

# Family Literacy Guided Lesson

For From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems/Del ombligo de la luna y otros poemas de verano

## NY State Learning Standards

### Related to English Language Arts:

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression. As readers and writers, students will use oral and written language for self-expression and artistic creation.

## About the Book

### From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems / Del ombligo de la luna y otros poemas de verano

Francisco X. Alarcón and illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez

"México" me dice mi abuela "significa: del ombligo de la luna" – "Mexico" says my grandma "means: from the bellybutton of the moon," writes Francisco X. Alarcón in the poem that gives his book its title. In 22 bilingual poems, the author pens his memories of childhood summers spent in Atoyac, Mexico. With affection and respect he shares in poetic form his recollections of shoeless romps on green grass, familiar voices, laughter, summer rain showers, joyful dips in the sea, a grandfather's lessons and a grandmother's love. Artist Maya Christina Gonzalez's lively illustrations give life to the summer joys described in these cheerful poems.

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## The Language/Literacy Connection

### Lyrical Literacy for Readers and Writers at All Levels

Pleasing words arranged in appealing ways. Intimate viewpoints revealed through lyrical images. World-views sketched in novel styles. This is poetry, graceful prose stretching the imagination and playing on the tongue. Through an array of writing patterns, poetry instills sensitivity to language. Fresh vocabulary describes tangible details and abstract notions. Metaphors and similes create connections between diverse concepts. Intriguing word-strings produce interesting, sometimes charming, and sometimes amusing language.

- ♦ Alliteration: repeated sounds at the beginning of words - *Five furry fox found four frantic frogs*
- ♦ Assonance: repeated vowel sounds – *how now brown cow*
- ♦ Consonance: repeated consonant sounds within a number of words – *Flit and flutter little butterfly*
- ♦ Onomatopoeia: words that sound like their meaning – *bang, boom, splash.*
- ♦ Refrain: repeated lines or phrases – *Brown bear, brown bear, what ...*
- ♦ Rhyme: words that share a common end sound – *rain, train, explain, refrain.*

Poetry prepares children for reading by sensitizing them to the sounds of their language, phonemic awareness; by inviting them to join in reading through predictable and repetitious words; and by helping them build decoding skills through words that begin or end with the same sound. Also, these traits, plus poetry's shorter texts that can express mature concepts, and its greater white space on a page, make poetry an inviting starting point for struggling older readers.

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# Early Childhood Education-Infant/Toddler Level

## Nursery Rhymes and Lullabies

### PLS-4 Skills

#### Auditory Comprehension

2. Enjoys caregiver's attention

#### Expressive Communication

3. Responds to speaker by smiling
15. Participates in play routine with another person for 1 to 2 minutes

### Before the Visit

#### Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ None

#### Gather Lesson Props

- ♦ None

### During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together, say: *(Child' name) may not appreciate the poetry in "From the Bellybutton of the Moon," but he/she will enjoy the paintings of dancing children and loving grandparents. Look at several paintings. Turn to the poem Antigua sabiduría/Ancient Wisdom. Ask: See the uncle/tío? See his gray hair/ pelo gris? Touch his ear/oreja, mouth/boca, hand/mano, etc. What else do you see? Cow/vaco, chicken/pollo, horse/caballo, corn/ maíz, stars/estrellas, moon/luna, etc. Have the child touch those things.*

### Lullabies

- ♦ Say to the parent: *Make up your own lullabies. With (child's name) quietly recall the day's activities. You might say, Remember the breeze we felt on our walk? Did it feel soft and warm like this? Gently blow across (child's name)'s head. Did the chirping birds sound like this? Chirp like a bird. Sing your words to a familiar tune.*

### Remembered Poems

- ♦ Say to the parent: *What poems or nursery rhymes from your childhood are suggested by the paintings? Recite the parent's suggestions or try these.*

#### Cinco pollitos

Traditional  
Cinco pollitos  
tiene mi tía:  
uno le canta,  
otro le pia  
y tres le tocan  
la chirmía.

