



Writing
COLOR POETRY



Kim Kautzer



Let's write a color poem! Don't start groaning on me now—poetry doesn't have to be stiff, boring, or dry! As a matter of fact, poetry can make kids smile as they discover the joy of using words to create patterns and pictures! In *Literature for Children: A Short Introduction*, David Russell helps us understand what poetry is:

- Poetry is the **language of the imagination**.
- Prose explains, but **poetry sings**.
- Poetry is **musical, precise, memorable, and magical**.¹

Poetry is a sensory writing experience. It teaches children to play with words and word patterns to create images that evoke an emotional response in the reader. Not only is this important for achieving the end result of a clever and engaging poem, but playing with poetry helps set the stage for writing more descriptive stories and reports, too.

If your children don't have much familiarity with poetry, this lesson will begin to broaden their experience by providing them with fresh new adventures in this delightful genre!

Writing a Color Poem

My four-year-old granddaughter loves to ask us, "What's your favorite color?" Everyone has a favorite, whether it's ocean blue, princess pink, or the rippling green of a grassy meadow, and colors lend themselves beautifully to poetry. Students of all ages love this activity! You'll find examples and instructions included.

Before you print the worksheets, here are a few suggestions to help you avoid common pitfalls as you present this poetry lesson to your kids.

Teaching Tips

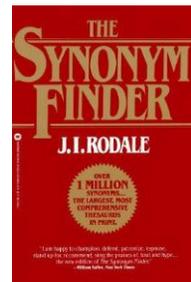
- **Pick a Common Color.** Your children will need to pick a color as the center of their poem. This should be a basic color—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, brown, black, white, gray, silver, or gold. As they brainstorm for details, they'll be able to include more unusual or exotic color words within the poem itself.
- **Use the Right Lists.** When students are filling in the blanks on page 3, make sure they're taking words from the correct lists on page 2.
- **Create Accurate Word Pictures.** Suppose your child writes: *Smoke smells red*. Even though smoke is associated with fire, smoke is typically gray in color. Explain that there are so many more accurate things that could "smell" red, such as red fruits, a spice like cinnamon, a certain scent of candle, or a fragrant red flower. Once she has chosen more appropriate words, such as *strawberries and roses*, invite her to add bright and vivid adjectives to her red smell words: *Crushed strawberries and wild climbing roses smell red*.

¹ Russell, David L. *Literature for Children: A Short Introduction*. 5th. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2005. 176-77. Print.

- **Avoid Repeated Words.** If your child uses *ocean* three times to describe how blue *looks*, *sounds*, and *smells*, guide her toward replacing two of these with other images, such as *gurgling creek* or *a bar of soap*.
- **Replace Vague Words.** Encourage children to pick more concrete or specific words. If their color is black, suggest *Orca* instead of the generic *whale*. Similarly, invite them to replace *tree* with *cedar*, *maple tree*, or *elm* when describing green. And while the word *candy* is too ambiguous for brown, *malt balls* or *chocolate* paint a more accurate mental picture.

Teaching Different Ages

- **Teens.** Older students should be able to write their color poems with little or no supervision. Do provide them with a good thesaurus (my all-time favorite is [The Synonym Finder](#)), and help them troubleshoot if necessary.
- **Upper Elementary.** These children may require a bit more help from you. Because they often lack the skills needed to make sophisticated word choices, their poems may fall flat without guidance.
- **Primary Ages.** Even your younger ones can participate in this activity, but you will need to work side by side through the entire process. The concept of a color having a smell or taste is too abstract and will likely go right over their heads. To help your younger kids:
 - Check out a library book about objects of different colors.
 - Do a Google search for terms like *red foods* or *red objects* (*always be with your children and use discretion when searching online*).
 - Talk about objects, foods, and textures that are associated with a particular color. For example, brown *objects* might include *pennies*, *cowboy boots*, a *sparrow*, and *soil*. Brown *foods* include *walnuts*, *fried chicken*, *fudge*, and *bran muffins*. Brown *textures* could include *lizard skin*, *cowhide*, *fur*, *velvet*, and *leather*.



It's time to gather your family together to enjoy the special treat of writing color poems. Instructions begin on the next page. Oh, and don't be surprised if some of your kids want to write more than one: they're that fun. You may even find yourself writing one too!

Happy writing,

Kim



COLOR POETRY

Using colors in your poetry can evoke strong sensory images for the reader. When your entire poem is about one color, the effect is quite dramatic. Look at these examples of Color Poetry. Notice: you experience different feelings and emotions with each poem.

