I. POETRY:
In this poetry unit, students will explore poetry for the main purpose of pleasure and enjoyment. Students will study the structure of poetry (stanzas, lines, etc.), the elements of poetry (rhyme, alliteration, etc.), and the sensory language of poetry (literal and nonliteral). We will collaboratively create an anthology of original and borrowed poems.

II. Big Idea/Essential Question:
• What is poetry?
• How is poetry different from prose?
• How do images or sounds help us to understand the meaning of a poem?

III. Learning Goals:
a. CONTENT: This poetry unit will be addressing two content standards outlined in the Common Core:
   CCSS.RL.3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers (p 15).
   CCSS.RL.3.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language (p 15).
   CCSS.RL.3.5: Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections (p 15).
   CCSS.RL.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters (p 15).
   CCSS.RL.3.8a: Identify elements of fiction and elements of poetry (p 15).
   CCSS.F.3.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
   a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
   b. Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
   c. Use context to confirm or self correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary (p 22).
CCSS.W.MA.3.3a: Write poems, descriptions, and stories in which figurative language and the sounds of words (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme) are key elements (p 25).

CCSS.SL.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly (p 31).

CCSS.SL.3.2: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally (p 31).

CCSS.L.3.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

   a. Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).

   b. Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).

   c. Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered) (p 37).

b. **PRACTICE**: My learning goals for this unit go beyond the acquisition of content understanding. In addition to this, I hope that students learn the ways in which readers and writers think and conduct their practice. As such, there are many habits of mind that I strive to teach throughout this unit:

   1. Readers read for pleasure and enjoyment.
   2. Readers make connections to their experiences and their world.
   3. Writers use tools (elements of poetry) to enrich their work.
   4. Writers use images to convey both literal and nonliteral meaning.

c. **LITERACY**: These content goals and habits of mind are complemented by a series of language objectives, which emphasize the desired gains for our readers’ and writers’ growing literacy. Each focuses on how students will achieve the content goals of the lesson. The ones listed here highlight the main literacy goals of a particular lesson, and it
is important to note that students may be developing their skills in other domains simultaneously.

Reading: SWBAT read poems from anthologies individually and in groups (All LAPs). SWBAT decode onomatopoetic words (words that sound like their object) (LAP 4).

Writing: SWBAT re-write a poem using the same words but an original structure (LAP 2). SWBAT create a list of alliterative words (LAP 3). SWBAT write a poem (school) that features rhyme in groups (LAP 5). SWBAT create a graffiti board that represents the images they discover in a poem (LAP 6).

Listening: SWBAT listen for onomatopoetic sounds (LAP 4).

Speaking: SWBAT read poems aloud, independently and chorally, as well as explain orally what they notice or know about poetry (LAP 1). SWBAT discuss orally how alliteration influences a piece (LAP 3).

d. COMMUNITY: This unit encompasses many goals for our classroom community of learners, which will enable us to achieve new heights in the other areas of learning goals (content, practice, and literacy). Students will be tasked with collaborative thinking and exploring, which will help students to view one another as funds of knowledge. To bolster this point, poetry often enables all students to engage and shine, especially those students who are not frequently praised in traditional writing tasks. As such, all students will have something to contribute. Students will have many opportunities to share their accomplishments and praise the work of their peers, which builds our ethos of support. To further build our community of learners, we will use accountable talk to guide our discussion; this includes prompts such as “I agree/disagree with…because…” or “I would like to add to….” By using this accountable talk, students will be required to proactively listen to one another and engage with one another’s ideas. Over time, they will begin to guide discussions more independently, without the teacher moderating each comment. As in all subjects, readers and writers will not be chastised for their mistakes—an impossible task in poetry—but instead lauded for their bravery and creativity.
IV. Rationale:

a. This unit’s essential questions are important to the discipline of English Language Arts in that poetry is one of the three major categorizations of writing (along with prose and drama). Still, poetry remains an under-utilized form of expression and communication. Exploring poems for pleasure will only serve to create more poets and readers of poetry! This unit will also prove invaluable exposure to a form of writing that they will dabble with throughout the rest of their educational experience. By introducing this form of writing, students will come to see poetry as a tool to creatively express meaning from their own lives. Perhaps students will stumble upon relatable poems or a talent for writing that they didn’t know they had!

