

Grab and Go Lesson Plan

Gratitude Poems

The Anchor: *Dear Socks* (poem) by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater

April is **National Poetry Month**, and it's one of my favourite times of the year to bring a little extra poetry joy into the classroom. Poetry is such a wonderful way to play with language, rhythm, and imagination and is a great opportunity to “use your poet’s eyes” to notice nature!

This simple lesson introduces students to **gratitude poems** using the delightful poem “*Dear Socks*” by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater. In the poem, the poet writes a thank-you note to her favourite pair of socks — a playful reminder that poets often say something ordinary in a new way.

April also includes a wonderful celebration called **Poem in Your Pocket Day** (April 30). On this day, people carry a poem with them and share it with others throughout the day. After students write their gratitude poems, they could copy their poem onto a small card and carry it with them to share with classmates, teachers, or family members.

I used to do this with my class every year — and the students absolutely loved it (although I will warn you, the novelty does tend to wear off by recess!).

For more Poetry Lessons like this one - check out my book [*Powerful Poetry: Read, Write, Rejoice, Recite All Year Long*](#)

Materials

- Anchor poem: “**Dear Socks**” by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater (included pg. 6)
- Chart paper, whiteboard, or screen
- Example of a “Gratitude Poem” for teacher modelling (“*Dear Grilled Cheese Sandwich*” - included pg. 7)
- Student planning sheets (included - pgs 8-10)

1. Introduction

Set the Context:

Write the words “**Thank You**” on the board.

Ask students if they have said those words today. Who did they thank? Why?

Share a quick personal example.

(Example: “I said thank you to Mrs. Wu in the staffroom when she passed me the milk for my coffee.”)

Explain that another word for “thank you” is **gratitude**. If you feel gratitude, it means noticing and feeling appreciation for something or someone.

Now hold up a classroom object — a pencil, a chair, or a book.

Ask students: *Have you ever said **thank you** to your pencil? Your pillow? Your toothbrush?*

Students will likely laugh and say no. Discuss why it seems funny (because nobody talks to a pencil, it’s not alive, doesn’t have feelings).

Explain that today, we are going to be writing **thank-you poems to objects** and learning that sometimes, when we write poems, we can use words and language in new ways.

Discussion Prompts:

Hold up a pencil. Ask:

- *Why might someone feel grateful for a pencil?*
 - *If a pencil had feelings and could hear - what might you say to it?*
 - *What specific things would you like to thank your pencil for?*
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2. Read Aloud

Share the poem “**Dear Socks**” by Amy Ludwig Vanderwater. (see page 6) If possible, project the image onto the screen so the students can listen but also see how the poem is written. Read it aloud with expression!

After reading, invite students to share:

- What did you notice about this poem? *(written like a letter, had repetition, had expression, alliteration)*
- What was your favourite part of the poem?

- Why do you think the poet wrote a thank-you poem to her socks?

Explain that **poets often say something ordinary in new ways**. We don't usually say "thank-you" to objects, but thinking about them in a new way can help us notice things we appreciate about them.



3. Activity - Writing Your Gratitude Poem

Tell students they will be writing their own gratitude letter poem to an object they really like.

Step 1: Brainstorm

Model by listing a list of objects you like (love) and use often. Invite students to add their objects to the list:

Example:

- books
- my pillow
- grilled cheese sandwiches
- my trail runners
- coffee mug
- snow

Invite students to create their own list of favourite things on their planning sheet. Invite them to share their ideas with a partner.

Step 2: Choose an Object

Students choose one object from their list. Model your own example.

Example: grilled cheese sandwich

Step 3: Think About Why

Record your object on the whiteboard and list two headings underneath: Things I Love; Things I'm Thankful For. Discuss and record ideas under each heading (see example model below).

Grilled Cheese Sandwich

THINGS I LOVE	THINGS I'M THANKFUL FOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your stretchy cheese • your crunchy corners • your triangle shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being delicious • filling my tummy • keeping me company

Show students the finished poem (see page 7). Discuss where you tried to include some repetition and some of the ideas from the planning page.

Pass out Gratitude Poem planning page (see page 8). Invite students to brainstorm ideas and record their ideas on their planning sheet.

Step 4: Write the Poem

Re-read “Dear Socks” and point out a few things about the poem:

- written like a letter
- sounds like the poet is speaking directly to the object, as if it could hear.
- has some repetition

As students begin to write their gratitude poems, remind them of these tips:

- start with “Dear _____,”
- pretend the object can hear you
- leave white space on the page
- use repetition
- don’t forget to say “thank you” and “I love you”

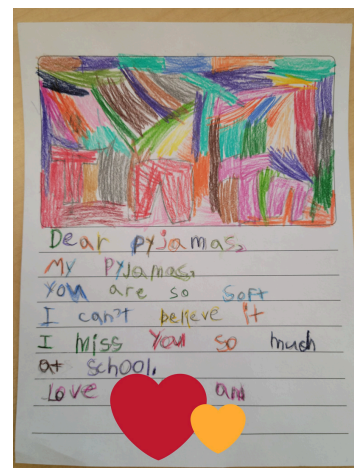
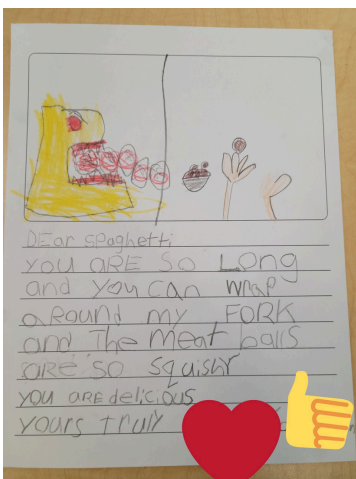
4. End the Lesson

When students are finished, invite them to draw and illustrate a picture of their object.