#### The Cow Jumped Over the Moon

Traditional  
Hey diddle diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle,  
The cow jumped over the moon.  
The little dog laughed,  
To see such a sight,  
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

### Lullabies

- ♦ Say to the parent: *Lullabies are a comforting way to introduce poetry to young children. Do you have a favorite lullaby that we can sing to (child's name)?*

#### Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Based on a folk melody by  
Mozart  
Twinkle, twinkle little star,  
How I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky.  
Twinkle, twinkle little star,  
How I wonder what you are.

#### Arrorró

Traditional  
Arrorró, mi niño,  
arrorró, mi Sol:  
arrorró, pedazo  
de mi corazon.

#### Sing to the tune of Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Today we took a walk  
outside,  
A walk outside,  
a walk outside.  
Today we took a walk  
outside  
The air was sweet and  
breezy.  
A little bird was  
chirp-chirp-chirping,  
Chirp-chirp-chirping,  
chirp-chirp-chirping.  
A little bird was  
chirp-chirp-chirping,  
High up in a tree.

# Sunflowers and Spirals

## PLS-4 Skills

### Auditory Comprehension

- 47. Understands expanded sentences
- 54. Orders pictures from largest to smallest

### Expressive Comprehension

- 44. Answers questions about hypothetical events

## Before the Visit

### Gather Needed Materials

- ♦ Yellow and light brown construction paper
- ♦ Markers
- ♦ Paper plate

### Prepare Lesson Props

- ♦ From the construction paper make several sunflowers that have light brown centers with yellow petals around the edge.
- ♦ Following the directions below, create a sample spiral poem.

## During the Visit

- ♦ With the parent and child sitting together, read “Green Grass / Hierba verde” in *From the Bellybutton of the Moon*. Point to the illustration and ask: *What do these children have on their feet?* (They are barefooted.) Read the poem and ask questions to help the child connect with the poem. For example, ask: *Do you sometimes go barefooted? How does the grass feel on your feet? How do you think these children feel about being barefooted? Is that how you feel?*

## Sunflower Poem

- ♦ Say: *A poem is interesting words that tell how a person feels about something.* Turn to *Girasol / Sunflower*. Say: *This poem describes the author’s feelings about sunflowers.* Read the poem. Say: *You can write your own poems about sunflowers.* If the child is not familiar with sunflowers, suggest another flower. Ask questions like: *What do sunflowers look like? How do they smell? What color are they? Where do they grow? Who likes to eat them? How do they taste?* Write the child’s responses to your questions on a piece of paper and read them back. Say: *Your answers are interesting. They will make a good poem. Do you want to change any words?* Give the child a paper sunflower. Ask him/her to write his/her words in the center of the flower. If the child is not a writer in the conventional sense, ask him/her to “write in his/her own way,” or ask the parent to write the child’s words.

## Spiral Poem

- ♦ Say: *Sometimes a poem is written in a shape or a design.* Turn to *Rueda aire / Air Wheel* and *Water Wheel / Rueda agua*. Say: *These poems are written in circles. Their shape reminds us that they are about things that are continuous, that keep going around.* Read the poems. Say: *A spiral is like a circle except that it has a beginning and an end. To write a spiral poem:*
  1. Think of things that happen in a continuous way: your day from morning to night, your family from oldest to youngest, your toys from favorite to least liked.
  2. Write words on a piece of paper, for example: morning, school, afternoon, night.
  3. After each word, write another word that describes it or tells something about it. For example: morning, dress and eat; school, study and play; afternoon, work and games; night, to bed. This is your poem.
  4. Beginning at the center of a paper plate, draw a spiraling line that goes all the way to the outside edge.
  5. Write the words to your poem between the lines.
  6. Cut along the spiraling line and hang your poem on a string.
- ♦ Say to the parent: *(Child’s name) may need help with these poetry-writing activities. Give as much assistance as needed. The purpose is to encourage (child’s name) to play with words. The only rule is to have fun.*

# Parenting Education Activity

## Reading to Children So They Will Listen

Reading aloud to children is an important part of parenting. Reading with animation, gusto and a bit of drama captures children's attention and compels them to listen. The short verses and easy vocabulary of poetry provide good material to practice captivating reading strategies.