MORNING BLUE

Matthew, age 10

Blue is as fluffy as cotton candy.
Blue is cloudless sky and berry pie
and the feeling of rest.
Blue is sapphire, indigo, and denim.
Blue is the cold taste of mint mouthwash.
Blueberry pancakes and early morning rain
smell blue.
Loneliness makes me feel blue.
Blue is the sound of scrub jays screeching
and ocean waves crashing.
Far-stretching sea and Hawaii are blue.
Blue is endless.

TICKLED PINK

Courtney, age 13

Pink is as fragile as delicate porcelain.
Pink is rosy cheeks and flamingoes and
the feeling of bashfulness.
Pink is fuchsia, salmon, and rose.
Pink is the taste of sweet candy hearts
and watermelon Kool-Aid.
Juicy strawberries and blooming
carnations smell pink.
Being in love makes me feel pink.
Pink is the sound of romantic songs and
old church hymns.
Giggling and painted sunsets are pink.
Pink is sweet and shy.

CALIFORNIA CASUAL

Kaeli, age 15

Orange is as exotic as a brilliant tiger lily.
Orange is skittish clownfish and cool cantaloupes
and the feeling of fizzy Fanta tickling my nose.
Orange is peach, copper, and melon.
Orange is the tangy taste of California citrus.
Spicy cinnamon and delicate orange blossoms
smell orange.
Orange is the sound of a crackling fire and Spanish
guitars.
Cruising the Caribbean and dancing the Mambo are
orange.
Orange is laughter on the beach at sunset.

Color Poem Brainstorming Worksheet

Directions

Choose a color for your poem. Write it here: _____

Fill in the following blanks with "color" ideas, words, and phrases. Some of these ideas are abstract. Does a color really have a "smell" or a "taste"? Try to think creatively!

We've used (blue) as an example. Change it to your own color, writing at least three or four things for each list.

List 1 What things look (blue)? _____

List 2 What things sound (blue)? _____

List 3 What things smell (blue)? _____

List 4 How does (blue) feel (*textures, temperatures, objects, etc.*). Avoid emotion words, but many others will work here. _____

List 5 What emotions make you feel (blue)? Find ideas here: [Emotion Words](#).

List 6 What tastes (blue)? _____

List 7 What experiences, sights, and ideas seem (blue)? _____

List 8 Can you think of any places that look or feel (blue)? _____

List 9 What are four synonyms for your color? Visit these websites for ideas: [Color Thesaurus](#) and [Color Names](#). Do your **synonym choices make sense**? For example, *cornflower*, *periwinkle*, and *turquoise* are good synonyms for "blue," but *dodger*, *cadet*, and *colt* will not make sense.

Writing Your Color Poem

Directions

- Fill in the blanks below using words and phrases from your brainstorming lists. Write your color word on each bold, dark line.
- Use a simile, which compares two things using *like* or *as* (*soft as a lamb, loud as thunder*).
- Make each word count!
 - Do not** repeat any main words (except for the color word you have chosen).
 - Use interesting, specific nouns. For example, instead of *bird*, choose *canary, cardinal, or parakeet*. Instead of *sports car*, choose *Corvette, Viper, or Ferrari*.
 - Use strong verbs. For instance, replace *moving* or *going* with *flitting, racing, or soaring*.
 - Add descriptive adjectives where appropriate, such as *juicy, ripe, or plump* strawberries.
- Think of a clever or creative title. It doesn't have to include the color word, but it may.
- When finished, read your color poem out loud to hear how it flows. Replace any dull words.
- Write or type your final draft onto fresh paper. Use a special font, if you wish.
- Do not** write your poem in paragraph form. Begin each sentence on a new line, like the samples on page 1. If a sentence continues onto a second line, *indent* the second line.

(Title)

_____ is as _____ as _____. (Simile/any lists)

_____ is _____ and _____. (List 1)

and the feeling of _____. (List 4)

_____ is _____, _____, and _____. (List 9)

_____ is the taste of _____. (List 6)

_____ and _____ smell _____. (List 3)

_____ makes me feel _____. (List 5)

_____ is the sound of _____ and _____. (List 2)

_____ and _____ are _____. (Lists 7, 8)

_____ is _____. (Any list—not a word already used)

Want to Do More? Plan and write another poem, choosing a different color as the subject.



Inspiring Successful Writers.

WriteShop® Inc.
2726 Mildred Pl.
Ontario, CA 91761
Phone (909) 989-5576
Fax (909) 941-9541
<http://www.writeshop.com>
info@writeshop.com

Keep up with WriteShop by following:



Award-winning WriteShop offers quality, parent-approved writing resources for kindergarten through high school, helping new and veteran homeschoolers alike teach writing with confidence.

[See the WriteShop store for details!](#)

