

GRADE 4 English Language Arts Reading and Responding: Lesson 2

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 to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\implies) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 2:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- read a poem,
- practice identifying key words in questions, and
- practice responding to short-answer questions.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 1 and 2 – 2
- Pencils

LESSON 2: Reading and Responding

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

Have you ever wished for a magic machine that would do your homework? Pause to allow students to respond.

I bet every fourth grader would want one of the homework machines. Shel Silverstein thought that a homework machine sounded like a pretty good idea, so he wrote a poem about one. Listen as I read it to you.

Read the title, the poet's name, and then the 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.**

Then say:

Maybe this homework machine isn't so grand as you thought it would be! You may still have to do your homework the old-fashioned way.

In today's lesson we are going to study this poem. We will look for some tricks or techniques that you can use when you have to read a poem by yourself and then answer questions.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 1.

Say:

Here is a copy of the poem that I just read to you. Take a moment and read it to yourself please.

Pause and allow students to read the poem.

Then say:

Let's read the poem in unison. *In unison* means we are going to read it out loud, together. Always start with the title, then the poet's name. Ready? Pause. Homework Machine by Shel Silverstein.

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Students may find the first reading awkward. Students will need to read it a second or third time to *feel* the rhythm of the poem.

**The Homework Machine, oh the Homework Machine,
Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.**

What's a contraption? Pause.

(Response: something (like a mechanical device) that performs a function or effects a desired end. Students most likely will say a contraption is a *thing*.)

I believe that *contraption* is probably the only word that might have been new or unfamiliar to you.

Say:

Now, let's think about some tricks to use when reading a poem. For starters, begin by reading the title. Then look at the poem.

Poems look different! They don't look like stories. They are not written out in paragraphs like stories. You won't see regular looking sentences in a poem.

Look at the "Homework Machine."

Are all the lines equal? Are they all the same length? Pause. (Response: no)

You've got a line with just one word on it: "Three?" It is really important to pay attention to the punctuation marks. For example, here with that one word, the poet is asking a very important question.

Demonstrate the difference by using the students' names. In a question, your voice goes up at the end; in a statement your voice will remain the same.

Poets don't use as many words as story writers do. Sometimes a poet uses one word and let's us figure out what he or she meant. Reading a poem takes practice. You usually need to read a poem several times! Yes, several times.

Think back to when we read the poem in unison earlier. Was it easy to read the first time? Pause. No, not really; but the next time it was a little easier to read, so it sounded better. Reading the poem over and over could only help you make it sound better and better.

When you are reading a poem by yourself, take the time to read it more than once.

Say:

There are a couple more things to think about when studying a poem. Does this poem rhyme?

Pause. (Response: yes)

Say:

Yes, the “Homework Machine” rhymes. Look at the last word on the line. *Machine* rhymes with *seen*. What’s the next rhyme? Pause.

(Response: dime and time)

Yes, *dime* and *time* rhyme. What’s the next rhyme? Pause.

(Response: be and three)

***Be* and *three* rhyme. What’s the last rhyme? Pause.**

(Response: three and me)

***Three* and *me*.**

Now, Mr. Silverstein changed the pattern on us at the end because *perfect* and *be* don’t rhyme.

Generally, we like poems that rhyme because it is easy on our ears!

Another thing we like in poetry is rhythm. Rhythm is the music of poetry. Actually, there is rhythm in all language, but we hear the rhythm mostly in poems.

Reading a poem several times helps you to hear the rhymes, feel the rhythm, and understand it more completely.

Then say:

Now we are ready to work with the questions. We will work the questions together so we can talk about some tricks to help you find the correct answer.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 2.
Be sure every student has a pencil.

Say:

Let’s begin with Number one. “Which of the following is the best way to read ‘Homework Machine?’”

Choice A: Read the first and last line.

Choice B: Read only the rhyming words.

Choice C: Read the entire poem several times.

Choice D: Read slowly, spelling each word.

