

# Poetry

## Strong Student Models

### The Friend

Every morning on my way to school  
I stroked the cool, gray bark  
of the magnolia;  
and, if it were spring,  
the tight shiny casings of the buds—  
glistening with morning dew,  
symmetrically pinned on flowing branches.

I still carry its whispers  
in my fingertips.

### Turtle Pond

They squat on rocks  
heavy, square.  
Others, smaller than leaves,  
rise and fall  
with the breath of water.  
Layered like green bricks  
without mortar,  
each has hauled  
its enormous shell  
up the nearly vertical  
shore of the island.  
Flippers scrape,  
heads retract,  
and lidless eyes blink  
as they stare, or sleep.  
Suddenly, the shadow  
of an ancient shell  
rises from the deep,  
scattering minnows, carp,  
his furrowed back a garden  
of streaming brown moss,  
head and tail scaly,  
ponderous.  
He is sultry, slow.  
His snout breaches the surface  
at an angle.  
Half-submerged, he circles the island  
then breaks onto land—world  
bearer, biter, tumbler of shells.

## Writing Workshop

*These writing models are also available in **Assessment Masters**.*

1. Draws the reader into the poem by using simple, direct language.

2. Use of personification effectively communicates the writer's experience.

1. The writer creates a sense of unity by not dividing the poem into stanzas.

Other Options:

- Create separate stanzas.
- Use a rhyme scheme.

2. Creates a vivid image with a striking simile.

3. Includes precise, sensory words.

4. Throughout poem, sentences broken into short lines slow the pace, imitating the slow, ponderous movement of the turtles.

5. Use of metaphor and alliteration contribute to a strong conclusion.

## Poetry

## Writing Workshop

### Strong Student Models *continued*

#### The Good Neighbor

Olga won't take out the trash  
But brings the cans in,  
Her flat white feet slapping  
The greasy concrete like flippers.  
She walks stomach first, chin up,  
Shrieks affectionately at her wild-eyed cats.  
I hear her through our common wall.  
At Halloween she buys a plastic pumpkin,  
A candle to burn for St. Anthony,  
And an artificial tree and menorah.  
Dime store festive!  
I pass her door and she offers me  
Pastries from Czechoslovakia,  
Weeks old and brimming with stale sugar  
She brings me plants that die  
And plastic flowers.

I give her nothing.

1. The poem is broken up into stanzas to separate ideas and set off concluding line.
2. Uses alliteration and a striking simile to describe Olga's feet—both their appearance and their sound as she walks.
3. Creates a vivid image of the character by using interesting details and precise, sensory language.
4. Ends the poem with a stark, simple line that is full of emotion.

# Poetry

## Writing Workshop

### Average Student Models

#### A Friend

Every morning on my way to school  
 I stroked the bark  
 of the magnolia  
 and, if it were spring,  
 the tight shiny coverings of the buds—  
 wet with dew,  
 placed evenly on long branches.  
 I still feel it  
 in my finger  
 when I close my eyes.

1. Draws the reader into the poem by using simple, direct language
2. Adding precise descriptive modifiers would help readers share the experience of the tree.
3. Using figurative language could make the conclusion more powerful.

#### The Pond

Some sit on rocks.  
 Others  
 rise and fall  
 with the water.  
 Piled like green bricks  
 without mortar,  
 each has pulled  
 its enormous shell  
 up the nearly vertical  
 shore of the island.  
 Flippers touch,  
 heads pull back,  
 and eyes open and close  
 as they stare, or sleep.  
 Suddenly, a shadow  
 rises from the water,  
 scattering fish,  
 his back streaming  
 with moss,  
 his head and tail scaly,  
 heavy.  
 He is slow.  
 He comes out of the surface  
 at an angle.  
 Half in and half out of water, he circles the island  
 then climbs onto land.

1. The writer doesn't mention the poem's subject, turtles, leaving the reader to discover it through the description.  
 Other Options:
  - Incorporate the subject into the title.
  - Name the subject at the very end.
2. Creates a vivid image with a striking simile.
3. Using stronger verbs and more precise sensory words would make the poem's images more vivid.
4. Sentences broken into short lines imitate the slow, ponderous movement of the turtles.
5. The use of sound devices or figurative language would make the emergence of the ancient turtle more dramatic.