### Reading Strategies

Start by choosing poems that interest your child. Most children like poems that:

- ♦ Are short,
- ♦ Are easy to understand,
- ♦ Are related to their own lives,
- ♦ Have rhyming words,
- ♦ Have an accompanying action,
- ♦ Have repeating words that are easy to remember and say,
- ♦ Have rhythm – a certain beat or pace, and
- ♦ Are humorous and fun to say.

Use your voice as a tool. To keep your child's interest:

- ♦ Read with expression,
- ♦ Vary the pace and volume of your voice to fit the storyline – louder, slower, softer,
- ♦ Place emphasis on important words, and
- ♦ Use different voices for different characters – cheery, sad, angry, tired, old, an animal.

Encourage your child to join in. As you read:

- ♦ Demonstrate motions that accompany and clarify the poem,
- ♦ Pause to let your child to fill in a rhyming word or repeating phrase, and
- ♦ Make the poem personal by inserting your child's name and other personal information.

#### Practice Strategies

Use these traditional poems and others to practice strategies outlined above. Say: *Listen as I read poems.* What strategies are included in each? Ask the parent to read using demonstrated strategies.

### Shoo Fly

*Shoo fly, don't bother  
me  
Shoo fly, don't bother  
me  
Shoo fly, don't bother  
me  
I have work to do.*

Change the last line.  
I have homework to do.  
I have to clean my  
room.

### Bate, bate, chocolate

*Bate, bate, chocolate  
Uno, dos, tres, cho-  
Uno, dos, tres, -co-  
Uno, dos, tres, -la-  
Uno, dos, tres, -te  
Bate, bate, chocolate*

Chant. Clap as you  
count.

### Little Bear

*Little bear, little bear, turn  
around.  
Little bear, little bear, touch  
the ground.  
Little bear, little bear, climb  
the stairs.  
Little bear, little bear, say  
your prayers.  
Little bear, little bear, turn out  
the light.  
Little bear, little bear, say  
goodnight.*

Do actions suggested by  
the words.

### Five Little Monkeys

*Five little monkeys jumping on the bed,  
One fell off and bumped his head.  
Mama called the doctor and the doctor said,  
No more monkeys jumping on the bed!*

Use a sing-song voice. Emphasize underlined  
words.

- ♦ Say: Memorize a few favorite poems and repeat them in those moments when you and (child's name) have a few minutes to fill such as when waiting in the grocery line or in the doctor's office.

### La loba

*La loba, la loba  
el compró al lobito  
un calzón de seda  
y un gorro muy bonito*

Pause for listener to fill in  
underlined words.

# Interactive Literacy Between Parents and Their Children

## Playing With Poetry

- Playful interaction with poetry boosts children's confidence as readers and writers. Read, write and act out poems together. Try these activities and make it fun!

### Poetry Box

- Glue wrapping paper onto a shoe box. Add touches of magic with glitter and ribbon.
- Cut interesting words and pictures from magazines and newspapers. Print other words that appeal to you on index cards.
- Place the words and pictures in your poetry box.
- On a quiet afternoon, play around with the words and pictures until you and your child create a poem.

### Acrostic Poem

- Write your child's name vertically on a piece of paper.
- After each letter, write words that begin with that letter and that describe your child. Use words that you know. Look through your Poetry Box and in a dictionary for word ideas.

B    *Beautiful, bounc,y bright*  
E    *Energetic, enthusiastic*  
L    *Lovely, lively, little*  
L    *Likable*  
A    *Animated, agile, affectionate*

- Write acrostic poems for other words like crayon, book and poem.

