

FORGET-ME-NOTS

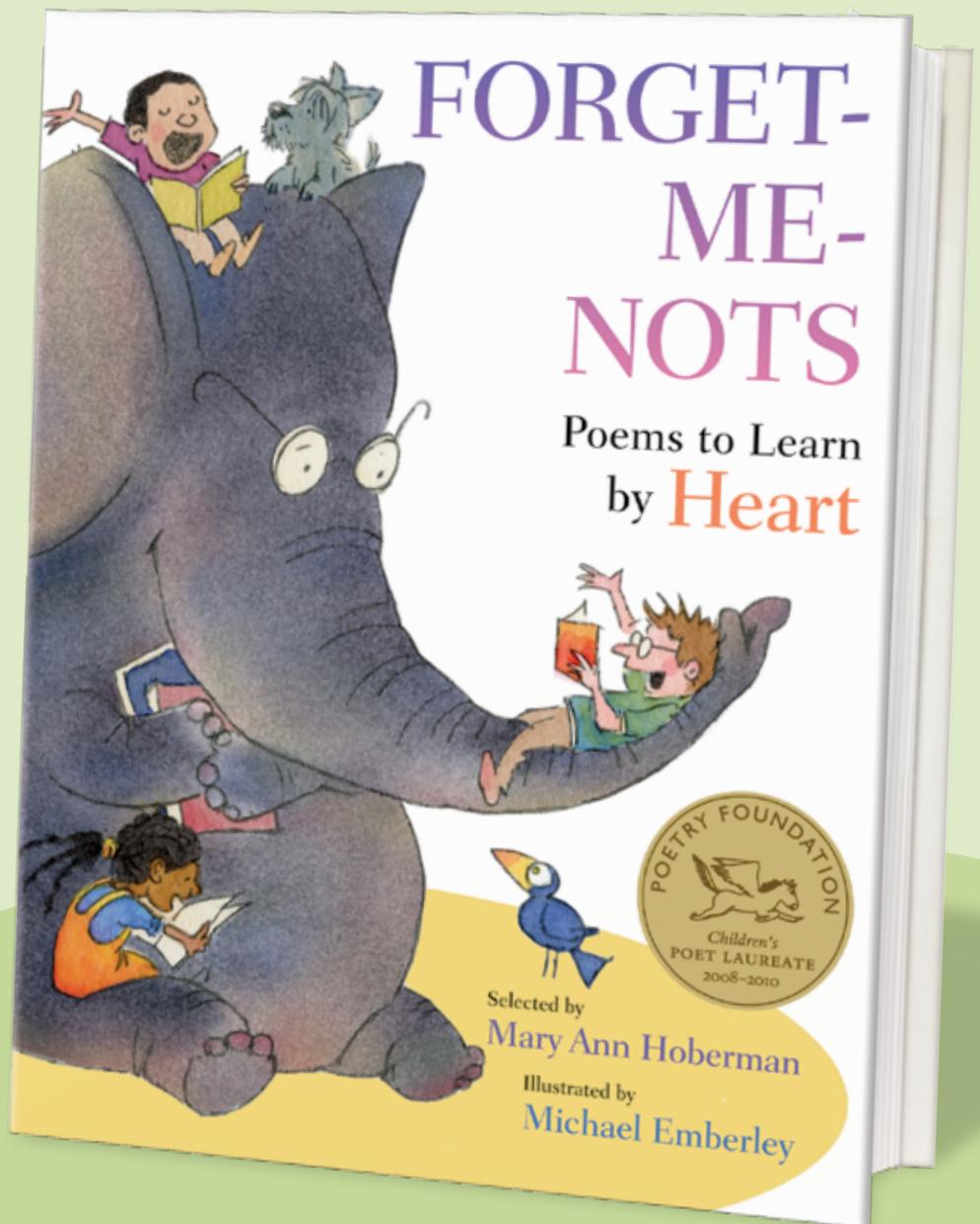
Poems to Learn by Heart

Selected by Mary Ann Hoberman | Illustrated by Michael Emberley

Curriculum connections

- ❖ Poetry
- ❖ Read Aloud
- ❖ Memory

All Ages



BUILDING BACKGROUND

Memorizing by Heart

Read or read aloud Mary Ann Hoberman's introduction. Discuss with students what she means by "learning by heart" and her explanation of how the rhythm of the heart is similar to the rhythm of poetry. Talk with students about why memorizing is still a meaningful activity even in this age of instant information. Then, set a class goal to learn a certain number of poems by a designated date. (There are excellent suggestions in the back of the book to help make memorizing easier.) Make a visual chart showing the goal. Students could choose different poems to memorize and then showcase their memorized poems at a poetry tea or other class event. Use the occasion to celebrate the efforts of the class.



