

“I Went to the Doctor” Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Kenn Nesbitt in *The Aliens Have Landed!*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A sick child visits the doctor and gets a shot.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A lab coat and a syringe would be great props, but if they are not available the poem can be performed without them.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Child
Doctor

I Went to the Doctor

Child:

I went to the doctor,
all covered in bumps.
He said,

Doctor:

You've got whooping cough,
tetanus, rubella,
digestive dysfunction
from green salmonella.

You're covered with head lice,
mosquitoes, and fleas.
You've even got pinkeye
and mad cow disease.

What's more, you've got cooties,
a cold, and the flu,
but don't be upset;
I know just what to do.

Child:

He told me,

Doctor:

I promise
this won't hurt a bit.

Child:

Then grabbed a syringe
like a barbecue spit.

He made me bend over
the seat of my chair,
then plunged that big needle
in my you-know-where.

So now I'm all cured
of my cooties and fleas,
my whooping cough, measles,
and mad cow disease.

He cured me of every last
sniffle and bump,
and now I'm all better—
except for my rump.

THE END!

"Turn Off the TV" Poetry Theater

A poem in three voices

Adapted from the poem by Bruce Lansky in *My Dog Ate My Homework*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A child debates watching TV with his parents.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class.

Props: A TV would be a great prop but if one is not available the poem can be performed without it.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Child
Mom
Dad

Turn Off the TV!

Child:

My father gets quite mad at me;
my mother gets upset--
when they catch me watching
our new television set.

Dad (yelling):

Turn that thing off!

Mom:

It's time to study.

Dad:

I'd rather watch my favorite TV show
with my best buddy.
I sneak down after homework
and turn the set on low.
But when she sees me watching it,
my mother yells out . . .

Mom (yelling):

No!

Dad:

If you don't turn it off,
I'll hang it from a tree!

Child:

I rather doubt he'll do it,
'cause he watches more than me.
He watches sports all weekend,
and weekday evenings too,
while munching chips and pretzels--
the room looks like a zoo.
So if he ever got the nerve
to hang it from a tree,
he'd spend a lot of time up there--
watching it with me.

"I Call First" Poetry Theater

A poem in three voices

Adapted from the poem by Ted Scheu in *If Kids Ruled the School*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A student who wants to be the first in everything learns that first isn't always best.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: This poem can be performed without props. However, students can use the pencil sharpener, stack chairs, snack on an apple or cookie, and do other things described in the poem.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Student 1
Student 2
Student 3

I Call First!

Student 1:

"I call first to get a drink! And first to eat my snack!
I call first to go to gym, and first when we come back!

Student 2:

"I call first to leave for lunch! And first to switch the light!
I call first to read out loud the poems that I write!

Student 3:

"I call first to sharpen up my pencil, loud and slow!
And when we get to sharing time, I call first to show!

Student 1:

"I call the computer! I call the special chair!
And I call first in line each time that we go anywhere!

Student 2:

"And on the hill at recess, I get to be the king!
I call first forever and for every little thing!"

Student 3:

I said those things in class today until my teacher heard.
She sat right down and made a list to keep me at my word.

Student 1:

So now I'm first to dump the trash and sweep the silly floors.
I'm first to be the last in line—'cause I hold all the doors.

Student 2:

I'm first to wipe the tables off and scrape off clods of clay.
I'm first to pass the paper out and put the paints away.

Student 3:

I'm first to stack the stupid chairs and first to scrub the sink.
I'm prob'ly not the first to see that being first can stink!

The End

“Get Out of Bed!” Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Diane Z. Shore in *If Kids Ruled the School*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A child tells his mom that he is sick so he won't have to go to school.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them. For example, the student playing the mom could shake the child and pull on the blanket while reciting her lines.

Props: A blanket and a desk used as an imaginary bed would be great props, but if they are not available the poem can be performed without them.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the Performing Poetry section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Mom

Child

Get Out of Bed!

Mom (yelling) :

Get out of bed you silly fool!
Get up right now, it's time for school.
If you don't dress without a fuss,
I'll throw you naked on the bus!

Child:

Oh, Mom, don't make me go today.
I'm feeling worse than yesterday.
You don't know what I'm going through.
I've got a strange, rare case of flu.

My body aches, my throat is sore.
I'm sure I'm knocking on death's door.
You can't send me to school—*achoo!*— (sneeze)
'Cause everyone could get it, too.

Besides the kids despise me there.
They always tease, and always stare
And all the teachers know my name.
When something's wrong, it's me they blame

Mom (yelling):

You faked a headache yesterday.
Don't pull that stuff on me today.
Stop acting like a silly fool—
The principal cannot skip school!

THE END!

