

WILD BLUEBERRY POETRY



Blueberry barrens

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The students will explore poetry and art using the wild blueberry as the object of their efforts. They will write and illustrate a poem using descriptive language and read their poems to the class.

CORRELATIONS TO STATE OF MAINE LEARNING RESULTS: PARAMETERS FOR ESSENTIAL INSTRUCTION

Content Area	Performance Indicator	Grades 3-5 Descriptor(s)	Grades 6-8 Descriptor(s)
English Language Arts	A2	f, g	f
	B1	f	c
Science and Technology	A1	a	a
	E2	c, d, e	b
Social Studies	D2	b	b
Visual and Performing Arts	B1		

OBJECTIVES:

The students will:

1. write a poem about wild blueberries using one or more forms of poetry.
2. edit and compile the poems into a book or newspaper.
3. illustrate their poetry (and/or book) using an art technique or medium of their choice.

LIFE SKILLS:

Describing, developing appreciation, developing vocabulary, editing, expressing one's self, illustration (or other art forms), observing, writing

MATERIALS:

- Writing materials and paper
- Art supplies
- Computer and CDs

ESTIMATED TEACHING TIME:

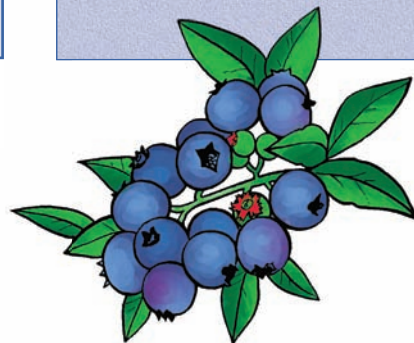
Two or three 45-minute class periods

PREPARATION:

Insure that the poster accompanying this educator kit is displayed where students can see it.

VOCABULARY:

Cinquain, Haiku, Acrostic (Other vocabulary words will develop as the students write.)





BACKGROUND



The wild blueberry has been part of Maine's history, culture and economy for centuries. The wild blueberry was an essential part of the Native American diet and culture long before settlers came to Maine. It was eaten fresh in the summer, dried for use in the winter as a seasoning for stews and soups, and used for curing meats. The crushed wild blueberry was made into dyes. It was also used in medicine. Brewed as a pungent tea, it was given to relieve pain. Blueberry juice and syrup were used as cough medicine. It was and is a part of Native American legends and is believed to have magical powers. Atop each wild blueberry is a five-pointed star that is the base of its earlier flower calyx. Legend has it that during a time of starvation, the Great Spirit sent these "star berries" down from the heavens to relieve the hunger of his children.

When settlers arrived, the Native Americans showed them the wild blueberry barrens that had been cared for by burning on a regular basis and taught the many uses of the wild blueberry. Colonists in 17th century New England created foods called Grunt, Slump, Mush, Buckle, and Fool made from wild blueberries. During wild blueberry season, one of these dishes usually graced the supper table.

The importance of the wild blueberry to Maine's economy is still in effect today. It affects not only the economy, but also our culture and diet. One such example can be found in Robert Frost's poem, "Blueberries," published in 1914 by Holt and Company in North Boston.

It begins like this:

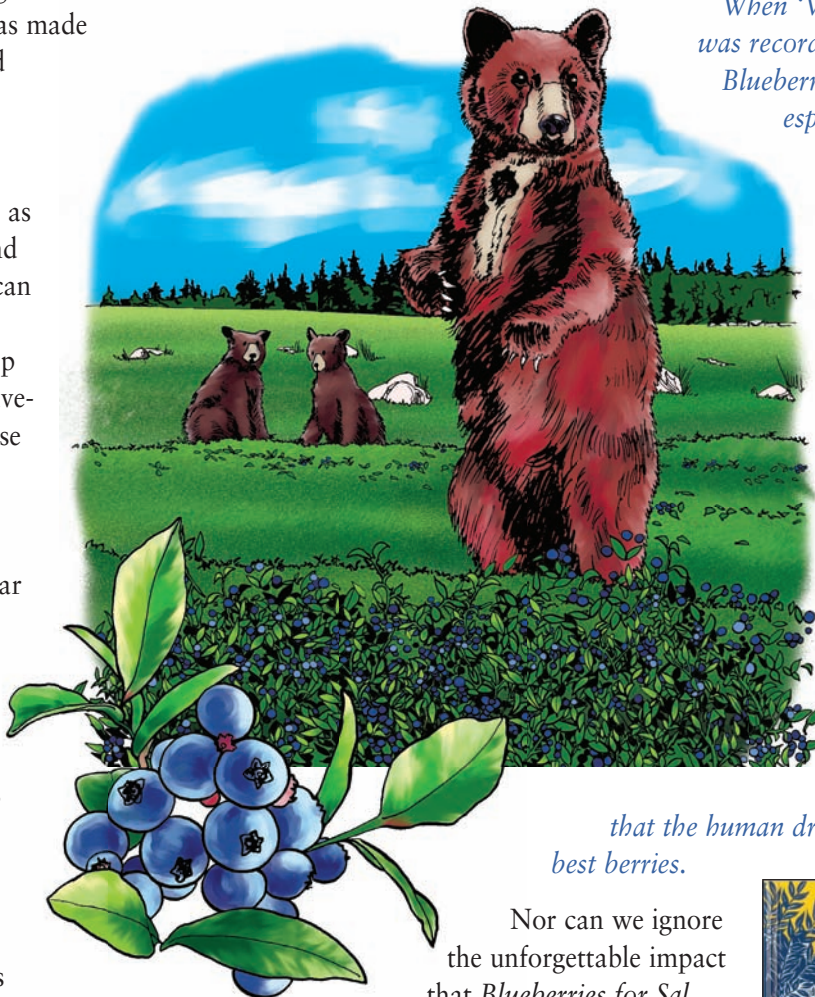
*You ought to have seen what I saw on my way
To the village, through Patterson's pasture today:
Blueberries as big as the end of your thumb,
Real sky-blue, and heavy, and ready to drum
In the cavernous pail of the first one to come!...*

