

I CAN create a letter poem by thinking about how the spacing and line breaks affects rhythm, sound, meaning, impact, and appearance.

RF.5.4. Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.



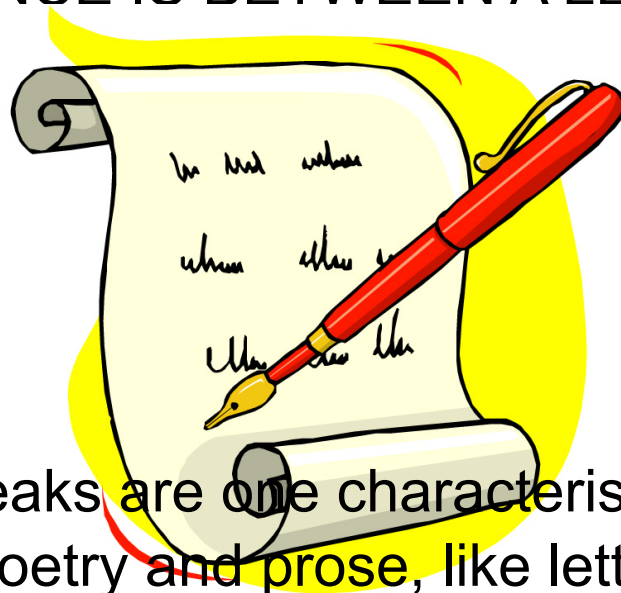
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CONNECT: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN A LETTER AND A POEM?



Line breaks are one characteristic way in which poetry and prose, like letters, differ, yet some poems seem like they could also be written as prose. Today we will focus on letter poems.

I CAN create a letter poem by thinking how the spacing and line breaks affect rhythm, sound, meaning, impact, and appearance. Letter poems sound like letters, communicate personal messages like letters, but are written in the form of poems. Think about letters you may have written—letters to friends, thank you letters, business letters, letters you wrote but perhaps never sent. Many of these could be turned into a powerful poem. The same is true of e-mail messages (in essence, informal letters).



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TEACH: Let's look at: "Dear Grandma" as Letter and Poem

by Julie Wollman-Bonilla

Dear Grandma,

I was so young, really when you died. But I remember your sharp smell of mothballs, your teeth soaking in a cup, while you listened to talk radio. Your quick sense of humor, your red and white picnic cloth dress. Your chicken soup. You put in your teeth, put on your tablecloth dress, and walked me to Brigham's for a mocha fudge cone. Your worry, a cage I hated. Your love, a cushion I needed.

This letter was actually turned into a poem. Let's notice how the writer was very deliberate on the line breaks, knowing full well that they greatly impact the sound, meaning and message.

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Dear Grandma

I was so young, really
When you died.

But I remember
Your sharp smell of mothballs
Your teeth soaking in a cup
While you listened to talk radio.
Your quick sense of humor
Your red and white picnic cloth dress.
Your chicken soup.
You put in your teeth
Put on your tablecloth dress
And walked me to Brigham's
For a mocha fudge cone.

Your worry
A cage
I hated.

Your love
A cushion
I needed.



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Notice how some
lines are extra
short

Dear Grandma

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But I remember
Your sharp smell of mothballs
Your teeth soaking in a cup
While you listened to talk radio.
Your quick sense of humor
Your red and white picnic cloth dress.
Your chicken soup.
You put in your teeth
Put on your tablecloth dress
And walked me to Brigham's
For a mocha fudge cone.

While this
second
stanza is
longer-
grandma's
routines

Two shorter
stanzas

Your worry
A cage
I hated.

Being trapped by
your fear

Your love
A cushion
I needed.

These stand out by
themselves!!!!

Comforted
by your love

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WE DO:

Letter Poems Break It! ►

Dear Daddy,

I have taken the duct tape that you left on the workbench
in the garage and that you probably need to tape the
batteries in the tv remote. I'm sorry but my toy was broken.

Love,
Dorothy

Letter Poems Continue ►

First, I looked for words that I wanted to stand out.

Dear **Daddy**,

I have taken the **duct tape** that you left on the workbench
in the garage and that you probably need to tape the
batteries in the tv remote. I'm **sorry** but my toy was broken.

Love,
Dorothy

Letter Poems Continue ►

Next, I broke the words into three ideas that I made into stanzas.