Equally as relevant to both the field and students are the learning goals of this unit. All practice goals seek to strengthen discipline specific skills so that students are constantly doing the work of readers and writers. As such, nothing could be more important to the discipline or relevant to students than reading and writing to share meaningful moments that evoke a sense of pleasure. Furthermore, poets are constantly seeking to share their work, so the community goals of this unit are essential to the discipline. Additionally, it will be very empowering for students to share the work that they are most proud of and demonstrate their growth as poets.

b. The essential questions and big idea are carefully based on the guiding principles outlined in the Massachusetts frameworks. We will achieve Guiding Principle 1 by working collaboratively to write, read, listen to, and orally speak poems. Guiding Principle 2 will be met by students reading poetry at home and by students being exposed to poems from around the world (English speaking or otherwise). As in all subjects, this ELA unit will feature differentiated instruction, and thereby achieve Guiding Principle 6. Part of the unit will also be explicit instruction in how to read and write poems (Guiding Principle 7). We will meet Guiding Principle 8 by focusing on poems that relate to student interests and the lives and experiences of our urban, socioeconomically depressed students.

c. Student interest plays a large role in this unit, particularly in the introductory phases. I will choose a variety of poems that students can relate to and will find engaging. These will include both the light-hearted and the more serious topics. Some poems are humorous diddies; others are perspectives on the urban experience. Students will also
have ample opportunity to read and write choice poems that allow them to explore whatever is of import to them. Furthermore, students will be drawn in with choral readings and recordings of the poet performing his or her poem. This poetry unit is built upon several of my students’ strengths. This includes an ear for rhyme and rhythm, as well as their experience with performing (Extreme Weather presentations and Ant and the Grasshopper Fable show). While they might not have a large about of prior knowledge with the mechanics of poetry, I will harness their experience with it through music. By building the lessons on their interests and strengths, I encourage them to take agency over their learning.

d. As mentioned above, the needs of the students have been carefully considered in the planning of this unit. Students who interact well socially will be placed in proximity of one another, while others are placed under close observation of the teacher. It is essential, however, that all students participate and engage with their peers. The nature of this discipline allows students to shine who do not often get to do so. As such, we must provide as much opportunity for careful mainstreaming. This applies for academics as well. Most activities will feature heterogeneous grouping, to ensure that students are able to serve as resources for one another. This academic support will be accompanied by other scaffolds, such as modified worksheets, repeated instructions, and explicit instruction of all domain specific language. As always, students who require quiet spaces or smaller groupings (such as pairs instead of groups of four or five) will be provided with these accommodations.

e. The unit is thoroughly informed by researched best practice, especially those listed in Zemelman and Daniels’ *Best Practice*. These include teacher models, gradual release of responsibility, collaborative work, and safe classroom environments for experimentation and mistakes. These are complemented by Gibbons’ *English Learners Academic Literacy and Thinking*, which provided insights into thoughtful teaching and both formal and informal assessments that comprise this unit. Specifically, Gibbons’ emphasized the need for explicit instruction of academic language, as well as conscious teaching of domain specific vocabulary. The majority of this unit has been inspired by writing specialist Lucy Calkins, from whom I have borrowed the writers’ workshop. Georgia Heard’s *For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry* has provided invaluable insight in the
structure of this unit, especially the beginning stages. I have adopted many of Heard’s practices, including beginning with exposure to a variety of poems, workshopping with students, and remaining true to the habits of practicing poets. I have also been greatly inspired by the best practice demonstrated by my mentor teacher, who has lent me her methods of classroom management that allow our students to flourish in a space of continuous and consistent support.

