

Oh, Theodore! Guinea Pig Poems

A collection of poems that tells a story about a boy and his new pet guinea pig

Vocabulary:

- selection
- party pooper
- waddles
- salary
- tending
- grooming
- stroll
- nibbled
- scurried
- gnawed

Objectives:

Students will...

- Identify responsible pet ownership behaviours
- Describe the needs of guinea pigs
- Identify appropriate behaviours with pets that indicate responsible pet ownership
- Discuss examples of how animals show they have feelings and personalities

Reading Activities

A: Pre-Reading Activities

Pre-teach the Language Arts outcomes:

- recognize how words and word combinations, such as word play,

repetition and rhyme, influence or convey meaning

- explain how onomatopoeia and alliteration are used to create mental images

Provide students with the Activity Sheet [Let's Experiment with Language](#)

Have students complete the activity sheet while you read the series of poems.

B: Discussion Questions

- Which poem did you like the best? Why?
- What would you have named this guinea pig? Why?
- Did you find any of the poems humorous? Scary?
- What inferences can you make about Theodore's feelings from the pictures and the words?
- What is the main idea of this story?
- How does the boy feel when he realizes Theodore is missing? How do you think you would have felt?
- What does the boy do to find Theodore? What would you have done?
- How would you describe Theodore's personality?
- If you allow a guinea pig out of its cage, what are some ways you can keep it safe?



- Have students make inferences from the titles what each poem is going to be about.

C: Post Reading Activities

1. Experimenting with Language

Revisit the *Let's Experiment with Language* Activity sheet.

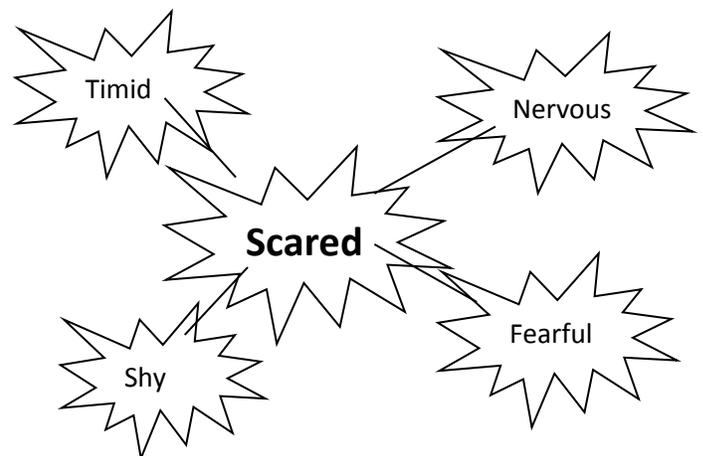
<i>Figurative Language</i>	Examples from Oh, Theodore!
Word play	p.22 Theo-Door
repetition	p.9 I wanted a p.22 open p.29 step p.34 as usual p.40 nobody
onomatopoeia	p.15 chrrr, peep, squeep p.30 purr, brrr, peep, squeak
alliteration	none
rhyme	p.12 bed/head floor/Theodore p.37 Theodore/floor/door knees/leave (used as a rhyme)

There were no examples of alliteration used in Oh, Theodore. Ask students to create their own alliteration about Theodore or their own pet and add it to the activity sheet.

2. Vocabulary Explosions

Make a list of descriptive words and write some of the vocabulary on the board. Have students use dictionaries to find definitions that are appropriate for the context of the story. Then have students use a thesaurus to find synonyms. Students can create “word explosions” with the synonyms to display in the classroom. Discuss the nuances of the synonyms with your students.

Example:



3. Write your own Pet Poem

Using your own pet or an imaginary pet, create a series of short poems to describe events in the pet's life. Ask students to integrate some of

the descriptive words generated from the previous activity

Or

Rewrite the series of poems as either poetry or prose from the perspective of Theodore. Students can use the same poem titles. Have students use some of the techniques discussed in “Let’s Experiment with Language” Activity Sheet.

Here is an example to start the class off.

Pet Selection

I wanted an owner.

He looked at a snake. What about me?

He looked at a dog. What about me?

He looked at a fish. What about me?

Too scary, too loud, too wet.

He chose me

Extension

Once students have completed the worksheet, draw a Venn diagram on the board and ask students to compare and contrast the needs of pets and students. Students can include the words they used in *Animal Alphabet*.



4. Animal Alphabet

Divide students into small groups and provide them with the *Activity Sheet – Animal Alphabet*. Students then think of a word for each letter of the alphabet that describes something different that pets need. Students will need to be creative to find a word for each letter. Encourage students to use adjectives as well as nouns.



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Alberta Education Program of Studies: *Curriculum Connection*

English Language Arts

General Outcome 1

Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences.

Express ideas and develop understanding

- compare new ideas, information and experiences to prior knowledge and experiences
- ask questions, paraphrase and discuss to explore ideas and understand new concepts
- share personal responses to explore and develop understanding of oral, print and other media texts

General Outcome 2

Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts.

Experience various texts

- experience oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres, such as personal narratives, plays, novels, video programs, adventure stories, folk tales, informational texts, mysteries, poetry and CDROM programs
- retell events of stories in another form or medium

Appreciate the artistry of texts

- explain how language and visuals work together to communicate meaning and enhance effect

- explain how onomatopoeia and alliteration are used to create mental images

Experiment with language

- recognize how words and word combinations, such as word play, repetition and rhyme, influence or convey meaning

Use comprehension strategies

- comprehend new ideas and information by responding personally and discussing ideas with others
- extend sight vocabulary to include words frequently used in other subject areas

Health and Life Skills

W- 4.8 expand practices that provide safety for self and others

W- 4.10 describe and demonstrate ways to assist with the safety of others

R- 4.8 describe and accept roles and responsibilities within a group

Science

Attitudes

General Learner Expectations

Students will:

4-4 Demonstrate positive attitudes for the study of science and for the application of science in responsible ways.

- respect for living things and environments, and commitment for their care.