Or in Pauline W. Moore's *Blueberries and Pulsey Weed: The Story of Lovell, Maine:*

*When 'Went A-Blueberrying'
was recorded it was really summer.
Blueberries were plentiful,
especially where the land
had been burned
over...*

*If it had been
an extremely dry
summer, the berry
pickers had to watch
out for bears that
stood up on their hind
legs and reached for
the big ones just as
the humans did. Many
bears have been seen
by blueberry pickers
but never has anyone
been hurt. Both the
bears and humans run
as fast as possible, the
only difference being*

*that the human drops a basket full of his
best berries.*



Nor can we ignore the unforgettable impact that *Blueberries for Sal* has had on young children across the United States. In the classic story, a young girl in Maine wanders away from her mother while blueberry picking to come face-to-face with a mother black bear whose cub has also wandered away to come face-to-face with Sal's mother.



From BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL by Robert McCloskey, copyright 1948, renewed (c) 1976 by Robert McCloskey. Used by permission of Viking Penguin, an imprint of Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.



Poetry is also a part of our culture. It has allowed us to paint word pictures to express thoughts and feelings about our experiences. There are many forms of poetry. Three of these are Haiku, Cinquain, and Acrostic.

HAIKU

Haiku is a Japanese poetry form that always has three lines that do not rhyme. The first line always has five syllables. The second line always has seven syllables. And the third line always has five syllables. It is usually written about nature or the seasons.

Example:

Line 1, 5 syllables – Blueberry picker
 Line 2, 7 syllables – raking blueberry barrens
 Line 3, 5 syllables – summertime in Maine

CINQUAIN

The Cinquain is a five-line poem that is based on the number of words or syllables. Each line has a theme and a given number of words or syllables.

- Line one: a title written in two words or syllables
- Line two: a description of the title in four words or syllables
- Line three: a description of action in six words or syllables
- Line four: a description of a feeling in eight words or syllables
- Line five: another word for the title in two words or syllables

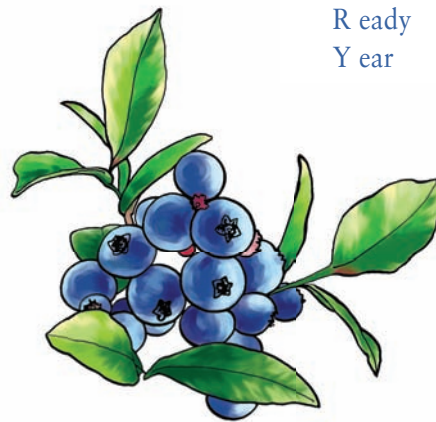
Example:

Wild Blueberry.
 Sky-blue, round, sweet.
 Raking on the barrens.
 Sweet happiness in round, blue balls.
 Wild joy!

ACROSTIC

Acrostic poetry uses a word written down the left side of the page. Using the letter of the word as the first letter of another word or phrase a poem is written.

Wonderful	B lue
I nspired	L ights
L ovely	U plifting
D elights	E very
	B erry
	E very
	R ipe
	R eady
	Y ear



ACTIVITY

1. Display both the poster and the folder that contains this kit. Ask students to brainstorm and write a list of words that describe these images. Use both the inside and outside of the folder.
2. Select one or more of the poetry types for the students to utilize and have each write their own poem using words that have been developed in the brainstorming session.
3. Have the students edit their poems and reproduce a final copy onto a large sheet of construction paper. Have the students select a medium and illustrate their poems.
4. Have the students read and display their poems, then post their works or have the class compile them into a book.



EXTENSIONS

1. In conjunction with the other lessons in this educator kit, have the students each compile their own wild blueberry book that contains poetry, artwork, an advertisement, the life cycle description and sequence, etc.
2. Create a wild blueberry newspaper and have the students compile efforts from these lessons into sections of the newspaper.
3. Have the students research other instances where wild blueberries are used in literature, poetry, the press, etc.
4. Have older students write longer poems and turn them into song lyrics, create a rap song or write a free verse.

EVALUATION

1. Evaluate the poetry and accompanying artwork as they relate to the style chosen.
2. As an evaluation tool, assign the students to develop a greeting card that contains a poem and is illustrated. Include these in a portfolio.

RESOURCES

1. McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 1976.
2. Lathem, Edward Connery ed., *The Poetry of Robert Frost*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.
3. Moore, Pauline Winchell. *Blueberries and Pusley Weed: The Story of Lovell, Maine*. Kennebunk, Maine: Star Press, Inc., 1972.

NOTES: