take more than 20 seconds, as we need to allow enough time for all 4th grade students. The most interesting poems are those recited with expression. The teacher will present many poetry selections during class, some of which may be selected by the students. Parents should feel free to be encouraging and helpful in the poetry selection process. They may:

- go through poetry books to help find a suitable selection
- read any poem to their child to provide a sense of what it sounds like when recited
- make copies or generate a printout of the poem the student wishes to submit for approval
- be their audience at home and offer suggestions and critique the student's performance

It is our intention that this exercise be fun and educational. Often, this experience results in more confident speaking as students learn to project, enunciate, pace their speaking speed, and talk with expression. More information about the party will be forth-coming.

(please sign and return this portion by no later than **Friday, February 9**)

I understand that my child, _____, is responsible for _____, (please print)

selecting a poem by no later than **Mon., February 12th** and will provide his/her teacher with a copy of that poem for approval. The copy will remain with the teacher. Once approved, the poem is to be recited at the Poetry Presentation.

Please let security know that the following visitors will be attending the reception (please print):

Parent Signature _____ Date _____



How to select a poem for presentation:

- Understand what the poem is about. Typically humorous poems are most easily presented at this age. Classics can be used, but a presentation will not be very meaningful unless the student thoroughly understands the meaning behind the poem.
- A poem and its reciter must have a certain “chemistry.” A student who enjoys a poem can bring it to life before an audience. If the poem holds little interest for the student, its presentation will be boring, and the student’s experience will be as much fun as a trip to the dentist.
- Look through a few poetry books from our school library or from your local library. Look for that poem that speaks to you personally. Try reading it aloud with expression. Was it enjoyable? Can you make it sound interesting to an audience? Can you have fun with it, or can you stir the audience to an emotional high with this poem? If the answer is yes, you have found your poem.
- If you choose a poem that the teacher considers to be below the “norm” of challenge, this can bring down your ratings, as reflected in the “level of difficulty.” Students who choose poems based on line length rather than “chemistry” may take a hit in this category. Besides, it is easier to memorize a poem you are excited about rather than a poem you’re not that crazy about – even if the line length is shorter.
- Keep in mind that you must be able to recite the poem in 2 minutes or less. Typically, a minute is just about right.
- How long should your poem be? Sixteen lines is typically an appropriate length, but some students may wish to do a longer poem, and some may find a terrific poem they adore that is shorter (say 12 lines). The teacher will ultimately decide if the selected poem is appropriate for the student.

How the presentation will be rated:

Volume (can your audience hear it?) – 5 points

Enunciation (speaking clearly – can your audience understand what you are saying?) – 5 points

Expression / Interest (entertainment value for the listener) – 5 points

Difficulty Level of the poem – 1-3 points (3-very challenging, 2-average, 1-easy)

Memorization – 3 points

Pacing (recited at just the right speed – not too fast) – 5 points

Total: 25-26 points (depending on level of difficulty)

Students will be graded on each category separately in their language grades, and each rating will be more than just 5 points, reflecting the time students spend on achieving the skills of volume, enunciation, expression, pacing, and memorization.

Students will be given several opportunities to read or recite their poems aloud in class. Any student who gets a perfect score during a memorized presentation in class will lock in that score and can go into the Poetry Presentation with “no pressure,” otherwise students will earn their final poetry presentation grade at the Poetry Presentation.

Practice Your Public Speaking

Volume: The ability to speak loudly enough so everyone can hear you from any point in the room. Speak from your diaphragm (above your stomach) – not from your throat. Practice using your outside voice as if calling someone to dinner from a distance. Sometimes becoming excited about what we have to say will play a part in increasing our volume.

Enunciation: The ability to speak clearly so your words are understandable. Be sure to OPEN your MOUTH widely enough and move your lips in an exaggerated fashion. Sometimes it is a good idea to slow down your speech in order to have more time to form your words. Also try putting some space between some of your words (as opposed to running words together). Practice exaggerating your words – almost to the point of being ridiculous; but then, if you do so in front of an audience, ask them if it helped them understand your words better. You may think your exaggerated speech sounds funny, but you may be surprised that your audience could understand you a lot better.

Expression: The ability to hold your audience's interest when you deliver a speech. Getting into your character is very important when presenting a poem or acting in a play. Your voice should change its inflection as appropriate, for example, getting a bit higher when the character is excited about something, or sounding hopeless or desperate when expressing something sad or frustrating. When you present a poem, you become an actor.

Pacing: The ability to talk at just the right speed. Most people have problems talking too quickly (the problem is **almost never** talking too slowly). Most students should attempt to slow down their speech, which will also help enunciation problems. With some poems, it is more appropriate to speak a bit faster, but you must still be clear and your words must be understood. Sometimes it is appropriate to speed up your pace or slow it down at different places in your poem. Follow the coaching of your teacher or make some artistic judgments on your own.

The Need for Teaching Public Speaking: A parent once told me that their child's fourth grade poetry presentation experience was the only time their child received any formal training in public speaking. I remembered being very surprised by that information. Then a few years later, it got me to thinking that each of my own children have had numerous experiences in college where they were responsible for a formal presentation to the class as part of their grade in a subject. Most of time this requires the use of Microsoft PowerPoint; however, my daughter has been called upon to do presentations with a tri-fold board. It would not surprise me if presentations continue to grow in popularity at the high school and middle school levels as alternative assessment opportunities. Students need to be well versed in their public speaking skills in preparation.

Our History of 4th Grade Poetry Presentations: According to our board member, Judy Wilhelm, "... I looked it up in an old year book. I remembered starting it with a fourth grade teacher named Carla Lykins, and it turns out that was in the 1988-1989 school year. It continued on through other fourth grade teachers, including Sue Moraz, and gradually went from just one fourth grade class to including the whole grade."