Some students may immediately mark their answer and continue answering questions on the worksheet. It is best if they go step-by-step with you. Your dialogue actually takes students through the thinking process to find the right answer. It may be helpful to have students put their pencils down during this part.

Is the best way to read this poem just to read the first and last line?

Pause. (Response: no)

Why not? Pause.

(Possible responses: it won't make any sense; you can't figure it out.)

You might want to put a dot by Choice A, since you know Choice A is not the answer.

What about Choice B? Read only the rhyming words. Is Choice B correct? Pause. (Response: no)

Why not? Pause.

(Possible responses: it won't make any sense; you can't understand it.)

You might want to put a dot by Choice B, since you know Choice B is not the answer.

Now say:

Is the best way to read the poem to read the entire poem several times? Pause. (Response: yes)

Yes, reading the poem several times is the correct answer; but just to be safe, look at Choice D. Read slowly, spelling each word. Well, that answer is just plain silly, so I know it's not the answer. Go ahead and put a dot by Choice D.

Be sure you darken Choice C.

Let's continue with Number two.

Say:

Who would most likely be the speaker of this poem?

Choice A: a teacher.

Choice B: a parent.

Choice C: a principal.

Choice D: a student.

Who do you think is the “I” in this poem? Pause.

(Response: a student.)

Why did you select Choice D: student?

(Responses might include students are the only ones who have to do homework; teachers, parents, and principals want you to have to do homework.)

Sometimes it just seems as if you automatically know the right answer. You don’t have to think about each individual answer choice. Just take your time and be careful!

The one thing you want to avoid is making a careless mistake. Sometimes we make a careless mistake if we aren’t paying attention!

How do you know this selection is a poem? This question is a short-answer question. Usually on this kind of question, you should try to answer in a complete sentence and use your best handwriting. How do you know this selection is a poem? Pause.

Ask for volunteers or call on a student.

(Possible responses: it has rhyme and rhythm; it is not a paragraph.)

The question itself can help you start your answer. How do you know this selection is a poem? Tell me a way you might begin your answer. Pause.

(Response: I know this selection is a poem because...)

If no one volunteers, start the sentence and allow students to complete it orally.

Allow time for students to write it. Repeat the sentence, if necessary.

Then have students read their sentences aloud.

Say:

We are now ready for Number four. Number four is also a short-answer question. What is the problem with the Homework Machine?

Pause.

(Responses: it can't add; it can't do math)

The response "it doesn't work" is too vague or general. Ask students for a specific thing that doesn't work.

Now, when you answer a short-answer question, what are the two things to remember?

Pause.

(Response: write in a complete sentence and write neatly.)

Where is the clue to help you get started writing your answer sentence?

(Response: in the question)

Yes, the clue is in the question. What is the problem with the Homework Machine?

Use the clue; on your paper, answer the question for Number four.

Pause to allow time for students to complete the task.

Then ask for volunteers to share their responses. Most will begin the same way: The problem with the Homework Machine is...

If a student writes "The problem is it doesn't work," point out to the students the need to be very specific. What is *it*? "*It* doesn't work" doesn't mean anything to the reader.

Then say:

Since you don't have a homework machine, you have to do your assignments the old-fashioned way. We have practiced several techniques or tricks to use when reading and answering questions about a poem. Let's review those tricks in closing today. Who remembers a trick or technique we practiced today?

Ask for volunteers or call on various students.

(Possible responses: read the poem several times; look at the poem closely; read the question carefully; read all the answer choices; write in complete sentences in the short-answer questions.)

Student Worksheet Reading and Responding Lesson 2 – 1

HOMework MACHINE
Shel Silverstein

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"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 2 – 2

NAME _____

HOMework MACHINE

1. Which of the following is the best way to read Homework Machine?
 - A. Read the first and last line.
 - B. Read only the rhyming words.
 - C. Read the entire poem several times.
 - D. Read slowly, spelling each word.

2. Who would most likely be the speaker of this poem?
 - A. a teacher
 - B. a parent
 - C. a principal
 - D. a student

3. How do you know this selection is a poem?

4. What is the problem with the Homework Machine?