Dear Daddy,

I have taken the duct tape that you left on the workbench
in the garage
and that you probably need to tape the batteries in the tv remote.

I'm sorry but my toy was broken.

Love,
Dorothy

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Letter Poems

Last, I made line breaks, using my notes on important words and the stanza ideas.

Daddy,
I have taken
the duct tape
that you left
on the workbench
in the garage

and that you
probably need
to tape the
batteries in
the tv remote.

I'm sorry
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Love,
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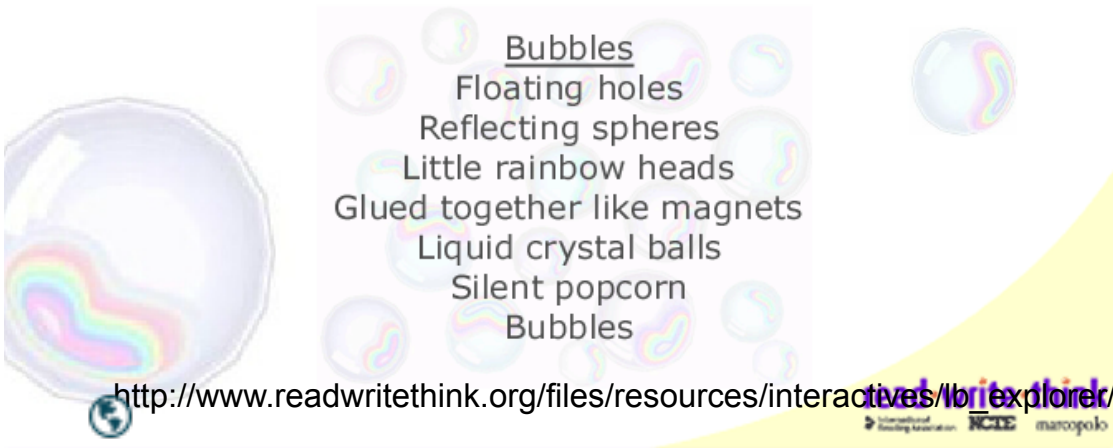
rhythm, sound, meaning, impact, and

appearance.

Line Break Explorer

Hear It

Continue ►



Bubbles
Floating holes
Reflecting spheres
Little rainbow heads
Glued together like magnets
Liquid crystal balls
Silent popcorn
Bubbles

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/lb-explorer/>

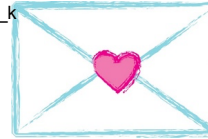
readwritethink
International Reading Association NCTE marcopolo

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Here's another example of a letter poem--that is actually a really cool song--notice the line breaks:



s://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0kqOtro__k



Dear Eloise

[The Hollies](#)

Dear Eloise,

I am writing to say

A number of funny things I heard today.

I heard that he's left you, and run off to see.

Could be the best thing that's happened to me. WOW, HE

Writing a letter to make you feel better.

Sorry to hear that he left you that way.

I could have told ya,

He was much older,

So much older than you.

LOVES

ELOISE.

WONDER IF

HE WROTE

THIS TO

MAKE

HIMSELF

FEEL

BETTER?

You loved him blindly,

He treated ya kindly,

Until he found out what he could get from you.

You should have departed, before he got started.

Now you've been burned just like I said you would.

Please read my letter closely,

It's beneficial to you,

Must read in between the lines,

A message you will see.

If you use your mind you'll find,

I want you bad with me-eee-eeee

Ba ba ba ba ba

Ba ba ba ba ba

Ba ba ba ba- ba ba ba ba ba

Ba ba ba ba ba

Ba ba ba ba ba

Ba ba ba ba- ba ba ba ba ba

Writing a letter, to make you feel better.

Sorry to hear that he left you that way.

I could have told ya,

He was much older.

So much older than you.

So much older that you.

So much older than you.

Dear Eliose, I am writing to say

A number of funny things I heard today.

I heard that he's left you and run off to see.

Could be the best thing that's happened to me.

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This Is Just To Say

William Carlos Williams, 1883 - 1963

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

Let's consider why the author chose to write this poem
and create line breaks where he did.

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Turn and talk to your partner about the poem you brought in today. What do you notice about the line breaks and how it affects meaning?

Today, you can practice writing a letter poem or any other poem. Just keep in mind that where you choose to create a line break--maybe you will not break at all--impacts the meaning of your poem.



SHARE!!!

