



**Gundalow  
COMPANY**

Protecting the Piscataqua region's  
maritime heritage and environment  
through education and action

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## Place Based Poetry activity:

### Description:

Many poets draw inspiration from a place. There are some famous poets who have used places in New England and the New Hampshire seacoast specifically to inspire their writing. In this activity you will write a poem inspired by a place. This can be your backyard, a nearby park, stream, or river, or it can be a place from your memory. For example, if you have a favorite spot on a beach, you can draw on that.

Poetry can take many forms, and you don't have to worry about it sounding super smart or fancy. Just enjoy the process and see what kind of creative masterpiece you can make!

### Materials: For this activity, you will need:

- A notebook
- A pen or pencil
- Your 5 senses

### Instructions:

1. First, let's choose a place- do you have a favorite spot in your yard, or your local park?  
If these things are not sparking your creative energy, think of your favorite outdoor space nearby- is there a beach that you love? A pond, or a spot on a trail?
2. Go to that place either physically or in your mind. Sit down and get comfortable!
3. Sit quietly for a few minutes and either look around you or think back to that place.

4. Now, let's use the 5 senses to write down notes about this place. You don't need to start writing your poem yet, just writing down the words that describe what you see, hear, touch, smell, and taste.

Try and use adjectives and descriptive words. If you see a rippling stream, can you think of adjectives to describe it, like sparkling or quick? These will help your poem come to life.

- What do you see? Colors, light, movement? Any animals, birds, or plants that catch your eye?
- What do you hear? Wind? Insects, or waves?
- What do you feel or touch? Warmth? A cold wind or rain? Any leaves, grass, or rocks near your feet?
- What do you taste? For this- let's not pick up anything and actually eat it! Instead, try and taste the air. Does it taste salty or fresh from a breeze?
- What does this make you feel or remember emotionally? Does this place hold any important memories? Do you feel calm here, or excited?

5. Now, let's take those descriptive words, and see if we can put them together. Poetry sometimes has a rhythm and rhyme, but it doesn't have to! You can make a free verse poem, a haiku or acrostic. The descriptions of each one of these are below. When you're done writing your poem, share it out loud!

**Free verse:** A type of poetry that does not have a clear pattern or rhyme. This is a very open form of poetry- you can do what you want with it!

**Rhyming:** In a rhyming poem, usually the last word in a line sounds the same (rhymes) with the last word in another line. You can make all the lines rhyme, or you could alternate, or form your

own pattern! You can even rhyme in the middle or beginning of a line of poetry instead of the end. Rhyming can be playful, have fun with this one!

**Haiku:** Originally a Japanese form of poetry, a haiku has a strict pattern of syllables. Usually the first line has 5 syllables, then 7, and the last has 5. Saying the words out loud and counting syllables on your hand can help you piece a haiku poem together. Haikus are traditionally about nature, so this is perfect for our activity!

To give an example of the syllable count, here is a very basic haiku I made up about my pitcher plant:

My room has a plant  
That eats flies in bulbs of green  
Would it eat me too?

**Acrostic:** This is a vertical form of poetry. Listing the letters of one word vertically, you then find an adjective that starts with each letter and describes the word. For this activity, you could use the name of the place you chose, or something that you see in the place.

For example, if I were to use the word “pond” (and you can be much more creative than that!) my acrostic might look like this:

**P**eaceful

**O**utside

**N**atural

**D**eep