



The Poetry of Phrases

Foundation Lesson

Skill Focus

Levels of Thinking					
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze	Evaluate	Create
Close Reading		Grammar		Composition	
Sound Devices Alliteration	Phrases Absolute (10) Appositive (7) Gerund (8) Infinitive Participial (8) Prepositional Clauses Dependent/Subordinate Independent Sentence Variety Sentence Beginnings Sentence Combining	Style/Voice Experimentation with Sentence Variety			

Grammar

Materials and Resources

- *Sentence Composing for Middle School* by Don Killgallon
- *Sentence Composing for High School* by Don Killgallon
- Grammar Foundation Lesson: “Sentence Structure Basics”
- Grammar Foundation Lesson: “Sentence Variations”

Lesson Introduction

Learning grammar by writing poetry can be a very memorable experience for students and adults alike. Try writing grammar poems with your students – first as a group, then in pairs, then as individuals. The study of phrases comes alive, and students begin to think of the different types of phrases as tools in their writer’s toolbox after practicing exercises like these several times. Grammar study becomes painless and even enjoyable when students realize how valuable and interesting these writing tools can be.

Several different poetry patterns are listed and modeled in the lesson that follows. After the students have mastered these forms, encourage them to make up their own structures to practice grammatical concepts through poetry. A “Phrase Toolbox” outlining and giving examples of the different kinds of phrases follows the lesson and can be used as a resource for student writers. Extensive study of the types of phrases is not needed – just have the students wade in and start to write them, using the models as a guide.

**Student Samples
Phrase Poetry**

*Wild eyes glancing every which way
Uncanny ears listening to every small squeak,
Brain thinking of wondrous ways to catch its prey
the owl hunted
in the sky
on the ground
in the dark
in the hope
of catching his supper*

(Michael Delong, Grade 6)

*His cloak billowing in the biting wind,
his eyes dry from the frigid temperature,
his boots crunching over the new snow,
he marched to the battlefield
sword drawn,
muscles tensed
ears cocked
focus narrowed
with fire in his eyes.*

(Whit Shaw, Grade 6)

*His blue sail tightening in the wind,
his mouth salty like the sea,
his legs shivering like a person's bare hand on ice,
the sailor watched
in his boat
in the harbor
in the fear
in the mind
of the sailor.*

(Charlie Goodman, Grade 6)



*Her beautiful wings noiselessly flapping,
her eyes shining brightly
her feathers ruffling with the light wind,
the dove slipped swiftly through the night sky
in the dark
with only the light of the moon to guide her
the ground rushing by
the clouds way up high
on the way to her loved ones.*

(Andrew Pansick, Grade 6)

*The engine smoking with anxiety,
its ports firing with might,
its driveshaft ready for action
the engine screamed
on the track
in the moonlight
in the glory
in the grief
for the love of his owner
for one last race.*

(Beau Falgout, Grade 6)

*Her burning dress tasting the air,
Her feet jumping like cross country runners'
Her arms tensed like after a fencing match
She ran down the path
in the woods
in the sunset
in the dark
on the ground
of her loneliness.*

(Andrew Harris, Grade 6)

*His head sweating
His mouth dry
His heart racing with every step he took,
the gladiator walked
into the arena
to the tigers*

*to the lions
to his adversaries
to his death.*

(Brian Cummisky, Grade 6)

*His forest green cloak sticking to his fur,
his sweat burning his eyes,
his sword glistening in the moonlight,
Matthias the Mouse struck
with the sword
of the warrior Martin
in the dead of night
in the rain
for the love of his home.*

(Adam Genecov, Grade 6)

*His hands throbbing
his legs shaking
his fingers tingling,
the boy walked into the castle
on Halloween
in the dark
by himself
with no protection
from his fears.*

(Jeff Scovell, Grade 6)

*Her silky dog hair blowing in the wind,
her bloodshot eyes burning like flames of a fire,
her head bobbing like a ship at sea,
the dog walked quickly
in the woods
in the dark
in the light of the moon
in the heat of the fire
of her anger.*

(Justin Utay, Grade 6)



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Using the “Phrase Toolbox” as a resource, try writing poems that have the following grammatical structures. Choose a different subject each time you write one.

Pattern #1

absolute phrase
absolute phrase
absolute phrase

independent clause
prepositional phrase
prepositional phrase
prepositional phrase
prepositional phrase
prepositional phrase

Example:

*His glowing fur ruffling in the breeze
his eyes burning like coals
his muscles rippling like ocean waves
the tiger paced
in the cage
in the night
in the gloom
in the fire
of his rage.*

Pattern #2

gerund phrase as the subject
finish the sentence with a rhyme.
gerund phrase as the subject
finish the sentence with a rhyme
gerund phrase as the subject
finish the sentence with a rhyme.
gerund phrase as the subject
finish the sentence with a rhyme.

Example:

*Toasting in the hot sun
is a lot of fun.
Dipping in the crystal fountain
seems better than climbing a mountain.
Sipping on an icy drink
lets you hear the sound of a refreshing clink.
Relaxing with good friends
is the way a summer day ends.*

Pattern #3

independent clause with an appositive phrase in it
participial phrase
participial phrase
participial phrase
participial phrase
participial phrase

Example:

*The sky, a dark cauldron full of storm clouds, boils and bubbles,
sparkling with lightening
glittering with glimpses of stars
shrouded in fog
crackling with electricity
waiting for the storm to burst.*

Pattern #4

a subordinate clause
an independent clause
an infinitive phrase and a prepositional phrase
an infinitive phrase and a prepositional phrase
an infinitive phrase and a prepositional phrase
an infinitive phrase and a prepositional phrase
a final independent clause.

Example:

*When I grow up
I want
To dance over a rainbow
To climb above the clouds
To soar beside the birds
To sail with the stars
These are the dreams of my heart.*