V. Assessments:

a. Throughout the unit, students will be informally assessed through their participation and cooperation with fellow readers and writers during both the lessons’ discussions and activities. With my informal assessment, I hope to monitor my more abstract learning goals; that is, I hope to measure how well my students are contributing to the community of writers and readers we are as a class. Furthermore, I will be assessing their ability to work collaboratively. Students will be formally assessed through their effort and engagement in relation to the completion of their CEPA, which will be an original anthology. The development of this summative assessment will also serve as my formative assessment of the unit, as they will demonstrate to me in real time how successful my lessons are and what I need to do to make the future lessons of the unit more successful.

b. Students will know the teacher’s standards for the informal assessment of participation and cooperation, as they are the common policy of the class. If behavioral issues arise, I will reiterate explicitly my expectations for their conduct. Should students need reminding, I will state directly why I need their attention and why what we are doing is important. Additionally, more formal methods of assessment will feature explicit directions as well as a teacher model so that they may best meet my expectations. Students who require additional scaffolding or support will be provided with the appropriate materials and accompanying directions and examples.

c. As mentioned above, the culminating assessment of this unit is an anthology that is a compilation of their own original work as well as the work of other poets. Throughout the unit, students will be exposed to the criteria for this assignment, which include:

- 10 original poems in their anthology
o 10 published poems in their anthology
o An oral recitation of at least one original poem
o An oral recitation of at least one published poem
o A written description of the structure, elements, and sensory details of both selected poems
d. Students will receive written feedback from the teachers throughout the unit. I will be sure to give oral feedback and praise to the whole class when appropriate. Students will receive daily feedback on their original poems and RRJ responses, either in orally in one-on-one conferences or in writing. Parents will share in the poetic accomplishments and growth of their students through the texts that students bring home for ERAH and the poetry assignments they are tasked with for homework. Both parents and students will see the development of students’ understanding through the ongoing contributions of their anthologies.

VI. Unit Calendar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Learning Activities and Strategies</th>
<th>Essential question</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
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</table>
| One    | Introduce students to new unit on poetry, discuss essential questions, and review final CEPA. Provide time for students to explore poems independently and in pairs. As a whole group read chorally and listen to poems. RRJ Response. | What is poetry? | Participation in discussion and cooperation (i)  
Contribution to anthology (f)  
RRJ Response: What makes a poem a poem? (f) |
| TWO    | Continue to explore poems for pleasure independently or in pairs. Explore the structure of a poem and how structure influences meaning. Optional RRJ Response. | How is poetry different from prose? | Participation in discussion and cooperation (i)  
Contribution to anthology (f)  
RRJ Response: How is poetry different from prose? (f) |
| THREE  | Continue to explore poems for pleasure independently or in pairs. Whole group exploration of alliteration. Preform | How do images or sounds help us to understand the meaning | Participation in discussion and cooperation (i)  
Contribution to anthology (f) |
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<th>FOUR</th>
<th>Explore onomatopoetic sounds in poems. Generate sounds with our bodies to mimic them. Perform interpretations. Generate onomatopoetic poem.</th>
<th>How do images or sounds help us to understand the meaning of a poem?</th>
<th>Participation in interpretation and cooperation (i) Contribution to anthology (f) Performance of poems (f)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>FIVE</td>
<td>Continue to explore poems for pleasure independently or in pairs. Review poetic devices to date. Whole group exploration of rhyme in poem. RRJ response.</td>
<td>How do images or sounds help us to understand the meaning of a poem?</td>
<td>Participation in discussion and cooperation in activity (i) Contribution to anthology (f) Original poem (f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIX</td>
<td>Continue to explore poems for pleasure independently or in pairs. Whole group exploration of poems with strong images. Develop a graffiti board to develop rich images for a choice.</td>
<td>How do images or sounds help us to understand the meaning of a poem?</td>
<td>Participation in discussion and cooperation in activity (i) Contribution to anthology (f) Graffiti board (f)</td>
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This sequence of activities models the gradual release of responsibility and includes copious amounts of modeling so that the students may access both the ways of knowing in ELA and content standards that compose this unit. The sequence begins from an accessible exploration of poems structure before moving onto the more challenging elements of poetry. This will provide an excellent foundation for the most abstract concept of the unit, sensory language (both literal and nonliteral). With clear expectations and explicit modeling, students will gradually become more independent readers and writers of poetry.

