



## Poetry Reading

### Springboard:

Students should work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm lists to describe poetry to complete “Hard to Put a Finger on It.”

*(Lists will of course vary and include: have rhythm, rhyming words, a certain look or “style,” free, show feelings, bring out feelings in readers, etc.)*

**Objective:** The student will be able to explain how punctuation helps poetry reading.

**Materials:** Hard to Put a Finger on It (Springboard)  
Punctuation Please? (student page)  
Writers’ “Whispers” to Readers (optional student page)  
A Poetry Slam! (student page; reuse as desired)

**Terms to know:** **brainstorm** - list MANY ideas (as many as possible!)  
**punctuation** - markings in writing (period, comma, question mark, etc.) that help read and understand it

### Procedure:

- During discussion of the Springboard, make sure the student(s) recognize the freedom of poetry. Note that *it CAN rhyme, but certainly doesn't have to! In fact one of the main characteristics of poetry is the wide variety of forms it can take.* Go on to explain that *the one thing that remains constant in reading poetry of any form is HOW it's read, so this lesson looks at the RIGHT way to read poems.*
- Review the directions for “Punctuation Please?” and explain that *in most cases poems are READ in sentences as they're written. Like other writers, poets use punctuation to guide the reader to understand their meaning and tell how it “should be” read.* Take time as needed to review punctuation signals using the optional “Writers’ ‘Whispers’ to Readers” page. (Students should keep up this page in their Interactive Poetry Notebooks, described in the introduction, to be maintained through the unit. They should add interesting examples of punctuation use as they progress. **Remind them!**) The student(s) should work in pairs, groups, or with the teacher / parent to read and annotate the poem as directed.
- **For group instruction** explain that *a poetry slam is a friendly poetry-reading competition. Those interested will have a chance to read their “interpretations of Twinkle-Twinkle Little Star” to find the best readers.* Have the student(s) work as before to practice reading the poem orally as they “understand” it, in sentences, as indicated by the punctuation.
- Then allow interested students to read orally, as others fill in the first names and jot notes about each (Emphasize **POSITIVE comments ONLY!**). They should check off their top 5, 10, etc. as appropriate, and then you'll need to tally to find the winners. -- This could also be a group effort. -- Then discuss the following:
  - ? What was GOOD about the winning readings? *(Answers may vary and include: reading with expression, sounding natural, speaking clearly, not stopping and stumbling over words, etc.)*
  - ? What clues did the punctuation give to the readers? *(See “Writers’ ‘Whispers...” handout for examples.)*



# ? ! Punctuation, Please? ! ?

**DIRECTIONS:** Highlight the punctuation marks in the poem (Yes, it's a poem put to music!). Study the sentences. Think about what the poet is trying to tell the reader with the punctuation. Jot notes around the poem about any ideas you have for reading it. Where should you pause? When should your voice go up? Note whatever you think!

## “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”

Twinkle, twinkle, little star!  
How I wonder what you are,  
Up above the world so high  
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the glorious sun is set,  
When the grass with dew is wet,  
Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

In the dark-blue sky you keep  
And often through my curtains peep,  
For you never shut your eye  
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark  
Guides the traveler in the dark,  
Though I know not what you are,  
Twinkle, twinkle, little star!

*Anonymous (Unknown)*



# Writers' "Whispers" to Readers

USAGE	EXAMPLES
, A <b>COMMA</b> means pause. It is used to join sentences with "and," "or," or "but": in lists of three or more things; and after words or phrases that introduce a sentence. Oh, and it also divides <i>Cities, [from] States</i> and is before or after, "Someone's words in quotation marks."	
; A <b>SEMI-COLON</b> notes a brief pause between two short sentences; and the two often go together. It is also used in writing lists of short sentences; to break them up; or when commas are used in items on the list.	
: A <b>COLON</b> is another cue to a short pause. It tells the reader something is coming: a list could follow it; or a quote may follow: "Like this one."	
. A <b>PERIOD</b> says, "Stop." In reading a period, the reader's voice will drop a little at the end of the sentence.	
? A <b>QUESTION MARK</b> ends a sentence that asks a question. When asking a question, a person's voice goes up at the end, doesn't it?	
! An <b>EXCLAMATION POINT</b> shows strong feelings. Its use could show anger, joy, fear, and much more! It's just so much fun to use!	

