**Playing with Words**

**This four-week unit encourages students to play with language and to explore their personal writing style.**

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**Overview**

* + Both spoonerisms and classic poetry provide a brief introduction to the appreciation and exploration of language. Students bring in a book about an important figure, such as a scientist, artist, or inventor as a springboard for writing about their own interests and researching famous scientists. Students explore word origins, compare literal and figurative language, and present poem they have written. This unit ends with an open-ended reflective essay response to the essential question.
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**Focus Standards**

* + These Focus Standards have been selected for the unit from the Common Core State Standards.
    - **RL.5.2**: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
    - **RI.5.1:** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
    - **RF.5.3:** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
    - **RF.5.3(a):** Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
    - **W.5.7:** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
    - **SL.5.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
    - **SL.5.1 (a):** Come to discussions prepared, having reador studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
    - **SL.5.1 (b):** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
    - **L.5.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

[Common Core State Standards, ELA](http://commoncore.org/free/resources/CCSSI_ELA_Standards.pdf) (1.5 MB)

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**Suggested Student Objectives**

* + - Read classic and humorous stories and poems.
    - Conduct research on people of interest, notably scientists.
    - Create digital presentations.
    - Write responses to a variety of literature and poetry.
    - Participate in group discussions about poetic techniques and figurative language.
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**Suggested Works**

* + (E) indicates a CCSS exemplar text; (EA) indicates a text from a writer with other works identified as exemplars.

**Literary Texts**

**Stories**

* + - *The Disappearing Alphabet* (Richard Wilbur and David Diaz)
    - *The King Who Rained* (Fred Gwynne)

**Stories (Read Aloud)**

* + - *The Phantom Tollbooth* (Norton Juster and Jules Feiffer)

**Poems**

* + - "Casey at the Bat" (Ernest Lawrence Thayer) (E)
    - *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* (Paul Fleischman and Eric Beddows)
    - "The Echoing Green" (William Blake) (E)
    - “Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf” (Roald Dahl) (E)
    - “Eletelephony” (Laura Richards)
    - “My Shadow” (Robert Louis Stevenson)
    - *Runny Babbit: A Billy Sook* (Shel Silverstein)

**Poems (Read Aloud)**

* + - *The Tree is Older than You Are: A Bilingual Gathering of Poems & Stories from Mexico with Paintings by Mexican Artists* (Naomi Shihab Nye)

**Informational Texts**

**Biographies**

* + - *Tales of Famous Americans* (Peter and Connie Roop)
    - *Forecast Earth: The Story of Climate Scientist Inez Fung* (Women’s Adventures in Science) (Renee Skelton)
    - *Rachel Carson: Pioneer of Ecology* (Women of Our Time) (Kathleen V. Kudlinski)
    - *John Muir: Young Naturalist* (Childhood of Famous Americans) (Montrew Dunham)
    - *Who Was Albert Einstein?* (Jess M. Brallier and Robert Andrew Parker)
    - *Alexander Graham Bell: An Inventive Life* (Snapshots: Images of People and Places in History) (Elizabeth MacLeod)
    - *Amelia to Zora: Twenty-Six Women Who Changed the World* (Cynthia Chin-Lee, Megan Halsey, and Sean Addy)
    - *The World at His Fingertips: A Story about Louis Braille* (Creative Minds Biographies) (Barbara O’Connor and Rochelle Draper)
    - *We Are The Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* (Kadir Nelson) (E)
    - *Meet the Authors and Illustrators Volume 1: 60 Creators of Favorite Children’s Books Talk About Their Work* (Grades K-6) (Deborah Kovacs and James Preller)
    - *Visual and Performing Artists* (Women in Profile) (Shaun Hunter)
    - *Musicians* (Women in Profile) (Leslie Strudwick)

**Other**

* + - *Scholastic Dictionary of Idioms (Revised)* (Marvin Terban)

**Art, Music, and Media**

**Music**

* + - Benjamin Britten, *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra, Opus 34* (1946)
    - Jack Norworth, *Take Me Out to the Ballgame* (1908)

**Media**

* + - Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, “[Who’s on First?](http://www.baseball-almanac.com/humor4.shtml)” (c. 1936)
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**Sample Activities and Assessments**

* + **Bio-poem**

Read all you can about a favorite sports hero, author, poet, illustrator, artist, or musician. Make a chart in your journal that includes the following information:

* + - Name of your person
    - Where he/she lived
    - When he/she lived
    - What did he/she do that made him/her famous?
    - What are some additional facts you found interesting?

After finishing this research, create a bio-poem based on the person you chose. Make sure you can explain why you chose the words you put into the bio-poem, and create a digital presentation of both. (RI.5.1, W.5.7, L.5.1a)

**Famous Scientists Graphic Organizer**

Since you and your classmates are reading and researching about different scientists, keep track of information, in similar categories to those listed above, in your journal. During class discussions, we will share our research and create a class chart together. (RI.5.1, RI.5.2, RI.5.3)

**Class Discussion**

How are the scientists we’ve read about similar? How are they different? How and why do scientists “play”? (SL.5.1a, b, RI.5.9)

**Class Discussion**

Compare and contrast the presentation of a topic in two different formats, such as baseball in “Casey at the Bat” (Ernest Lawrence Thayer) to *We are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* (Kadir Nelson), drawing on specific details from the text. Your teacher may ask you to write your own response on a Post-It note, on a white board, or in your journal and share it with a partner before, or during, the class discussion. (RL.5.2, SL.5.1a, b)