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"Lucky Trade" Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Matthew L. Fredericks in *If Kids Ruled the School*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A child trades places with his mother for the day.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A backpack or lunch bag would be a great prop. If these are not available the poem can be performed without props.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Child

Mother

Lucky Trade

Child:

I told my mom I'd go to work
if she would go to school.
She thought that trading places once
just might be kind of cool.

So she agreed; I packed her lunch
and made her wash her face.
Then Mother said,

Mother:

"I wonder why
you want to take my place?"

Child:

"I wonder what you do at work.
I'd like to meet your boss.
Now hurry up and brush your teeth
and don't forget to floss.

"There's just one other thing, Mom,
that I forgot to mention:
I'll pick you up at four o'clock—
today you have detention."

"Ish!" Poetry Theater

A poem in three voices

Adapted from the poem by Bruce Lansky in *My Dog Ate My Homework*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Ish!

Narrator:

When Frederick's grandmother
served him some fish,
young Frederick turned up his nose
and said:

Frederick:

Ish!

Grandmother:

Okay,

Narrator:

said his grandma,

Grandmother:

I'll give you some ish,

Narrator:

as she scraped out some earwax
right into a dish.

She brushed in some dandruff
that fell from her head,
and some fingernail clippings
from her husband, Ed.
She sniffed at the mixture
and started to sneeze.
Her eyes watered up;
she got weak in the knees.

Summary: A child debates eating fish with his grandmother.

Presentation Suggestions: Let your students read or perform the poem in class. Tell them to act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A plastic fish would be a great prop but if one is not available the poem can be performed without it.

Delivery: The lines of the poem should be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in your classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section of our site.

Characters:

Narrator

Frederick

Grandmother

Grandmother:

Okay,

Narrator:

said Fred's grandma,

Grandmother:

now eat up this ish.

Frederick:

No way,

Narrator:

said young Frederick,

Frederick:

"My New Pet" Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Bruce Lansky in *Miles of Smiles*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A child tries to decide which pet to buy.

Presentation Suggestions: Let your students read or perform the poem in class. Tell them to act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A pet (like a dog or a cat) would be a great prop for the poem. However, if you don't allow pets in the classroom, the poem can be read without them. You could also use stuffed animals.

Delivery: The lines of the poem should be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in your class, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section of our site.

Characters:

Child

Dad

My New Pet

Child:

I asked my father for a pet.
he said:

Dad:

I'll take you shopping.

Child:

My father took me to a store
where animals were hopping.
He asked me:

Dad:

Which one would you like?

Child:

So I picked out a puppy,
a parakeet, a rabbit,
plus a gerbil and a guppy
I also picked a monkey
and a yellow Siamese cat,
a turtle, snake, and lizard,
plus a very big white rat.

My dad said:

Dad:

If you want a pet,
then you will have to feed it.

Child:

Instead, I picked a storybook.
I cannot wait to read it.

"Rules for the Bus" Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Eric Ode in *Rolling in the Aisles*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A student learns a hard lesson about riding the bus.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A row of student chairs representing the seats on a bus. Any other props are optional.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Child

Bus Driver

Other riders on the bus (optional)

Rules for the Bus

Child:

Said our driver in September
as we climbed aboard the bus,

Driver:

"There are rules you must remember.
Number one, you do not cuss.
Do not squirm and do not wiggle.
Do not squeak and do not squawk.
Do not laugh and do not giggle.
Better yet, don't even talk.
Do not ever let me catch you
with your feet out in the aisle.
Sit as rigid as a statue
with a stiff and silent smile.
And you will not wear your mittens,
and you will not wear a mask.
And you will not bring your kittens,
and you shouldn't even ask.
And you will not play with bubbles
or a yo-yo or balloon.
And for causing me such troubles
you will get them back in June.
Now the day is here. Begin it
with the words I have to say.
Kindly take a seat this minute,
and let's have a pleasant day."

Child:

Well, I listened very closely
to the messages I heard,
and, in all this time, I've mostly
followed each and every word.
I have tried to pay attention,
but of this, I must confess.
There's a rule she didn't mention,
and today it caused a mess.
It is not as if I planned it
with an evil attitude.
I am not that underhanded,
and I don't mean to be crude,
but it causes quite a fuss,
and it might even be unlawful
to have climbed aboard the bus
when you have stepped in something awful.

The End!

"Samantha Cinderella Scott" Poetry Theater

A poem in three voices

Adapted from the poem by Kenn Nesbitt in *When the Teacher Isn't Looking*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A doctor tries to convince his patient that a shot won't hurt.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: An empty syringe, a doctor's lab coat, and a desk used as an examining table would be great props. If these items are not available the poem can be performed without them.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the Performing Poetry section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Narrator

Doctor

Samantha Cinderella Scott

Samantha Cinderella Scott

Narrator:

Samantha Cinderella Scott
was told she'd have to have a shot.
The doctor said,

Doctor:

"You're somewhat sick;
I think a shot should do the trick."

