

Lesson Plan for "The Ballad of Dirty Joe"
Submitted by Nancy Sage

Objective: Students will be exposed to poetry in ABAB rhyming format. Students will participate in choral reading, emphasizing words appropriately and speaking in the rhythm of the poem.

Time Needed: about 1 hour maximum, depending on the students' reading abilities.

Grades: 4-6 would be best (I did it in 5th).

Procedure:

1. Print out a copy of "The Ballad of Dirty Joe" from billharley.com
2. Number the stanzas so students will have an easier time "navigating" the ballad.
3. Split the class into two groups. One group will read the odd stanzas, the other group even ones.
4. If the class as a whole has fairly good oral reading skills, have them do a cold reading of the poem. I found that by the third or fourth stanza, the kids got into the rhythm and listened to the other group to get the story.
5. Re-read the poem, but switch the odd/even groups.

Extension:

- Have the students perform the poem during a talent show, parent night, etc. Some students could be Joe and Annie, with the other students being the "Greek chorus".