**Iamb, I Am**[[1]](#footnote-1)

Grade Level: Kindergarten

Duration: 2 days

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| Overview | This lesson incorporates familiar rhyming books to help students gain a better understanding of the basics of rhyming poetry, with a focus on rhyme, rhythm, and meter. |
| **Audience, Goals, and Lesson Content** | This lesson plan has been adapted for native English-speaking kindergarten-age children with intermediate reading abilities. The goals of this lesson are for students to better understand the difference between poetry and prose, to distinguish rhythm in words without music, and to define basic metrical units of poetry. |
| **Learning Objectives** | After completing this lesson, students will be able to identify rhyme and rhythm in rhyming poetry, distinguish between different feet of verse, and organize known words into a rhyming poem. |
| **Required Materials** | * Copy of Dr. Seuss’ *Green Eggs and Ham*
* White- or blackboard
* Dry-erase markers or chalk
* Handout: A Bestiary of Poetic Terms (attached)
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| **Procedures** | DAY ONE.1. First, read Dr. Seuss’ *Green Eggs and Ham* aloud to the students.
2. On the board, write these lines from the story: “I do not like green eggs and ham. /I do not like them, Sam-I-am.” Help the class read them aloud a few times. Ask them what they notice about the ends of the lines. Then, compare the lines in *Green Eggs and Ham* to other books around the classroom and use them to explain the difference between poetry and prose.
3. Next, explain to the class that we can hear beats in rhyming poetry, as we can in music, and that these beats come from the way we say the syllables. To demonstrate this, have students sit at a table or desk with their elbow resting on the surface and their chin in their palm. As they hold the position, lead them in a slow recital of the Dr. Seuss lines. While they read, the chin should drop a bit lower on stressed syllables like *Sam* and *ham* than on unstressed syllables like *and* and *I*. Students should sense a regular rhythm as the chin presses against the palm. As they remain in position, help them identify the rhythm by switching to a chant of exaggerated nonsense syllables: *da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM.*
4. Explain that each *da-DUM*—each set of an unstressed and stressed syllable—called an iamb, one of several feet of verse. To help the students remember, point out that Sam’s middle and last names, I-am, make up an iamb.
5. Reread the Dr. Seuss lines a final time, this time clapping along in rhythm to help students break up the syllables. Using the book, choose another brief passage to read to the students (ex: “I do not like them in a box. /I do not like them with a fox./I do not like them in a house./I do not like them with a mouse.”), exaggerating the syllables by clapping or through voiced stress.
6. Next, using the original two Dr. Seuss lines as a starting point, encourage the students to contribute collaboratively to a new rhyming poem by asking them to give lines that end in a rhyme with the first two. These can be nonsense lines or they can make up a narrative. Record the new lines on the board, and after each student has had a chance to contribute something, read the new poem aloud to the class.
7. Answer any questions the students may have.

DAY TWO.1. Start by reviewing iambs. Ask the students what they remember about yesterday’s lesson and refresh anything they might have forgotten. Explain again that an iamb is a foot of verse.
2. Explain that there are other types of metrical feet. To compare, write these lines, also from *Green Eggs and Ham*, on the board: “Would you like them in a house? /Would you like them with a mouse?” The foot in this line is the *trochee*, the opposite of the iamb. In this foot, the stressed syllable comes first, followed by the unstressed syllable. Ask students to try chanting these lines to the iambic beat. When they realize that the words don’t fit, lead them in a clapping recital until they begin to hear the trochee beat.
3. The teacher will conclude the lesson and answer any questions the students may have.
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| **Accommodations** | Because there may be students at different reading levels or students with reading-related learning disabilities, no student will be required to read aloud on their own. All reading will be done as a class so that students will be better able to understand the material being read.  |
| **Assessment** | Students will be assessed informally for their ability to keep up with the activities presented in class. If a student is unable to meet any of the standards involved in this activity, the teacher will make a note of it and discuss with parent(s)/guardian(s) during routine conferences. |
| **Common Core State Standards** | * [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2a](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/a/) Recognize and produce rhyming words.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2b](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/b/) Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.K.2c](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/2/c/) Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.5](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/K/5/) Recognize common types of texts (e.g., storybooks, poems).
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.2](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/K/2/) Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
* [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.K.6](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/K/6/) Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
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| **Extension Activities** | To explore more examples of metrical feet, students may be given the attached worksheet with the option to study at home. Suggesting students read through other rhyming poem storybooks at home is another way to help them discern rhyme schemes and patterns in meter. Offering an incentive for students who create another rhyming poem at home and have parent(s)/guardian(s) sign off on it is another possible extension of this lesson. |
| **Supplementary Materials** | (See Handout attached below); *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish* by Dr. Seuss as different examples of metrical feet. |



1. Adapted from <http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/publications/siycwinter_06.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)