

Poetry Recitations

Reading, memorizing and presenting poems has a number of benefits for children in the Cogito program. Poems provide numerous experiences for children to learn about the English Language. Thus, increasing opportunities to learn about figurative language and the powerful impact word choice can have on meaning, or creating visual images. In theory, children should become better writers and transfer their knowledge of language into their own writing. Memorizing a poem helps to develop the skill of systematically breaking down a task into smaller and more manageable pieces. This skill develops study habits and skills necessary when preparing for tests. Lastly, reciting a poem in front of an audience will develop public speaking skills that will develop confidence and independence in a variety of group settings.

Tips for memorizing a poem:

1. Read the entire poem through several times to hear the language of the poem, and to understand the meaning. Think about the order of events or ideas.
2. Read the poem again, and connect to the poem by thinking about each word. Ask questions to help understand the poem such as: what do I see, hear, or feel when reading the words. Look at the punctuation and decide on where natural breaks occur. Listen to the natural rhythm of the poem.
3. Break up the poem into manageable chunks. In younger grades mark off every second line, in older grades mark off 4-5 lines or use the poem's stanzas as sections to memorize.
4. Re-read over just the first section, slowly! Put the paper copy down and try to recite just the first line. Once you can recite that line add the next, continue until the first section marked off your copy has been memorized.
5. Take a break. Leave the poem and come back later to check if you can recite that section. If you can, move on to the next and repeat the same steps learning one line at a time. Each time you recite start back at the very beginning of the poem before adding another line.
6. Recite your poem often, while in the car on the way to school or on your way home, in the morning while getting ready, or before you go to sleep.
7. In the beginning it is okay to use a copy of your poem as a crutch, when reciting if you get stuck glance down at your copy for help. Once you are confident try reciting without your copy available.
8. Recite your poem to someone else to prepare for presenting. Work on pacing, pausing at punctuation, adding expression, or gestures to enhance the presentation.
9. Do not leave memorizing the poem for the week before the recitation. Plan on memorizing the poem at least one week prior to your recitation date.