

## **GRADE 4 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 15**

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (  $\Rightarrow$ ) by them.

*Optional:* At some point during the lesson, you may read the passage aloud so students can hear fluent, expressive reading and the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words. You may read the passage aloud at any point during the lesson, as you feel appropriate. The decision to read the passage aloud should depend on student needs, the degree of text difficulty, and the particular lesson.

### *Purpose of Lesson 15:*

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a poem,
- practice identifying unfamiliar words,
- connect text to real-life situations, and
- practice responding to poetry.

### *Equipment/Materials Needed:*

- Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-1
- Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-2
- Pencils

### *Optional Supplemental Materials:*

- One of Shel Silverstein's books

Introduction:

Before going directly into the lesson, spend about five minutes discussing poetry, differences in poetry, and other texts. Use the following questions as a framework for discussion to encourage students to respond and share.

**How many of you like poetry? Why? Why not? Does anyone have a favorite poem? Can you recite it? Do you know who wrote it? Have you read poetry written just for children? Do you know any authors who write poetry just for children?**

(Responses: nursery rhymes, Dr. Seuss, limericks, raps, songs)

**How is poetry different from stories?**

(Responses: looks different, rhymes, has fun words, doesn't have paragraphs, doesn't have long sentences)

**Why do you think authors write poetry?**

(Responses: to send a message, make us laugh, have fun, make into songs)

Say:

**Now I want you to just sit back and listen to a poem while I read it aloud to you. I think you will like this poem.**

HOMework MACHINE

Shel Silverstein

The Homework Machine, oh the Homework Machine,  
Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.  
Just put in your homework, then drop in a dime,  
Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds' time,  
Your homework comes out, quick and clean as can be.  
Here it is—"nine plus four?" and the answer is "three."  
Three?  
Oh me...  
I guess it's not as perfect  
As I thought it would be.

Without showing the students the poem or telling who wrote it, read the poem aloud. Pause for a minute. Then read the poem again.

Say:

**How did you like this poem? Has anyone heard it before? Does anyone know who the author is?**

(Response: Shel Silverstein)

**If you didn't already know, Shel Silverstein wrote this poem. Have you read some of his other poems? What kind of poetry does he write?**

(Response: funny stuff)

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-1.

Say:

**Before we look more closely at this poem to find out everything about this homework machine, let's read this poem together a couple of times so we can enjoy the way it sounds. We will start with the title and then the author's name. Ready? Pause.**

Read the poem aloud together 2-3 times until the students feel comfortable reading it.

**What makes reading this poem different from reading a story?**

(Response: it sounds different; it rhymes)

**Are all of the lines the same? (no) Can we still have rhymes with a mixture of long phrases and short phrases? (yes)**

**Did everyone understand what the homework machine is all about? Were there any new words? How about *contraption*? Can someone tell me what a *contraption* is?**

(Response: most will say *thing* or something that does work. Explain that it is something like a machine that will do a job, such as a pencil sharpener; the word *contraption* is usually used to describe a new machine with which most people are not familiar, or a new invention; many people probably called the telephone a *contraption* when it was first invented.)

Say:

**Let's take a close look at the poem and talk about all of the things we need to pay attention to. First, always look at the title. This strategy will help us understand what the poem will be about. Then, let's look at the punctuation in the poem. Do you remember what punctuation is?**

(Response: periods, question marks, quotation marks, etc.)

**Punctuation marks give us directions for reading. When we come to a comma, we pause (just for a short time). When we come to a period, we pause a little longer because the period means that we have come to the end of a thought. In poems, some thoughts are written as complete sentences, but some are written in short phrases or even just one word. Can anyone find the shortest thought written in this poem?**

(Response: three).

**Why is there a question mark at the end of the word *three*?**

Read the preceding line aloud and then the line with the question *three* with appropriate inflection (voicing disbelief). Pause for student responses. Discuss the effect punctuation has on the way we read text.

**Is there anything else about this poem that makes it different from reading a story?**

(Response: Some lines rhyme, but not all; some poems are short and some are longer, but most poems are shorter than stories; they don't have paragraphs; sometimes they are hard to understand.)

**Sometimes it is more difficult to understand poems because of these differences. If we have never seen or read a poem before, we may have a little trouble understanding just because it is written a little differently. Did everyone understand this poem by Shel Silverstein? Let's try to answer a few questions to check our understanding.**

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-2.