Poetry Through the Years

This collection of poems is quite diverse. It includes poems written by poets from long ago, as well as poems by authors still alive today. Some of the poems are intended to capture deep emotions, and some are simply silly verses that are fun to say. Help students understand that poetry can take many forms and may be written by all kinds of people by highlighting a few examples from this anthology. You may want to choose Robert Frost's "A Time to Talk" and Jack Prelutsky's "Don't Ever Seize a Weasel by the Tail." Share a little about the time period when the poems were written and a short biography of the poets. Talk about how the poems are different, and how they are the same. After modeling this, have groups of students choose two poems. Ask them to learn a little about the poets' lives and the time period when they were writing. Then, have them compare and contrast the poems they chose and share with the class. Afterwards, discuss the range of poetry and time periods they learned about. Why do they think poetry is something that is still relevant today?

COMPREHENSION CONNECTION

I saw, I felt, I think...

The ability to explain a poem or story is a foundational comprehension skill, but it can be challenging for some students. Help students practice this skill by giving them a page of sentence starters. At the top of the page write the name of the poem and the author. Then, have students complete these sentences: *I saw...* *I felt...* *This reminded me of...* *I think this poem is about...* Encourage students to use this process for a variety of poems. Then, talk about how they were able to understand the poem through what they saw (visualized) and the connections they made to their own lives.



Mood Connections

Have students choose two poems: one that makes them feel happy and one that makes them feel sad. How does each poet create that mood? What literary devices do they use? What connections did students make that gave even more meaning to the poem? Did all students feel the same way about each poem? Did all students pick the same poems? Extend the lesson by creating a graph of class results.

VISUALIZATION

Snowspell: Inferring and Visualizing

Read aloud “Snowspell,” by Robert Francis, but do not reveal the title. Have students picture the scene in their mind and then guess what the poem is about. Next, show the words but not the title. Which words helped them infer the meaning of the poem? Give students black or blue paper and white chalk or crayons. Then, read the poem again as students draw what they pictured in their minds.

VOCABULARY

Vocabulary Scavenger Hunt

Many of the poems in this collection have vivid vocabulary just waiting to be discovered. Send students on a scavenger hunt through the book to find five words to add to their vocabulary. Have students read the poems containing each word they found, record the words, guess their meaning,

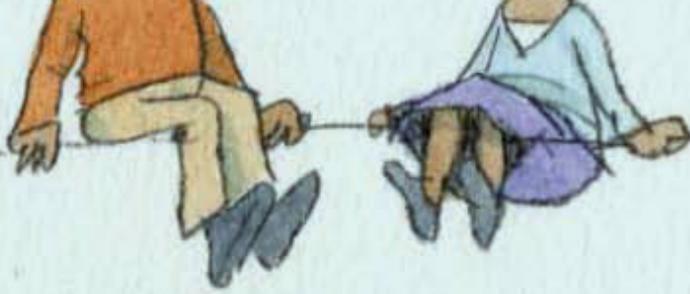
and then look up the meaning of the word. Then, challenge students to pick one word to use five times throughout the day. As an alternative, or for a more guided approach, give students specific poems to search through for new vocabulary.

FLUENCY

Poems for Two Voices

Conversation poems can help students develop fluency skills. Choose “Bird Talk,” by Aileen Fisher or “Roosters,” by Elizabeth Coatsworth. Working with a partner, have students look at the poem and decide how they might read it as a conversation between characters. Ask them to each choose a part to read. They can take turns reading with expression and appropriate pace. They might want to record their dramatic reading and then critique themselves. Did they read with expression? Did they read it at a comfortable pace? Did they read the words clearly? Have students practice a few more times and then record themselves again. Did they improve? How can they use this experience to help them when they are reading independently?





WRITING

Sensational Similes and Marvelous Metaphors

Poems can help us see the world in a new way. They often are examples of how language can be used and shaped to reveal the uniqueness of everyday things. Through the use of poetic language, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Begin by reviewing or introducing literary devices such as similes and metaphors. Then, search for examples of each throughout *Forget-Me-Nots*. Challenge students to write down each example, then explain what it means and why the poet may have chosen that literary device. What was the poet trying to describe? How did it help create the mood of the poem? How did it help the reader visualize? Extend this lesson by having students create their own similes or metaphors for the same everyday object or event. Students may want to create a class book of Sensational Similes

and Marvelous Metaphors, highlighting the original examples and the ideas they generated for each object.

