

# DAY EIGHT | Concrete Poems

## Core Curriculum Standards

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### Reading Literature: Craft and Structure

- RL.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- RL.7.5** Analyze how a drama’s or poem’s form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

### Reading Informational Text: Craft and Structure

- RI.7.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
- RI.7.5** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

### Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

- SL.7.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

## Lesson Goals

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### Outcomes

Students will be able to recognize the traits of a concrete poem. They will analyze the importance of imagery in poetry.

### Themes, Issues, Concepts

importance of word choice, the impact of imagery, longing, loneliness, hope, Thanksgiving, Christmas

### Literary Terms

concrete poem, shapes, imagery

### Materials

“Hope” by Aaron Williams

“Hope on a Windowsill” by Aaron Williams

Poetry On Their Terms book (2013 edition): “Christmas Tree” by Maggie Chanault (page 106)

Poetry On Their Terms book (2014 edition): “Field Goal!” by Michael T. Miller (page 63)

“The Mouse’s Tale” by Lewis Carroll

Writer’s notebooks

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## Lesson Plan

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### **DO NOW** (5 minutes)

Ask students to look around them. Have them to find an item, and spend five minutes freewriting about that item. The freewrite can describe the item, what or who the item reminds them of, what they like or don't like about the item, and so on.

### **WHOLE GROUP** (20 minutes)

Today's lesson is on concrete poetry. Poetry often relies heavily on imagery, and concrete poetry takes that a step further. With concrete poetry, the poem takes the shape of the subject.

With the class, read "Hope on a Windowsill" by Aaron Williams. This poem was originally in a traditional poetry form (as can be seen on the "Hope" handout, which shows the original draft of this poem), and then it was changed to look like a wishbone to show distance and longing. Ask the students the following questions:

1. What is this poem about?
2. What is the shape of this poem in? How does the shape contribute to the meaning of the poem?  
If this poem weren't in a wishbone shape, would that change how you interpret it? Why or why not?
3. How can you use imagery to your advantage when writing a poem?

### **PARTNERS/SMALL GROUPS** (15 minutes)

With partners, students will read "The Mouse's Tale" by Lewis Carroll. Together, they must answer:

1. What is this poem about?
2. What is the purpose of this poem's shape?
3. Would it still have the same meaning and effect if it weren't in a shape? Why or why not?

### **INDEPENDENT** (10 minutes)

Have students read "A Christmas Tree" by Maggie Chenault and "Field Goal!" by Michael T. Miller. Have them answer these questions:

1. What shape is this poem?
2. What is the poem about?
3. How does the shape contribute to the meaning of the poem?
4. Would a different shape be better for this poem? Would single line spacing affect the shape of the poem? Why or why not?

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## Lesson Plan

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### REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Reveal to the students that “A Christmas Tree” was originally turned in as a triangle. Then, it was suggested by 7GP editors that the author consider moving the last word to the center, hoping the author would make mental connections and see the change formed a trunk for the tree. Have a conversation with the students about the following:

1. How does moving the word “tree” affect or change the poem? What does this say about the importance of revision and proofreading when writing a poem?
2. What does this say about the importance of word choice in poetry?
3. What have you learned about the effects of imagery in poetry from today’s lesson?

### HOMEWORK

Students will re-read their free write from the beginning of the class. They will write their answers to these questions:

1. What are some ways you could change your freewrite into a concrete poem?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the concrete form?
3. How does this add to your idea of what poetry means to you?

# Hope

by Aaron Williams (7GP Founder)

*Original Draft*

A wishbone  
one Thanksgiving day  
met another  
left the year before  
wanting  
waiting too patiently  
for that special some one  
to pull on the other side

# Hope on a Windowsill

by Aaron Williams (7GP Founder)

*Revised Draft*

a  
wish  
bone  
one  
thanks  
giving  
day  
met  
another  
left the  
year before  
wanting waiting  
too patiently  
for that special  
some one  
to pull  
on the  
other side.



## Christmas Tree

by Maggie Chenault (7GP Winner, 2013)

Oh  
my lovely  
Christmas tree.  
So bright and green,  
with lots of tinsel and a little  
string. Some popcorn and some  
mistletoe, golden ornaments, and a bow.  
On top there's a shining star. You can see it  
from afar. Shining so bright, giving off a brilliant  
light. As you can plainly see, I love my Christmas  
tree.

# The Mouse's Tale

by Lewis Carroll (1832–1898)

Fury said to a mouse,  
That he met in the  
house, 'Let us  
both go to law:  
I will prosecute  
you.-- Come, I'll  
take no denial;  
We must have  
a trial: For  
really this  
morning I've  
nothing to do.'  
Said the mouse  
to the cur,  
'Such a trial,  
dear Sir, With  
no jury or  
judge, would  
be wasting  
our breath.'  
'I'll be  
judge, I'll  
be jury,'  
Said cunning  
old Fury:  
'I'll try  
the whole  
cause, and  
condemn  
you  
to  
death.'