

(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules

Poetry and Grammar

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	8th Grade
Subject	English/Language Arts

Essential Question

How can grammatical rules add structure and variety to poetry?

Summary

It has been said that poetry is a place to break all the rules. In this lesson, students will work with rules of grammar to learn how to integrate more structure and variety in verse to (not quite) break the rules of poetry. Using Shel Silverstein's poetry, students will analyze pieces for elements of grammar and then modify assorted poems to practice incorporating those elements.

Snapshot

Engage

Students engage in a Card Matching activity that establishes elements of grammar: parallel structure, gerunds, predicates, and complex sentences.

Explore

Students listen and follow along with the text of Shel Silverstein's poem "Messy Room," identifying the different grammatical elements they hear and read.

Explain

Students analyze a range of Shel Silverstein poems for grammatical elements and then create Anchor Charts in groups.

Extend

Students modify and expand a range of Shel Silverstein poems to incorporate new instances of the grammatical elements.

Evaluate

Students Commit and Toss new lines from the modified poems, identifying which element was used.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - English (6-12)

KLA 403: Determine the need for conjunctions to create straightforward logical links between clauses

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

L&C 401: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Make adequate word choices that convey the argument with clarity -Make stylistic choices, including voice, tone, and diction, that are appropriate for the given writing purpose and topic

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.5.R.2: Recognize and explain the impact on meaning of parts of speech in sentences:

- nouns
- verbals (i.e., gerunds, participles, infinitives)
- cumulative and coordinate adjectives
- vague pronouns
- singular they / them / their
- coordinating, subordinating, and correlative conjunctions
- adverbs
- interjections

8.5.W.1: Compose simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to add clarity and variety in their writing.
8.5.W.2: Create clarity and/or add variety to their writing with nouns, verbs, verbals, adjectives, prepositions, adverbs, pronouns, and conjunctions.

Attachments

- Card Matching—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.docx
- Card Matching—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.pdf
- Card Matching—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.docx
- Card Matching—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.pdf
- Lesson Slides—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.pptx
- Messy Room Poem—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.docx
- Messy Room Poem—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.pdf
- Messy Room Poem—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.docx
- Messy Room Poem—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.pdf
- Shel Silverstein Poems—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.docx
- Shel Silverstein Poems—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules - Spanish.pdf
- Shel Silverstein Poems—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.docx
- Shel Silverstein Poems—(Not Quite) Breaking All the Rules.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Card Matching handout (attached, one per group)
- Shel Silverstein poems (attached, one per student)
- Messy Room Poem (attached, one per student)
- Highlighters or markers (yellow, blue, green, orange, pink) (one color per student)
- Blank paper (one per group)
- Markers or coloring utensils (one set per group)
- Notebook paper (one per student)

Engage

Grammar Modification: Your Choice!

This lesson engages students in analyzing text to find and use gerunds, predicates, coordinating conjunctions, and both complex and compound-complex sentences. However, you might choose to focus on other elements of grammar. All attachments are easy to modify to suit using different elements. Additionally, this lesson presupposes that students have had an introduction to elements of grammar. If not, an introductory lesson might be helpful to teach before this one or if a review is needed considering unhiding **slides 3** and **4**.

Teacher's Note: Preparing for Activity

Print and cut out the attached **Card Matching** handout for each group (number of sets will depend on class size and grouping needs). Consider having the cards paper-clipped together before giving them to groups.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson.

Display **slide 5** and introduce the Card Matching instructional strategy. Pass out a set of cards to each group and inform students they will work in groups to match the grammatical terms with their textual examples. Give students time to match the cards.

After enough time has elapsed, display **slide 6** and **7** and have students check their answers. This is a way for students to check their knowledge. Discuss as a class what each of these terms mean.

Teacher's Note

If this is not enough time spent on gerunds, predicates, coordinating conjunctions, and compound and compound-complex sentences, then a scaffolding mini-lesson might be needed. Also, keep in mind that this Card Sort handout can be modified to suit different needs/terms.

Display **slide 8** and introduce the following questions for students to consider:

- What have you heard about poetry and not having to follow "rules"?
- How can poetry be viewed as richer or more accessible without rules?
- How can poetry be stronger with some rules?
- How could the elements of grammar you worked with add structure and variety to poetry?

As a class, discuss the questions and allow students to share their thoughts. After students have had some time to consider the questions, display **slide 9** and **10** and share the essential question and learning objectives.

Explore

Display **slide 11** and pass out a copy of the **Messy Room Poem** handout to each student or pair of students. Provide each student with a highlighter to annotate their copies.

Inform the students that they will be listening to an audio recording of the poem Messy Room by Shel Silverstein. Explain that as the video plays, students will follow along to the words of the poem and participate in an instructional strategy called Categorical Highlighting. As they follow along visually and auditorily, ask students to locate and highlight the gerunds, predicates, coordinating conjunctions, and compound and compound-complex sentences that they observe in different colors.