If-ing

Read the poem “If-ing,” by Langston Hughes. Discuss with students what is meant by “if-ing.” Then, ask them to think about something they might “if.” What would they dream about? Have them try writing a few “Ifs” of their own. For an added challenge, have them use the same rhyming scheme as Langston Hughes. Did all students write about the same things? In what ways were the things they wrote about the same or different from the original poem? In what ways are they the same or different from classmates?



SCIENCE

Poetry Food Pyramid

There are many poems written about food. Begin by either reviewing or introducing the food pyramid and what it teaches about the nutrients our bodies require. Once students have a good understanding of the food pyramid, have them search through the section of the poetry compilation called Delicious Dishes and record all of the foods mentioned in the poems. Then, have them place these foods on the food pyramid in the appropriate place. Were there any “foods” they could not find a place for on the pyramid? Did they have more in one section than another? Would it be a nutritious diet to eat all of the foods mentioned in the poems? Extend this lesson by having students pretend they are nutritionists analyzing the diet shown on the food pyramid. Have them write an evaluation report with at least three recommendations to help create a more balanced diet.

High Pressure Poetry: Exploring Weather

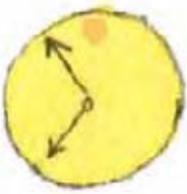
Poems included in the section called Weather and Seasons are about rain, fog, snow, and sunny days. Have students choose a weather topic to investigate. What creates fog? How do meteorologists predict the weather? What is a barometer? Put research into action by building a simple barometer. You will need: a balloon, rubber band, glass canning jar or coffee can, a drinking straw, a toothpick, an index card, and some glue. Construct a barometer by stretching the balloon over the mouth of the jar or can and securing it with the rubber band. Then, glue the straw to the center of the balloon so it is horizontal and extends several inches beyond the edge of the can or jar. Next, glue a toothpick to the end of the straw. The toothpick should protrude from the end of the straw and look like a pointer. Next, mark the index card with the words “high” at the top of the card and “low” near the toothpick’s point. Tape the card to a wall or other surface, and then have students keep track of whether or not the “needle” points to high or low each day. At the same time, have students record the kind of weather they observe. After about a week, look at the results and discuss the relationship among high pressure and low pressure and their observations. Extend students’ learning by reading informational texts about weather.



Beautiful Beasts Cards

Poems about animals are highlighted in the section called Beautiful Beasts. Help students develop an even greater understanding of some of the creatures addressed in the poems by creating “trading cards” with information about the animals. Begin by discussing or showing examples of different types of trading cards. Many students will be familiar with baseball cards or cards depicting characters from video games or cartoons. Talk about the type of information included on these cards. Most have a picture, a written description, statistics, and sometimes a list of super powers or talents. Decide as a class what information to include on each card, “” and then have students choose one of the animals featured in the poetry compilation to research. Each student may want to choose a different animal and then use a color copier or scanner to make copies of their cards to trade with their classmates.

SOCIAL STUDIES



Measuring Time Across Cultures

Time is measured in many ways. After students explore the poems in *Forget-Me-Nots*, have them identify some of the ways time is measured. Many cultures throughout history have used different measuring devices or have thought of time in unique ways. Ask students to work in teams to choose a culture to research, and then report on how that culture views time and how they measure (or measured) time. As an alternative, students may want to choose a particular measuring device and research its origins. For example, they might want to research the sundial or the lunar calendar. Challenge students to think globally and learn about perspectives on time in cultures around the world, now and in the past.

Messages from Everywhere

Read “Messages from Everywhere,” by Naomi Shih Nye. Have students imagine they are one of the birds in the poem, flying over the earth. Ask students to close their eyes while spinning a globe, and then place their finger on a random spot. Challenge students to research the place where they landed. Encourage students to learn something about the culture, language, geography, or some interesting facts about their landing site. Have students share the results on their mini-research projects. Then, connect back to the poem by discussing how all of these places are part of the same world. As an extension, give students the opportunity to send and receive real messages from everywhere, or at least a number of places, by helping them find international pen-pals. There are a number of online sites that will match students for a fee, or you can seek direct connections by contacting schools in other countries.

