

POETRY READ-A-THON



To sign up for the Read-a-Thon, visit:
WWW.POETS.ORG/READATHON

I. INTRODUCTION

The Academy of American Poets launched the first Poetry Read-a-Thon in April 2006. Since then classrooms at every grade level and in every state in the country have been eager to sign up for the Read-A-Thon. This project's goals are to celebrate the reading of poems and writing about poems, as well as facilitating the development of student writing and comprehension skills.

II. HOW IT WORKS

During the month of April, students choose poems to read and then write prose "responses" to the poems they read. A response will be 75-100 words and students can respond to one or two of the following elements of the poem:

- images of the poem
- sounds of the poem
- subject(s) of the poem

- emotional effect(s) of the poem
- the poem's meaning(s)
- questions about the poem
- questions the student would like to ask, if he/she could speak to the poet

The students keep a log of their reading. The log will include each poem's title, author, and the date the student read the poem and delivered his or her response to the teacher. The teacher will maintain a master log of all the poems read by the class.

Teachers will submit 1-3 examples of their students' responses to be considered for posting in the "For Educators" section of the Academy of American Poets' award-winning website, www.poets.org. This example of student work will provide models for students as well as an ongoing resource for teachers.

For some suggested poems to teach, see the Academy's anthology, *How to Eat a Poem* at: www.poets.org/howtoeatapoem
or peruse some other children's anthologies at: www.poets.org/kidspoems

III. TEACHER'S GUIDE

Who is eligible to participate in the Read-A-Thon?

Students at any grade level are encouraged to participate, and can be attending any school throughout the United States.

How do I register my classroom?

To have your students' responses considered for publication on Poets.org, register your classroom at: www.poets.org/readathon

What happens during the Read-a-Thon?

- The Read-a-Thon can begin any time after March 1st and ends on April 30th.
- Facilitator explains "Read & Respond" exercise to students.
- Students choose poems to read. Anthologies and poems will be recommended on Poets.org.
- Students read a poem twice (once silently and once aloud), then writes a "response" (see below) to the poem.
- Student logs poem's title, author, and date of read/response. Logs are kept in classroom.
- Facilitator logs all poems and number of responses for entire classroom.
- Facilitator sends the class log and sample Response to the Academy, via fax, mail, email, or an online form, no later than April 30th.
- Academy selects Responses from across the country to be posted on Poets.org by mid-May.

What is a Response?

A response is defined as a 75-100 word reaction which addresses one or two of the following elements of the poem:

- images of the poem
- sounds of the poem
- subject(s) of the poem
- emotional effect(s) of the poem
- the poem's meaning(s)
- questions about the poem
- questions the student would like to ask, if he/she could speak to the poet

What if a student writes a poem in response to the poem he/she read?

Responses must be in prose. Student poems written in response to the poems will not count in the Read-a-Thon.

Do spelling and grammar count?

For the purposes of the class work, each teacher must gauge the spelling and grammar level that best represents the student's ability. If the response is chosen to be posted on Poets.org, the Academy will copy edit the material and reprint it with the student's permission.