Narrator:

He said,

Doctor:

"You shouldn't feel a thing,
except perhaps a tiny sting,
a painless prick, a poke, a pinch.
It shouldn't even make you flinch. 1

"You won't begin to bleat or bawl.
I doubt that it will hurt at all.
I don't expect to see it bruise
or swell your arm and start to ooze. 2

"There's little chance of bellyaches
or fevers, chills, or sudden shakes.
It's not supposed to cause a cough. 3
Your arm will likely not fall off.

"I'm guessing that there won't be lots
of itchy red and purple spots. 4
Convulsions, too, are fairly rare.
I think you'll get to keep your hair.

"In fact, the chance is nearly nil
that you'll become intensely ill
or grow a ghastly greenish hue
or turn into a kangaroo. 5

"It's nearly certain that you'll not
become a fish or flowerpot.
I'm quite convinced it's fair to say
you won't turn into mush today. 6

"But if you start to shake and cough
or if your head should tumble off, 7
if you become a moose or mule,
you'll get a day away from school."

Narrator:

Samantha Cinderella Scott
took just a moment, deep in thought,
then yawned the slightest little yawn
and told the doctor,

Samantha Cinderella Scott:

"Bring it on!"

"My Doggy Ate My Homework" Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Dave Crawley in *If Kids Ruled the School*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A student tells his teacher that his dog cooked and ate his homework.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: This poem can be performed without props.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Student

Teacher

My Doggy Ate My Homework

Student:

"My doggy ate my homework.
He chewed it up," I said.
But when I offered my excuse
My teacher shook her head.

I saw this wasn't going well.
I didn't want to fail.
Before she had a chance to talk,
I added to the tale:

"Before he ate, he took my work
And tossed it in a pot.
He simmered it with succotash
Till it was piping hot.

"He scrambled up my science notes
With eggs and bacon strips,
Along with sautéed spelling words
And baked potato chips.

"He then took my arithmetic
And had it gently fried.
He broiled both my book reports
With pickles on the side.

"He wore a doggy apron
As he cooked a notebook stew.
He barked when I objected.
There was nothing I could do."

Teacher:

"Did he wear a doggy chef hat?"

Student:

My teacher gave a scowl.
"He did," I said. "And taking it
Would only make him growl."

My teacher frowned, but then I said
As quickly as I could,
"He covered it with ketchup,
And he said it tasted good."

Teacher:

"A talking dog who likes to cook?"

Student:

My teacher had a fit.
She sent me to the office,
And that is where I sit.

I guess I made a big mistake
In telling her all that.
'Cause I don't have a doggy.
It was eaten by my cat.

"My Dog Has Got No Manners" Poetry Theater

A poem in two voices

Adapted from the poem by Bruce Lansky in *Rolling in the Aisles*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A child complains about his dog's bad behavior to his mom.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them. You may want to have a student play the dog in this poem, acting out the ill-mannered behavior the child describes.

Props: A toy or stuffed dog would be a great prop if you choose not to have a student play the dog's part. If this prop is not available the poem can be performed without it.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Child

Mom

Dog (an optional, non-speaking part)

My Dog Has Got No Manners

Child:

My dog has got no manners.
I think he's very rude.
He always whines at dinnertime
while we are eating food.

And when he's feeling thirsty
and wants to take a drink,
he takes it from the toilet
instead of from the sink.

He never wears a pair of pants.
He doesn't wear a shirt.
But worse, he will not shower
to wash away the dirt.

He's not polite to strangers.
He bites them on the rear.
And when I'm on the telephone,
he barks so I can't hear.

When I complained to Mommy,
she said,

Mom:

"I thought you knew:
the reason that his manners stink—
he learns by watching you."

"Bad-Hair Day" Poetry Theater

A poem in three voices

Adapted from the poem by Linda Knaus in *If Kids Ruled the School*, published by Meadowbrook Press.

Summary: A student's bad-hair day disrupts the class.

Presentation Suggestions: Have the students read or perform the poem in front of the class. Have the students act out the different lines while they read them.

Props: A wig with hair sticking up would make a great prop. Another option is for the student having a bad hair day to apply mousse liberally. Or, antlers made out of paper might be fun. Of course, the poem can be performed without props.

Delivery: The lines of the poem need to be read with poetic rhythm. For more information on poetic rhythm and how to perform poetry in classroom, please read the [Performing Poetry](#) section under the Teacher's Resources.

Characters:

Student

Classmates

Teacher

Bad-Hair Day

Student:

I looked in the mirror
with shock and with dread
to discover two antlers
had sprung from my head.

The kids in my class
were complaining all day,

Classmates:

"We can't see the board
with your horns in the way!"

Student:

The teacher was cross.
He asked,

Teacher:

"What's your excuse?"

Student:

I said, "Well, I think have
used too much mousse."

The End