

Earthshake: Poems From The Ground Up

Writing Activities

1. Many of the poems in Earthshake are "borrowed" forms. One is a recipe, one is an ad for a job, one is a letter.

What are more possibilities for borrowed forms? Some ideas:

text message
email
travel brochure
TV ad
phone call

Have your students write a poem about a subject of their choosing with a borrowed form. It might make poetry writing simpler for some students. If the form is set, that's one thing they don't have to "invent."

2. Some of the poems in Earthshake are personification poems. They give "life" to something that's not alive. Things like continents and a glacier are treated as though they are people.

Have your students think about personifying a nonliving thing. How would a hydrogen atom in the sun feel? How does an asteroid talk? What did Pluto do when scientists declared it was no longer a planet?

Brainstorm some ideas and have your students write their own personification poems about a subject of their choosing. Read them out loud. Poetry is meant to be read out loud!

Science Activity

Lots of kids have rock collections. Be different. Have your students start a class sand collection. Sand is everywhere and it comes in many colors, not just brown.

Ask students to take a small plastic bag with them when they go to the beach or when they're taking a walk with their family or when they travel. You never know when you'll see sand! Have them bring in their bags of collected sand.

If your school has a microscope, have the students examine the sand grains under the microscope. Sand is made of many things including bits of shells, fossils, glass, minerals and clay.

If possible, display the sand in clear glass bottles. I've used small bottles from Pier 1 or

World Market. But there might be other sources. Kids can also bring in bottles and jars that would have wound up in the recycling bin at home.

Label the bottles with the date and the location and the child who collected the sand. The glass bottles will show off all the colors and textures.

The International Sand Collectors Society has a great set of sand photos. Check it out!
http://www.sandcollectors.org/Picture_Gallex.html

Art Activity

People around the world make sand paintings. Your students can make a sand painting with the sand they have collected. Have them sketch a design or a scene in pencil on poster board or card stock. Dilute some Elmer's glue in water and have students brush the glue mixture on one small section at a time. And be careful not to mix sand samples!