VII. Resources:

a. Parental involvement is not necessary but encouraged throughout the unit by assisting their children at home. Parents will be informed of how they can best help their students’ through our daily planner. Students will have to receive a parental signature that they read from their poetry anthologies for thirty minutes. Should it be identified that a student struggles with an element of comprehension, a letter will be sent home or a conference
will be called so that parents may be given tools so that comprehension skills may be practiced at home. I will gladly provide any parents I interact with throughout the day with the details of our work in this unit and any other additional materials that they can employ. I will also recommend and encourage that students talk to their parents about what we are working on in our science, so that they may deepen and enrich their own understanding through conversation. Finally, parents are always invited to visit the work of their children, which we will hang proudly in a public space within the school. Parents may monitor their students’ performance through my written feedback on their poetry, as well as my response on the culminating assignment.

b. I will be drawing mainly on community resources within our own community of learners in the classroom. As mentioned above, students will be encouraged to engage with their parents. Hopefully students will find the work engaging and relevant enough to provoke out of school conversations regarding their successes or frustrations. Students will complete an assignment that has them discuss at home one of their parent/guardian’s favorite poems. I have also drawn on many audio resources as an academic supplement to the unit; these are reputable and age appropriate primary performances by the poets themselves. As such, we will be using the computer and ELMO as instructional technology. Last but certainly not least, I will be leaning on my cooperating teacher to provide one-on-one support to students who require teacher proximity throughout the unit.

c. As mentioned above, all internet resources are both reputable and age appropriate. Additionally, they are known to be factually accurate and are always cited, whenever used.

VIII. Reflection:

a. This unit on poetry has been a joy to teach! Each topic proved ripe with opportunities for experimentation and exploration. All students came in with some schema that provided rich ground upon which the rest of the unit flourished. Their understanding over time and their skills as readers and writers have both solidified into a strong foundation for their future work with poetry and other English Language Arts. Above all else, their enjoyment of the genre has skyrocketed, as has their ability to take risks in writing.
i. **CONTENT:** This unit featured many content goals, more than I’ve every tried to accomplish in a single unit. I knew from the get go that I would achieve some content goals more comprehensively than others. This was something I had to continue to remind myself, as I became concerned toward the end of my unit that I was not covering several standards comprehensively enough. I’m comforted by the fact that no teacher can achieve all content standards to proficiency in ever discipline; additionally, all third graders cannot be expect to achieve all content goals evenly. Therefore, I praise my students for their many content related achievements of this unit, and see areas for growth in my efficiency and evenness of my delivery of instruction.

*CCSS.RL.3.1:* Students continued to grow their proficiency at developing questions and answers that referred to aural and visual elements of poetry.

*CCSS.RL.3.4:* Students took a first pass at this standard in our exploration of imagery and the difference between words that literally appear on the page and images that we see in our mind.

*CCSS.RL.3.5:* Students continued to grow their proficiency at participating in informal discussions in which structural elements were referred to.

*CCSS.RL.3.6:* We did not achieve this standard explicitly, although our work on Humpty Dumpty did provide an unplanned opportunity to discuss who was talking in each stanza.

*CCSS.RL.3.8a:* Students grew their proficiency at identifying and employing elements of poetry in each lesson by picking out a given element, whether structural or aural/visual (alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhyme, rhythm, imagery).

*CCSS.F.3.4:* Students continued to achieve this fluency standard by reading in a variety of contexts, including independently, chorally, and in small and whole groups.

*CCSS.W.MA.3.3a:* Students wrote a poem daily for homework and frequently within class, most often with a given element to incorporate.

*CCSS.SL.3.1:* Students developed their proficiency at participating proactively in group discussion as evident in their use of Accountable Talk (“discussion helpers”) and selecting one another to perform based on respectful listening.
CCSS.SL.3.2: Students began to address unique ways of presenting their understanding in our final lesson, during which we created a graffiti board.

CCSS.L.3.5: This is the standard that I really would have liked to address more comprehensively. Had I had another week, I would have explored similes and metaphors with poems in order to more explicitly distinguish between literal and non-literal language.

PRACTICE: Throughout this unit, I worked tirelessly to ensure that students were doing the work of writers and readers, not simply students doing assignments. I emphasized at the beginning of each lesson that readers read for pleasure and enjoyment; students accomplished this every day during our ELA block, when students read poems and hunted for poems to share that fit only one criteria: it had to be a poem that they really enjoyed. To achieve my second practice standard of readers and writers (Readers make connections to their experiences and their world), I gave students the opportunity to write a variety of choice poems. Whenever I gave them a topic to write about, I made sure that it was one that all students universally had experienced (school, summer). Perhaps I addressed my third practice standard most comprehensively: Writers use tools (elements of poetry) to enrich their work. Poets in room 22 worked tirelessly to identify and employ elements of poetry in both published and original works in order to find out how that enriches poetry. I know that there is room to grow in our achievement of my final practice standard: Writers use images to convey both literal and nonliteral meaning. Going forward, students have a strong foundation in the genre, so that they will be more comfortable hunting for non-literal meaning.