# Poetry

## Writing Workshop

### Average Student Models *continued*

#### Our Neighbor

Olga won't take out the trash  
But brings the cans in,  
Her feet shuffling along  
The concrete.  
She walks with her stomach out, chin up,  
Talks affectionately to her wild-eyed cats.  
We have a common wall.

At Halloween she buys a pumpkin,  
A candle,  
A tree, and a menorah.  
I pass her door and she offers me  
Pastries,  
Weeks old and brimming with stale sugar  
She brings me plants  
And plastic flowers.  
I give her nothing in return.

1. The poem is broken up into stanzas.

2. Hard to know why these details have been included.

3. Use of more precise, sensory language and figurative speech would round out this poetic profile.

**Poetry****Writing Workshop****Weak Student Models****Tree**

Every morning  
I stroked the bark  
of the pretty plant and if  
it was spring  
the pretty buds  
that were damp with moisture  
and lined up on long pretty branches.

I can still see it  
when I close my eyes.

**Turtles**

Some sit on rocks.  
Others rise and fall with the water.  
Piled up like bricks, each pulled  
their shell up the steep shore of the island.  
Flippers touch heads pull back and eyes open and close.  
Suddenly, a shadow rises from the water,  
Making fish swim around,  
his back is wet and covered with moss.  
his scaly head and tail are heavy,  
He is slow.

He sticks his head out of the surface at an angle.  
Half in and half out of water,  
he circles the island then climbs on to land.

1. Specifying the type of plant would help the reader to picture it.

2. Varying the modifiers and using more precise sensory words would make this image come alive.

3. Conclusion would fit better with earlier lines if writer recalled the sensation of touch rather than sight.

1. Nice use of simile, but pronoun *their* doesn't agree with antecedent *each* in number.

2. Following standard rules for punctuating sentences and using shorter lines throughout would make poem easier to read.

3. A stronger conclusion would help to make the poem more powerful.

**Poetry****Writing Workshop****Weak Student Models** *continued***Olga**

Olga won't take out the trash  
 But brings the cans in.  
 She makes a lot of noise with her feet on the concreet.  
 She walks funny,  
 And talks to her cats.  
 We have a commen wall.

At Haloween she buys a pumpkin  
 And a bunch of other stuff  
 From a dime store.  
 I pass her door  
 And she offers me  
 Stale pastryes.  
 Then other times  
 She brings me plants  
 And plastic flowers.

She's all right,  
 But I don't give her anything.  
 She's just a neighbor.

1. The use of descriptive language would paint a more complete picture of Olga.

2. Misspelled words throughout distract from poem's imagery.

3. Casual language and lack of details cause reader to lose interest.

4. Ends the poem with a "chatty" style that doesn't deliver any emotional impact.

# Poetry

## Writing Workshop

### Rubric for Evaluation

| <b>Ideas and Content</b>   | <b>Weak</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Strong</b> |
|--|-------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Focuses on a single experience, idea, or feeling  |             |                |               |
| 2. Uses precise, sensory words in a fresh and interesting way  |             |                |               |
| 3. Incorporates figurative language such as similes and metaphors  |             |                |               |
| 4. Includes sound devices as appropriate, such as alliteration, assonance, and rhythm, to support the affect and meaning of the poem |             |                |               |
| 5. Creates a mood appropriate to its subject   |             |                |               |
| <b>Structure and Form</b>  |             |                |               |
| 6. Uses rhyme, rhythm, varying line length, and stanza construction effectively when these forms are employed                        |             |                |               |
| 7. Chooses a form that enhances the poem's message   |             |                |               |
| <b>Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics</b>   |             |                |               |
| 8. Contains no more than two or three minor errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation                                      |             |                |               |
| 9. Contains no more than two or three minor errors in grammar and usage  |             |                |               |

### Writing Progress to Date (Writing Portfolio)

The strongest aspect of this writing is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The final version shows improvement over the rough draft in this way: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A specific improvement over past assignments in your portfolio is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A skill to work on in future assignments is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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