Invite students to share their poems with a partner or small group. Encourage listeners to notice specific lines they enjoyed.

Close by reminding students that poetry often begins with paying attention to the small things we appreciate and that poets sometimes like to say something old in a new way.

Student Samples: (from Mrs. Labrecque's Grade 1-2 Class, Glendale School, Alberta)



Extension Activities (Optional)

Earth Day Gratitude Poems

Once students understand the structure of the gratitude poem, invite them to write gratitude poems to an object in nature.

Examples:

a seashell
a river
a tree
a mountain

Follow the same process:

1. Brainstorm objects in nature
2. Choose one
3. List things you love and feel grateful for
4. Write your gratitude poem
5. Draw a picture

This extension works beautifully around Earth Day and encourages students to notice and appreciate the natural world. See sample below.

Dear Seashell – by A. Gear

**Dear Seashell,
I love you, seashell,
I love you.
I love your crunchy white outside
And your smooth pink inside.
I love holding you in my hand.
You are so pretty.
You smell like the ocean.
Thank you for being my tiny treasure.
I love you, seashell.
I love you.
Love, Me xo**

Dear Socks

by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater

I love you.
My toes love you.
My heels love you.
My eyes love you
and your big pink roses.
On this winter morning
as snowfall swirls to storm
you are blooming on my ankles.
You are keeping my feet warm.
I am so thankful.
You are socks of dreams.
My words are overdue.
Will you be my valentine?
I am in love with you.
Love,
me



Dear Grilled Cheese Sandwich

by A. Gear

I love you Grilled Cheese Sandwich

I love you!

My eyes love you, my nose loves you, my tummy loves you!

I love your crunchy edges and soft middle

I love the way you stretch yourself

like cheesy elastic, showing off

to the stretchless tuna and egg sandwiches.

I'm so grateful that on a rainy Saturday afternoon

You are always there to keep me company.

You fill my small hole of hunger

with happiness

and memories of hockey practice snacks

with you and my boys.

I love you,

Grilled Cheese Sandwich.

Now and forever.

Love, Me. Xo



Gratitude Poem Planning

Name: _____

Brainstorm everyday objects that you are grateful for.

Think about food, toys, clothing, school supplies.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Choose ONE object to write your poem about: _____

What do you love about your object? Think about size, shape, colour, smell, special features, how it makes you feel, etc.

I love _____

I love _____

I love _____

If that object could hear you, what would you say thank you for?

Thank you for _____

Thank you for _____

Thank you for _____

♥ Gratitude Poem ♥

Name: _____

Blank writing area with ten sets of primary-ruled lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed midline) for writing a gratitude poem.

♥ New Poetry Books

Book List

(Some of my favourite poetry books released in 2025-26, with a few exceptions)

[*Woods & Words - the Story of Poet Mary Oliver*](#) - Sara Holly Ackerman

[*Goldfinches*](#) - Mary Oliver

[*How Elegant the Elephant - Poems About Animals and Insects*](#) - Mary Ann Hoberman

[*The Pine Cone's Secret: A Life Cycle Poem*](#) - Hannah Barnaby

[*Rap It Up!*](#) - Carole Boston Weatherford

[*Hot Food: Nice!*](#) - Michael Rosen

[*Out of This World - Poems to Make You Laugh, Smile and Think*](#) - Michael Rosen

[*The Gift of the Broken Teacup - Poems of Mindfulness, Meditation, and Me*](#) - Allen Wolf

[*When the World is Puddle-Wonderful*](#) - e.e.cummings

[*You're A Poet: Ways to Start Writing Poems*](#) - Sean Taylor

[*A Forest Song*](#) - Kristen Hall

[*Dear Acorn \(Love, Oak\) Letter Poems to Friends*](#) - Joyce Sidman

[*Cows and Sheep and Chicks That Cheep - Farm Poems*](#) - Douglas Florian

[*Awesome Earth: Concrete Poems Celebrate Caves, Canyons, and Other Fascinating*](#)

[*Landforms*](#) - Joan Bransfield Graham

[*The Dirt Book: Poems About Animals That Live Beneath Our Feet*](#) - David L. Harrison

[*Catch the Sky: Playful Poems on the Air We Share*](#) - Robert Heidbreder

[*Poems for Every Season: A Year of Haiku, Sonnets, and More*](#) - Bette Westera

[*Dino Poet: A Graphic Novel*](#) - Tom Angleberger