

ENJOYING POETRY

A poem is not a delicate piece of pottery that clumsy hands may drop and break in pieces. It can be analysed, dissected, put under the microscope; and the closer and more detailed the examination, the more one finds to admire, as with any work of art.

from *Feet on the Ground*
by Margaret J. O'Donnell



The subject of this poem is a poem! The whole poem is a metaphor. Read it and decide in your group what the metaphor is. Discuss the meaning of this metaphor and compare your ideas with the other groups.

How to eat a poem

Don't be polite.

Bite in.

Pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice that may run down your chin.

It is ripe and ready now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core

or stem

or rind

or pit

or seed

or skin

to throw away.

Eve Merriam



Poetic Styles

The styles below are explained in full in the teachers notes accompanying each unit. For easy reference, the poem titles for each of these styles are shown below.

Ballad tells stories of heroes and folktales, often includes rhyming couplets, contains a repeated line

Ballade narrative, not a serious topic, contains rhyming with the last two lines in each stanza repeated

Doggerel uses rhyme to express an ordinary feeling or sentiment, type of verse used in greeting cards

Eulogy admires or praises a person, object or place

Lyric usually a short poem with two to three verses directly expressing the poet's own thoughts and feelings about a particular topic, feeling or situation; in ancient Greece, short poems were written to be sung to the music of a lyre – a stringed instrument made of a tortoiseshell; (also means the words of a song)

Monologue poet speaks to himself/herself

Nonsense about trivial matters, uses words to make the situation more absurd

Nursery Rhyme repeated vowels and internal rhymes, experiments playfully with words and variations on words, can be a nonsense element

Narrative tells or recites a story

Shape Poem rhyming lines compressed into the outline of the subject, being written so they blend together

Sonnet fourteen lines, three stanzas of four lines with a rhyming couplet at the end (a Shakespearean sonnet), often about love

N.B. There is also a Miltonic Sonnet (from Milton) that has two verses. Verse one has eight lines and verse two, six lines.

Ode usually has the same rhyming pattern (abcb); is the Greek word for song and celebrates or expresses admiration for something

Literary Terms

Alliteration

A recurring consonant in the same phrase; e.g. Peter's in a pickle, Susie's in a stew!

Assonance

The same vowel sound repeated within a verse; e.g. Gooseberry looseberry; Thin, pin, skin.

Homonym

Words that have different meanings but identical form; e.g. lie, saw, stake, pole (each has multiple meanings).

Homophone

Words with the same sound but different spelling and meaning; e.g. peace, piece.

Metaphor

Making a direct comparison with something through reference to its appearance, actions or manner; e.g. He's a pig!

Onomatopoeia

 (pronounced 'on-o-mat-a-pee-uh')

Where the sound also gives the meaning; e.g. 'swish', 'plop', 'crunching'.

Personification

A metaphor which gives human qualities to something non-human; e.g. The moon was smiling.

Simile

Two things are compared using 'like' or 'as'; e.g. He was as stubborn as a donkey; She runs like a gazelle.

Verse Forms

Couplet – two rhyming lines

Quatrain – a verse of four lines

Sestet – a verse of six lines

Octet – a verse of eight lines



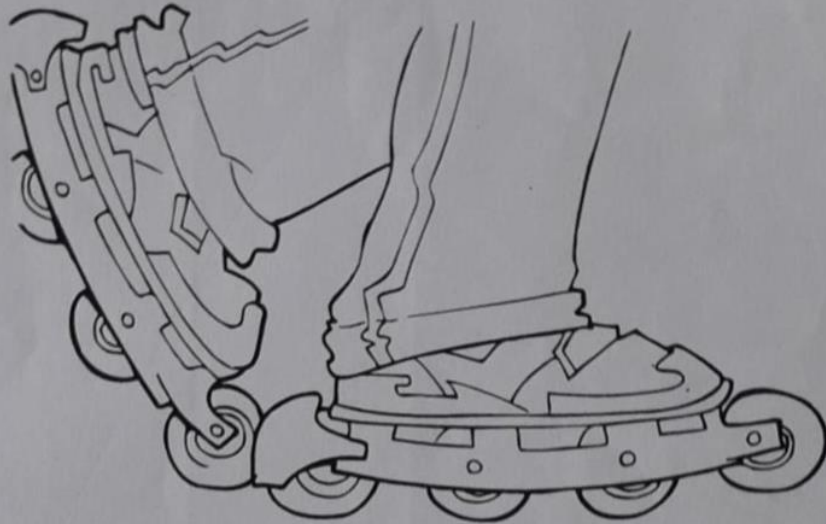
Children's thinking is stimulated through analysing a poem's meaning and use of language.

Rollerblading/Skateboard Skite

Rollerblading and *Skateboard Skite* are two action poems that are written in a lyric style. Lyric poetry is usually short. It expresses the poet's feelings about a particular topic, feeling or situation. In ancient Greece, such short poems were written to be sung to the music of a lyre—a stringed instrument made of tortoiseshell.