**Poetic Devices**

Not only do poets use a variety of formats, rhyme schemes, and meters, but they use specific devices to make their poems unique. Find examples of similes, metaphors, alliteration, and onomatopoeia in poems from this unit, and mark them with coded Post-it notes. Create a T-chart in your journal that includes the technique and examples of each. Try to write your own poem that uses at least two of the techniques found. (RL.5.4, L.5.5, W.5.4)

**Journal Writing**

Explore your own style of writing. Write your own humorous story or poem in which you incorporate figurative language or idioms learned. Share it with a classmate. Ask your classmate what he/she thinks would improve your writing. (L.5.5, W.5.4, W.5.5)

**Dramatization/Fluency**

Choose a poem, such as one from the anthology *Joyful Noise* (Paul Fleischman and Eric Beddows), to recite with a classmate. After the performance, discuss specific passages and poetic elements that made the poem come alive. (RF.5.3a)

**Create a Classbook**

Illustrate the literal and figurative meaning of an idiom from a text such as *The King Who Rained*. We will compile these illustrations into a classbook to share with younger students. Try to use phrases learned in your daily writing and speaking as well. (L.5.5b)

**Word Study**

As an individual and as a class, keep an index card file of words and phrases learned from the stories and poems in this unit, especially homonyms (i.e., sea, sea; to, two, too, etc.) and homophones, (i.e., weather, whether). Keeping the words on index cards will help you when we sort words by prefix, suffix, root words, meaning, spelling feature, etc. (Note: This will be an ongoing activity all year long.) (L.5.4a, RI.5.6)

**Listening/Musical Appreciation**

We will listen to Benjamin Britten’s *The Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* as a class. We will discuss how the ideas of “theme and variations” are expressed through music. As a class, we will choose a common topic about which to write, and then anyone who is interested may share their draft with the class. We will discuss the similarities and differences in our writing, just as “themes and variations” exist in music. (SL.5.1a, b)

**Reflective Essay**

Write an essay response to the essential question (“Why (and how) do we play with language?”). Your teacher may give you the opportunity to “[Give one, get one](http://rrisdmathteam.wikispaces.com/Give+One+Get+One)” before writing your response. (W.5.9a, b, W.5.5, W.5.7, L.5.1a)

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**Additional Resources**

* + [David Weisner's book *June 29, 1999* showcases this day](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/david-weisner-book-june-20551.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RL.5.7)

Note: In *June 29, 1999*, the main character, Holly Evans, undertakes a scientific project that appears to have gigantic results when huge vegetables begin landing on the planet. Wiesner's book carefully identifies elements that make the emotions in the story obvious to someone reading the book. Students then create lists of words and their own illustrations to express the feelings portrayed.

[Alliteration All Around](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/alliteration-around-849.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RL.5.4)

Note: In this lesson, students learn about alliteration from picture books by author/illustrator, Pamela Duncan Edwards. Using the books' illustrations for inspiration, students write original alliterative sentences and share them with the class. As the lesson continues, students practice using alliteration to create acrostic poems, alphabet books, number books, and tongue twisters.

[Noah Webster published his *American Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/noah-webster-published-american-20472.html) (ReadWriteThink) (L.5.4a, b, c)

Note: In this lesson, students celebrate the publication of Webster's *Dictionary* using a variation of the board game *Balderdash*. Divide students into groups of five or six, and provide each group with a dictionary and some blank paper.

[Spelling Patterns, “Go Fish” Card Game](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/spelling-patterns-fish-card-1046.html) (ReadWriteThink) (L.5.4a, b, c)

Note: In this lesson, students use a chart with fifty-two words grouped by spelling patterns to make a card game designed to help them recognize several common English spelling patterns.

[Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to earn a MD degree in 1849](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/elizabeth-blackwell-became-first-20402.html) (ReadWriteThink) (RI.5.9)

Note: With your class, explore other famous firsts. Begin by brainstorming a list of people who have done something "first" (i.e., the first person on the moon, the first woman to run for national elected office, the first Latino to win the Nobel Prize). To start your list, check out this month's entries on Amelia Earhart and Jackie Robinson. Once you've collected a list of firsts, divide your class into small groups to conduct some research into the lives of one of these people. Have each group design a multimedia presentation to report their research results to the rest of the class.

[Biographies for Children](http://www.pitara.com/magazine/people.asp) (Pitara Kids Network)

[All About Adolescent Literacy](http://www.adlit.org/) (AdLit.Org)

[Great People of the 20th Century](http://library.thinkquest.org/27629/themes/people/people.html) (Oracle ThinkQuest, By Students, For Students)

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**Terminology**

* + - biography
    - dialogue
    - homonym
    - homophone
    - idiom/cliché
    - literal and figurative language
    - poetic techniques: rhyme scheme, meter, stanza, metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia
    - spoonerism
    - theme (and variation)
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**Making Interdisciplinary Connections**

* + **This unit teaches:**
    - **Science:** Biographies (e.g., John Muir and Rachel Carson) and their (respective) related field of study (e.g., conservation and ecology)

**This unit could be extended to teach:**

* + - **Science:** Scientists and the type of science to which they contributed (e.g., ecology, biology, chemistry, astronomy, geology, meteorology, electricity, etc.)
    - **History/geography:** Famous people throughout history (e.g., How have these people changed our world? What makes them famous?)
    - **Physical education:** Baseball (i.e., rules and history)