



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2009 Volume IV: The Sound of Words: An Introduction to Poetry

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## **¿Qué Bello es el Sonido de la Poesía! Teaching Sounds and Culture through Poetry**

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With this unit I intend to help my students develop a larger vocabulary in their second language class, as well as learn the right intonation and pronunciation through the use of poetry. The students use the target language for the specific purpose of communication. They experiment with non-verbal, communicative aspects of language (body language, gestures, and facial expressions) as well as verbal aspects (intonation, rhythm, stress, slang, and idiomatic expressions), while interpreting a poem. Poetry is one of the best techniques to help teachers combine phonics and reading instruction in a way that is fun and engaging for students.

Second language acquisition becomes part of our students' lives when they begin to feel the language, and gain confidence to interact outside of the classroom in the target language. When the students learn and master the use of vocabulary, they become engaged in free flowing conversations as they interact with one another. Poems that express strong emotions, feelings, opinions or ideas can be an exciting language learning experience, through which students are able to develop vocabulary and cultural awareness.

With this unit I intend to accomplish the following goals:

- Students would have read a variety of literature from different periods in different styles that would help them understand many dimensions of human experience.
- Students would apply knowledge of language structure, conventions, figurative language and literary styles.
- Students would learn intonation, pronunciation, rhythm, rhyme and stress in a poem.
- Students would use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their learning purpose.

Poetry is a literary genre that makes people fall in love with sounds and words, but perhaps it is also the literary form most difficult to teach. Our children nowadays are not exposed enough to poetry and they perceive it as a complicated way of writing. The main focus for teachers should be to teach the genre in a way that is meaningful and engaging to students.

(Developed for Spanish I Reading and Writing, grades 9-10, and Spanish II Speaking, grades 11-12; recommended for Spanish I, II, III, Reading, Writing, and Speaking, grades 10-12)

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