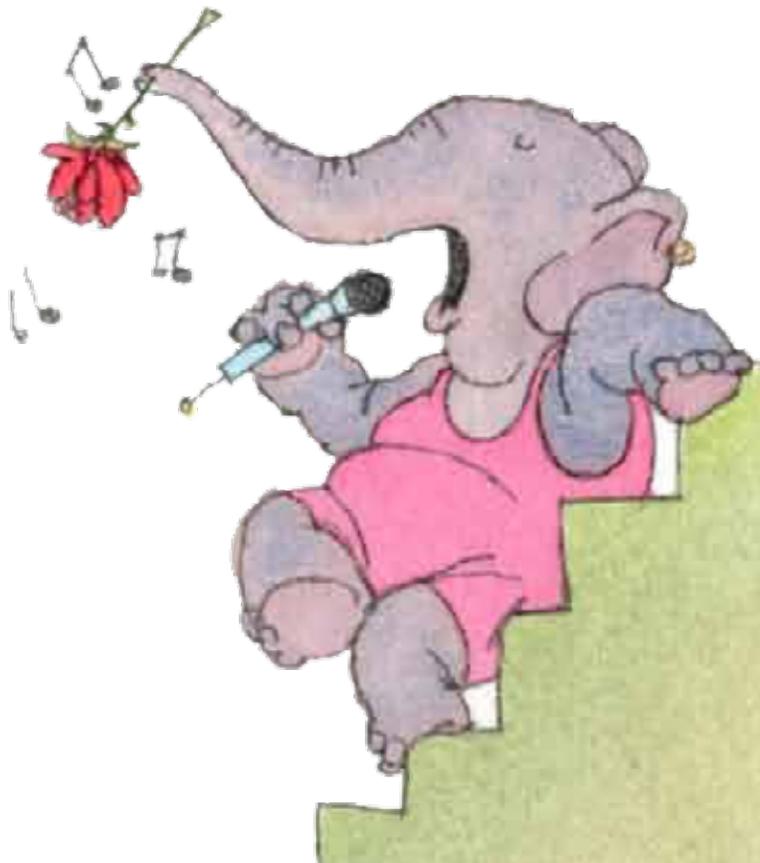
MOVEMENT, MUSIC, AND GAMES

Poetry Charades

Choose a few poems with strong imagery for students to read and memorize. Then, randomly distribute the poems to teams of students. Encourage them to work together to act out the poem while other teams guess which poem they were given.

Got Rhythm?

Listen to the rhythm and feel the beat. Poetry can make you want to move your feet. Choose a few poems to enhance with rhythm instruments such as drums, rhythm sticks, shakers, or even clapping. Then, have groups of students use the instruments to highlight syllables, create sound effects to enhance imagery, or use as a time-keeping beat. Have students perform their selections for the class or as part of a poetry celebration.



Over and Under-Preposition Fun

Prepositions can be challenging for some students to grasp. Adding actions can help reinforce the concept of prepositions and aid in memorizing a poem. Encourage students to learn and act out the poem "Over and Under," by William Jay Smith. After they are comfortable using their whole bodies to memorize this poem, ask them to choose another poem and create actions to accompany it.



As students read each line, teach them these actions:

Line 1: Make a bridge with arms

Line 2: Pretend you are in a boat

Line 3: Use your finger to dot the i

Line 4: Pull pretend blankets over your head

Line 5: Over-make a bridge with arms

Line 5: Under-sit with hands covering head

Line:6: Over-make a bridge with arms

Line 6: Under-sit with hands covering head

Line 7: Pretend to crack a whip

Line 8: Hold cupped hand up to ear

Line 9: Hold nose and pretend to dive under water

Line 10: Pretend to dive like a seal

Line 11: Make a fish face and point to eyes

Line 12: Fold hands and tilt head as if placing head on a pillow

Line 13: Over-make a bridge with arms

Line 13: Under-sit with hands covering head

Line 14: Over-make a bridge with arms

Line 14: Under-sit with hands covering head

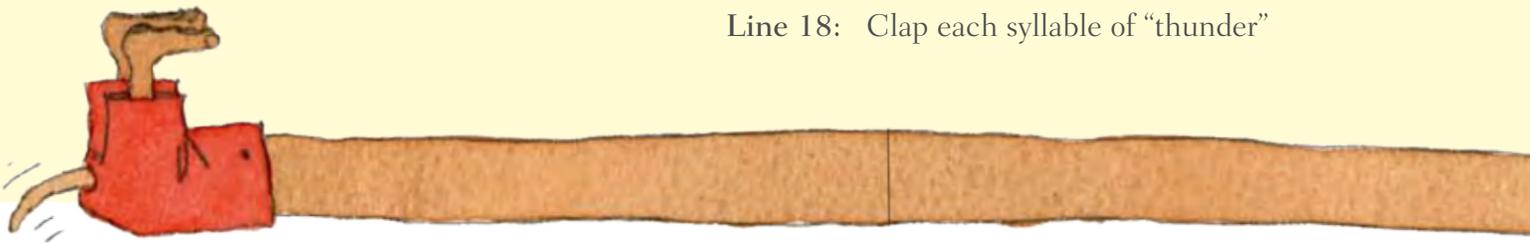
Line 15: Pretend to crack a whip

Line 16: Hold cupped hand up to ear

Line 17: Pretend to crack a whip three times

Line 18: Pretend to crack a whip

Line 18: Clap each syllable of "thunder"