Say:

**Before you begin answering the questions on this worksheet, look over them. What kinds of questions do you notice on this worksheet? Pause.**

**There is one multiple choice question. Remember to read each choice before answering. Sometimes the first choice you see makes sense, but you must choose the *best* answer. To find the best answer, you need to read *all* of the choices before making your selection.**

**The other kind of question on this worksheet is a short-answer question. For this kind of question, you must write your answer in one or more complete sentences. Be sure to answer all parts of the question. Do you see any questions that have more than one part? Pause.**

**Let's look at Number 4 together. How many parts are there to this question? How many answers do you need to give? Pause.**

**For the first part of the question, you could just answer *yes* or *no*, but would that simple answer be enough to answer this question completely? Pause.**

**No, it would not. Remember to answer the second part of the question and explain why you answered *no* or why you answered *yes*.**

**This question asks for your opinion. It doesn't matter whether you answer *no* or *yes*; but if you leave out the second part and don't explain *why* you said *no* or *yes*, your answer would not be correct.**

**Now take about 5-10 minutes to complete your worksheet. Then we will discuss our answers. I can't wait to hear your answers to Number 5!**

After students have completed their worksheet, discuss the answers to each question, emphasizing the importance of explaining the reasons for answers.

Use the guidelines below to facilitate the discussion of questions and answers.

### Facilitating Discussions of Questions and Answers

- The purpose of the discussion *is not* simply to provide correct answers.
- The purposes of the discussion are to
  - *determine student comprehension so that you can provide appropriate instruction,*
  - *ensure student understanding by clarifying any confusion,*
  - *lead students through problem solving or the reasoning necessary to answer questions,*
  - *enhance students' awareness of their own learning, and*
  - *foster a sense of community where students learn from each other.*
- Before providing answers, ask students to give their answers.
- Require students to explain how they found their answers.
- When students' answers are incorrect, prompt and guide them through the reasoning necessary to find the correct answer.
- Encourage students to ask questions if they are confused. Clarify any misunderstandings before moving on to the next question.
- When students' answers are incorrect, but seem logical, reinforce their efforts and praise them: i.e., *"Your answer does make sense; that's good thinking, but there is more information that will make you change your answer; you're on the right track; think a little more about that.*
- When students' answers are correct, praise the students and ask them to explain how they arrived at their answers so the others can benefit from hearing the way their peers think through questions.

Note. From curriculum developed for middle school inservice. "Reading and Writing for Real Purposes," November, 2000, by Deidra W. Frazier. Reprinted with permission.

**Number 1:** We know the passage is a poem because it doesn't have paragraphs or complete sentences; each line begins with a capital letter; and it rhymes. (Students make think of other logical reasons.)

**Number 2:**

**Choice C is correct.** A machine cannot think for us. The "Homework Machine" didn't give the right answer to a mathematics problem.

**Choice A is incorrect.** The poem doesn't say anything about being able to buy anything we need. The poem implies the opposite; no amount of money could make the "Homework Machine" do our thinking.

**Choice B is incorrect.** The "Homework Machine" is an example of a machine that *cannot* do the kind of work it was intended to do. It could not do mathematics homework correctly.

**Number 3:** The *I* is probably a student because students are the ones who would want a machine to do their homework. Can you think of anyone who would be against the idea of a homework machine? Pause. Possible answers would be teachers, parents, principals.

**Number 4:** I wouldn't get it to do mine because it got the wrong answer.

**Number 5:** Have students share their *contraptions*.

After the discussion, read the "Homework Machine" together one more time. If you have one of Shel Silverstein's books, read a few selections aloud. Encourage the students to check out his books to read other great poems.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-1

HOMEWORK MACHINE

Shel Silverstein

The Homework Machine, oh the Homework Machine,  
Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.  
Just put in your homework, then drop in a dime,  
Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds' time,  
Your homework comes out, quick and clean as can be.  
Here it is---“nine plus four?” and the answer is “three.”  
Three?  
Oh me...  
I guess it's not as perfect  
As I thought it would be.

“The Homework Machine” by Shel Silverstein, from *A Light in the Attic*, Copyright © 1981 by Evil Eye Music, Inc. Used by permission.

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 15-2

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you know this passage is a poem?

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2. What lesson is the author trying to teach in “The Homework Machine”?

- A. Money can buy you anything you need.
- B. A machine can be invented for any kind of work.
- C. You should not trust a machine to think for you.
- D. You should pay someone to do your homework if you are too tired.

1. Who do you think the *I* is in this poem? Tell why.

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2. If this contraption were your homework machine, would you get it to do your mathematics homework? Why or why not?

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3. If you could invent anything you wanted, what kind of *contraption* would it be? What would it do? (Explain your answer completely.)

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