### Tongue Twisters and Riddles

Try these traditional riddles and twisters and look in books for more.

A flea and a fly flew up a flue.	Railroad crossing Look out for the cars.	Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear.
Said the flea, "Let us fly".	How do you spell it	Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.
Said the fly, "Let us flea".	Without any Rs?	So Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy, was he?
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.		

### Mini-Readers' Theater

Choose a poem. Read it through a time or two and talk about it together. Consider questions like:

- What is the poem's setting? Does it take place in winter, summer, at the seaside, in the woods?
- Who are the people or animals in the poem? Are they old, young, happy, sleepy? What are their voices like: whispery, gruff? How do they move: slow, bent over, fast?
- What actions and expressions will show the meaning of the poem? A whisper or shout? A smile or frown? A gentle rocking motion or a stomped foot?
- What simple costumes could be worn? A hat, scarf, necktie, shawl, or vest? A blanket wrapped around the reader?
- What simple props will help tell the poem's story? A broom, a ball, a rubber duck?
- Take turns reading the poem aloud and acting it out.

## Writing Poetry From Mental Images

- Mental images are mind-pictures created from the senses and emotions surrounding a person's memories.
- Calling forth images from memories gives writers authentic topics upon which to base their writing. Poetry, with its succinct, sometimes provocative, often inspiring verse enables even struggling readers and writers to generate vivid mental images they can use to craft meaningful writing.

### Generate Mental Images from Poetry.

- ♦ Say: *Francisco X. Alarcón uses words in a poetic way to describe his childhood experiences. Listen as I read the first line from one of his poems, "Ancient Wisdom." Imagine in your mind what this childhood experience was like.*
- ♦ Turn to page 15 and read, *"after working all day as a farmer from dawn to dusk."* Then ask: *What do those words make you think about? What animals or tools or crops do you see in your mind? What smells do you smell? What sounds do you hear? What emotions do you feel?* Give the learner time to respond. Say: *All of those sights, sounds, smells and emotions are mental images that you create in response to Alarcón's words based on your own past experiences with farms. You can create mental images in response to any poem that talks about something you have experienced.*
- ♦ Turn to page 5. Read *"Green Grass / Hierba verde"* and ask questions about the mental images that the poem inspires.

### Generate Metal Images from Personal Memories

- ♦ Talk about the learner's childhood memories. Start by sharing a memory of your own. Then ask questions like: *What games did you play when you were a child? Who were your playmates? What were your chores? How did the spring air smell? Where did you go to be alone? What clothes did you wear on warm days? How did winter feel? How did the night sound? What is a favorite memory of your grandparent? What was special about summer?*
- ♦ Make Memory Cards by jotting a word or two for each of the learner's responses on index cards, one card for each memory. For example, you might write: *Favorite game - Kick the Can. Summer fun - fireflies.*

### Write a Poem

- ♦ Say: *You can write a poem based on your memories. Look through the memory cards. Together choose one to develop in greater detail. Ask follow up questions and record responses. Responses for "Summer - fireflies" might include: When? At night. Where? Near the woods. How? In jars. Why? To see their lights. Who? My brothers and me.*
- ♦ Say: *Your words are the basis of a poem. You need to revise your ideas and add or move words around until they make sense. Write the learner's poem on scrap paper and read it to him/her. When the learner is satisfied, have him/her print the poem on attractive writing paper.*

### Twinkling Bugs

By Patricia Ward

In my backyard late at night,  
Near the woodline, what a sight!  
Twinkling bugs with bellies light,  
Fireflies flickering in their flight.

### Fireflies

By Patricia Ward

Flicker firefly,  
Glow and glimmer in the night.  
Oh, beautiful sight!

# Adult Literacy - GED Level

## Conventions of Poetry

Poetry provides excellent opportunities to study writing conventions such as metaphors, similes, rhyming words, alliterations, assonances, and consonances.

### Exercises

*Metaphors* are words or phrases that describe an object or idea by comparing it with another object or idea. What images do the following metaphors create for you?

