

## POETRY SELECTION TIPS

### For selecting “great” model poems

1. Avoid constant “sweetness themes.” Students often have the perception that poetry content is limited to love or nature. Selecting a variety of themes will broaden their awareness of poetry. Possible themes include birth, life, holidays, compassion, dreams, growing up, identity, and the meaning of life.
2. Don’t be reluctant to shorten poems that are too long.
3. Look for poems that contain cross-cultural application.
4. Don’t let sophisticated vocabulary discourage you. Use them as opportunities to define and explain language of the past. You may also simplify the language according to your students' grade level.
5. Select poems that excite you as the teacher. If they do not interest you, then continue to look for other poems – students will pick up on the extent of your excitement, and the more excited you are about the selection, the more likely they will be.
6. Find more than one poem to demonstrate a particular theme or feeling.
7. Select poems that demonstrate the author's voice, style, or form. This distinguishes the author from others you might study.

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Adapted from Certo, J.L. (2004). Cold plums and the old men in the water: Let children read and write “great” poetry. *The Reading Teacher*, 58, p. 269.