LITERACY: Student readers and writers in room 22 surpassed my expectations for their achievement of the learning goals that I laid out above. Students excelled in all four domains of language. Across the ability range, students were reading proactively and remained engaged with their anthologies for our entire daily reading period. They were also eager to read poetry at home, as demonstrated by their constant request to take poetry books home for ERAH! Perhaps just as meaningful were their achievements in speaking. Every chance they got, students
from every reading level shot up their hands to share the poems that they had found and enjoyed. Likewise, we worked tirelessly to listen respectfully to one another and practice the habits of a good crowd. This helped as we worked towards identifying and employing the aural elements of poetry. Last but certainly not least, students also excelled at achieving my literacy learning goals in writing. Both in class and for homework, poets took to the pen eagerly. Their already apparent styles and voices began to light up with the elements we learned and practiced in class. Perhaps the real sign of (and reward for) their growth in writing will be if any win the library’s contest for poetry month!

COMMUNITY: Lastly, our community learning goals were for the most part achieved. I had hoped that this unit would further our skills at collaboration through group work and exploration and sharing. There were many instances in this unit where students worked excellently together, pushing one another and helping one another. However, there is still room to grow on the independence front, so that teacher prompting is not required for students to begin a task or remain focused on said task in every instance.

ii. Although we did not extensively approach this topic in my poetry unit, imagery provided a window onto a very challenging concept: non-literal language. Given our struggle to find the exact words and phrases that made us think of a certain image, I believe that students would have a lot of difficulty identifying more abstract comparisons. In ELA, students are frequently tasked to find evidence for a particular statement. Identifying and employing non-literal language requires a different, more “out of the box” approach to language. This means taking a line like “the night is a big black cat” and transforming our mental picture from that of a huge black cat in the sky to one of a dark, mysterious, slinking quality. In order for students to begin writing their own metaphors and similes, we would have to take our time describing the difference between literal and non-literal interpretations. I look forward to taking on this challenge in the future when I have more time or experience with teaching the genre.

iii. The Clark LAP formats have provided an excellent framework for me to outline the scaffolds in place for the students who require unique assistance. Combined
with these pre-planned scaffolds, impromptu accommodations for students with special needs allows me to enhance my teaching so that all students have access to the content. For instance, I had planned on providing students with partners to generate an original, alliterative list on the topic of summer using the letter “s”; during my lesson, I realized that a particular student would require additional accommodations to achieve the task within the lesson. As such, he was provided with a special, informal surface (whiteboard and marker) upon which to write as well as teacher proximity; I spent a great deal of time with this particular student before moving on to others around the room. Likewise, I had planned to have students identify rhyming words in poems that I read aloud in a whole group context in order to prepare them for the task of writing a rhyming poem in small groups, a task I was unsure that they would be prepared to take on; despite this planned accommodation, I knew my students would need more modeling before they were ready to move on. In class, I decided to assign a given topic and worked with the whole class to generate a list of possible rhyming words that you could employ in your own poem on the topic. These are two examples of effective differentiation that occurred in planning and in practice.

b. Despite this effective differentiation, I mentioned above that I would have liked to more evenly approach my content learning goals. It was apparent by the end of the first week that we would not be able to do much work with non-literal elements of poetry. As such, I need to continue to hone my skills at gauging how much is reasonable to attempt in a single unit. While I did not feel that any particular lesson lagged on too much, we could have spent more time exploring poetry during other down times of the day in preparation for this unit; this would have given us at least several more hours to explore non-literal elements of poetry. By improving this skill of judging time and increasing student efficiency (which even comes down to the speed of their transitions and my ability to focus them without constant need to redirect), I will achieve more content, practice, literacy, and community goals in all areas of the curriculum. I cannot wait to continue building my rapport with students in other units! I feel like I’m getting the knack for it 😊