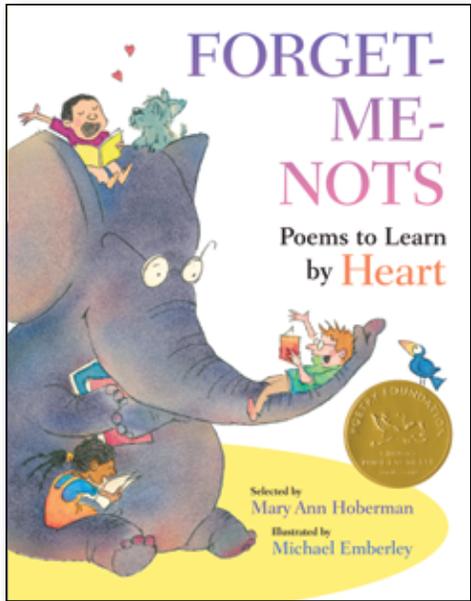
CHARACTER EDUCATION

Happiness Journal

Ask students to make list of things that make them happy. Read some of the poems in this compilation about happy topics. Have students identify what made the poets happy. What are the poems about? Then, create a Happiness Journal by writing down each little and big thing they do to

make others happy. They can use the class list for ideas. Challenge them to find small and creative ways to bring joy to others. Share journal entries at the end of the week. Did this activity make them happy too?

ABOUT THE BOOK



In this new anthology, Children's Poet Laureate Mary Ann Hoberman shares a brand-new collection of poems especially suitable for learning by heart and saying aloud. As Mary Ann says: "When you learn a poem by heart, it becomes a part of you. You know it in your mind, in your mouth, in your ears, in your whole body. And best of all, you know it forever."

In addition to beloved poems by Mary Ann herself, this collection also features poems by such notable poets as Carl Sandburg, Karla Kuskin, Jack Prelutsky, Alice Schertle, and William Carlos Williams, as well as helpful tools that children, parents, and teachers can use for memorization and recitation.

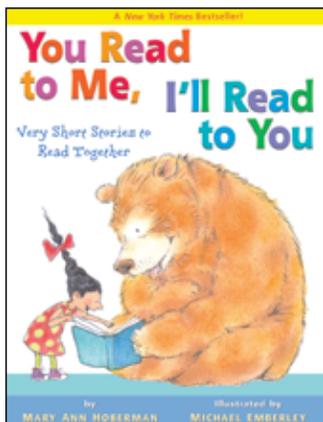
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



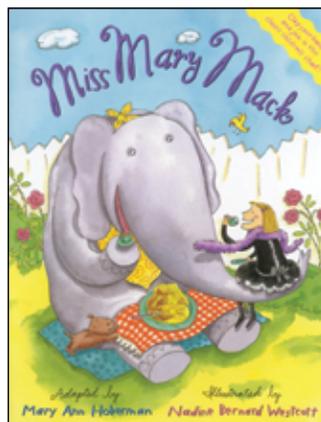
Photo credit: Lois Dreyer

Mary Ann Hoberman is the author of *A House is a House for Me*, which won a National Book Award, as well as the bestselling *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You* series. She lives in Greenwich, CT, and you can visit her online at www.maryannhoberman.com.

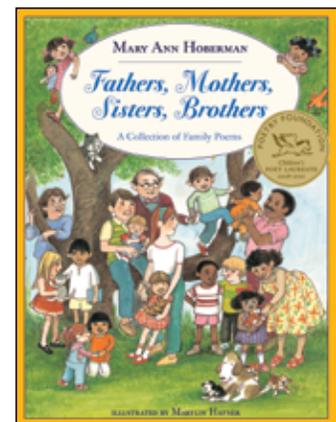
ALSO BY MARY ANN HOBERMAN



You Read to Me, I'll Read to You:
Very Short Stories to Read Together
978-0-316-36350-1



Miss Mary Mack
978-0-316-93118-2



Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers:
A Collection of Family Poems
978-0-316-36251-1