Father is a bear in the morning.	The ship plowed through the sea.	Her eyes were stars.
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*Similes*, like metaphors, compare things, but usually use the words *like* or *as*. Complete the following.

Blue as \_\_\_\_\_ Noisy as \_\_\_\_\_ Cheeks like \_\_\_\_\_

*Rhyming words* end in syllables that sound the same like: *rain, cane, and plain*. Write three rhyming words for each of the following.

Love	Red	Carrot
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

*Alliterations* are repeated sounds at the beginning of words. For example: *Ranging reindeer rapidly racing through a raging rainstorm*. Write an alliteration of at least five words.

*Consonances* are repeated consonant sounds within a number of words. For example: *Flit and flutter little butterfly*. Write a consonance of at least three words.

*Assonances* are repeated vowel sounds. For example: *Licking six sticky candy sticks made Mickey Dick sick*. Write a phrase of three words that have the same vowel sound.

### Putting It All Together

#### Greeting Card Prose

Greeting card companies create cards with sentimental, lovely and sometimes funny greetings for consumers to buy and send to their friends. You could save a bundle by writing your own verse for those special occasions. Use the techniques in this lesson to create greeting card messages for special events or other occasions.

#### Remember Me

How do you want to be remembered? Write an epitaph for your tombstone. Make it poetic.

Here lies John Ward  
A doctor he could not afford.  
Got the measles, had a cold.  
Died a cruel death, so I'm told.

# Adult Literacy - ELL Level

Use the repeating refrain in the children's song *The Bear Went Over the Mountain* to review English vocabulary, teach prepositions and give a sense of the cadence of the English language.

## Vocabulary

- ◆ Bear
- ◆ Over
- ◆ Mountain
- ◆ Man
- ◆ Through
- ◆ Door
- ◆ Other vocabulary that you plan to introduce or review

## Phrases

The bear went over the mountain  
To see what he could see

## Materials Needed

Pictures that illustrate vocabulary

## Introduce Vocabulary

- ◆ Place the picture of the bear on the workspace. Say: *This is a bear. What is this? It is a bear.* Ask again: *What is this?* Motion for the learner to repeat: *It is a bear.*
- ◆ Place the picture of the mountain on the workspace. Say: *This is a mountain. What is this? It is a mountain.* Ask again: *What is this?* Motion for the learner to repeat: *It is a mountain.*
- ◆ Repeat the practice for bear and mountain until they are mastered.
- ◆ "Jump" the bear picture over the mountain picture. As you do, say: *The bear went **over** the mountain.* Stress the word over. "Jump" the bear over a chair. As you do, say: *The bear went **over** the chair.* Stress the word over. Say: *What did the bear do? The bear went **over** the chair.* Ask again: *What did the bear do?* Motion for the learner to repeat: *The bear went over the chair.* "Jump" the bear over the mountain picture. Ask: *What did the bear do?* Motion for the learner to answer: *The bear went over the mountain.*
- ◆ Repeat this process until mastered.

## Introduce Song

- ◆ Sing the song *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*. Each time you sing "the bear went over the mountain" jump the bear picture over the mountain picture. On the last verse, "to see what it could see," place your hand above your eyes and look around.

### Words to song

*The bear went over the mountain,  
The bear went over the mountain,  
The bear went over the mountain,  
To see what it could see.*

- ◆ Give the bear picture to the learner. Repeat the song. Motion for the learner to jump the bear over the mountain each time the words are sung.
- ◆ Sing again. Motion for the learner to join in the song.

## Substitution

- ◆ Sing again substituting other vocabulary. Perform actions that illustrate the words. For example:
  - The man went through the door.  
(*Step through the door.*)
  - The man went through the door.  
(*Step through the door.*)
  - The man went through the door.  
(*Step through the door.*)
  - To see what he could see.  
(*Place your hand above your eyes and look around.*)
- ◆ Repeat song using words that the learner knows for review.