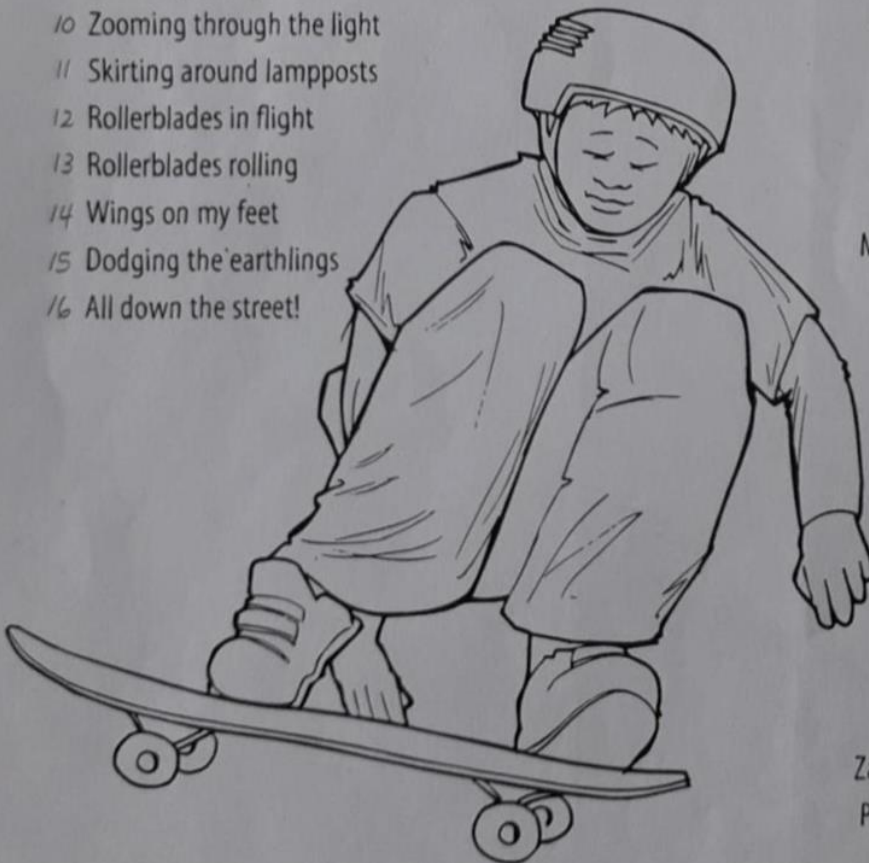
Rollerblading

- 1 Rollerblades rolling
- 2 Speed in my feet
- 3 Dodging pedestrians
- 4 All down the street
- 5 Swooping around corners
- 6 Swaying side to side
- 7 Feet in slow motion
- 8 Past each other glide
- 9 Shooting over pavements
- 10 Zooming through the light
- 11 Skirting around lampposts
- 12 Rollerblades in flight
- 13 Rollerblades rolling
- 14 Wings on my feet
- 15 Dodging the 'earthlings
- 16 All down the street!



Skateboard Skite

- 1 A silhouette against the sky
- 2 Watch him on his skateboard fly
- 3 An albatross in soaring flight
- 4 Mind free-falling, skateboard skite!
- 5 Spinning off the stairway edge
- 6 Down the steps, across a ledge
- 7 Full turns, a somersault or two
- 8 Just to show what he can do
- 9 Down the ramp and off the top
- 10 Poised above while others flop
- 11 Seamlessly his movement flows
- 12 Bending, flexing, on he goes
- 13 Leaning into every turn
- 14 Hasn't got a lot to learn
- 15 Zapping through the summer light
- 16 Proud and skilful skateboard skite!



Comprehension

- 1 Alliteration is the same consonant repeated in a line; for example, They **n**ever **n**eed to **k**now your **n**ame. Write an example of alliteration in each poem.



- 2 Assonance is the name for vowels with the same sound in the same line; e.g. che**a**p se**a**t. Write an example of assonance in each poem.

- 3 Onomatopoeia is the name for words that sound like their meanings; e.g. zing, flitting. Find three examples in 'Rollerblading'.

- 4 What do these poems have in common?

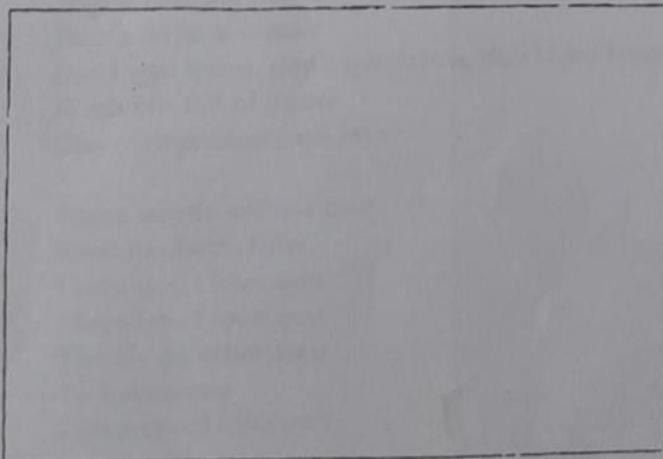


- 5 What is the main feeling being expressed in each of these poems?

(a) *Rollerblading* _____

(b) *Skateboard Skite* _____

- 6 Which poem do you prefer and why?



- 7 To 'skite' is to boast or brag about something.

(a) If you were going to tell a friend about something you are good at and which makes you proud, what would it be?

(b) Draw a picture of yourself doing your answer to (a).