Teacher's Note: Categorical Highlighting and Time

If you need to change the highlighter colors, adjust the colors on slide 11. The video is only 47 seconds long. Consider playing it more than once to provide students time to mark all the elements.

Play the video "Messy Room" by Shel Silverstein while students follow along and annotate their handout.

Embedded video
https://youtube.com/watch?v=X1K9GR2EOOA

Once the video is over, discuss as a class the poem and the essential question:

- How can grammatical rules add structure and variety to poetry?

Explain

To have students work deeper to look for these grammatical elements in action, students will next be reading an assortment of Shel Silverstein poems. It will likely work best to put students into groups for this stage. Provide each group with a copy of **Shel Silverstein Poems** handout and a highlighter to each student.

Display **slide 12**. Explain to the students that the purpose of this activity is for students to show how they know there are gerunds, predicates, coordinating conjunctions, and compound and compound-complex sentences in these poems. Each group will focus on one grammatical element for all the poems.

Teacher's Note: Optional Activities

There are three approaches that you could take to facilitate this activity. Choose the one that works best for you. You will need to adjust the direction on slide 12 to reflect your choice.

1. Students work in groups designated by individual poems.
2. Students work individually and are given a whole set of poems.

You can also have students focus on all grammatical elements instead of just one.

Explain that students should annotate their poems like they did with "Messy Room" and look for the one assigned element. Provide the groups time to work on the activity.

After poems are annotated, keep students in the same groups. Display **slide 13** and introduce the Anchor Chart Instructional Strategy. Because the paper that students will be using is small, they will likely not need as much time as they otherwise would for larger projects.

Tell students that their Anchor Charts should include each of the following:

1. The grammatical element name.
2. A clear definition or explanation of your grammatical element. (either in your own words or using the definition from the Card Matching activity).
3. A full-sentence example taken from one of the Shel Silverstein poems.
4. An image that demonstrates the grammatical element.

Provide students time to work on their anchor charts. As students create their charts, make sure to walk around and guide students who might need more and different directions or to clarify misunderstandings.

If time allows, have the groups share their posters with the class.

After the Anchor Charts are completed, they can be posted on the wall as references for future writing and reading exercises.

Extend

Now that students have looked for these grammatical elements in text and explained them in their own words and images, they will apply what they know by expanding one of the poems that they used for the Explain activity. Ask students to choose one poem to expand. (You might want to pass out fresh copies for this activity, but students could also reuse the copies they have already annotated.) Students can work individually, in a pair, or with a group to add to the poem by writing extra lines that integrate gerunds, predicates, coordinating conjunctions, and compound and compound-complex sentences.

Display **slide 14**, share the instructions for students to follow. Students could consider keeping the same tone of the original poem as they add to it or integrating a new tone. Depending on the needs of the lesson, consider asking students to write as many as two new stanzas or as few as three new lines. The same flexibility applies for which grammatical elements you choose for students. You may modify slide 15 to suit your specific instructional needs. Provide students time to expand their poems.

After students have completed their poems, they can read them aloud to the class.

Display **slide 15** and have students reflect on how their writing relates to the essential question: How can grammatical rules add structure and variety to poetry?

As students reflect on how integrating the lesson's grammatical elements has added structure and variety to their poems, ask them to revisit the discussion of how rules relate to poetry in order to help answer the essential question. How would they respond to those who say poetry is about breaking all the rules? Can there be a balance? Can grammar make poetry richer? If so, how?

Possible Student Responses

Possible student responses to the essential question might include:

Using different types of sentences in poetry can make a poem more interesting. Using coordinating conjunctions can expand on an idea and in poetry can add repetition and enhance rhythm. Predicates can heighten action in poetry, helping illustrate what is happening. Following "rules" in poetry helps with structure that can help a poem flow for the reader.

Evaluate

Display **slide 16**, ask students to get out a piece of notebook paper. On it, they should write down ONE original line of their newly modified poem. They will use this paper to engage in the Commit and Toss instructional strategy. Each student should:

1. Write down one original line from their newly modified poem that has an element(s) discussed in class.
2. Crumple the sheet of paper containing their line of poetry into a ball.
3. Gently toss the ball.
4. Pick up a new paper ball.

Once students have a new paper ball, display **slide 17** and have them uncrumple it and analyze whether a gerund, predicate, coordinating conjunction, compound and/or compound-complex sentence is shown. Students should then circle and label which grammar elements were used. Students can share out with the whole group or within small groups or pairs if time permits.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor charts. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Card Matching. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/1837
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Categorical Highlighting. Strategies.https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/192
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/119
- Perkins, S. (n.d.). “Messy Room” by Shel Silverstein. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1K9GR2EOOA&t=24s
- Silverstein, S. (2009). A Light in the Attic. HarperCollins.
- Silverstein, S. (2011). Every Thing On It. HarperCollins.
- Silverstein, S. (2014). Where the Sidewalk Ends. HarperCollins.