

Top Tips for Beginning Poets

Brainstorm – Before you begin writing, brainstorm a big list of specific, vivid, terrific words all about your topic

Don't Rhyme – We have enough poems with flower/hour/power rhymes. Instead, use exactly the right words and forget about trying to rhyme.

Play With Words – Poems are short. Write fast and try lots of poems about a single topic. For every 10 poems you write, one will probably have you thinking, “Hey, I wrote that. Not bad!”

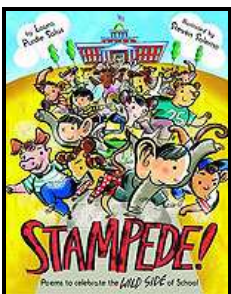
Say It – Poems are meant to be heard as well as read. Read your poem aloud, many times. How do the words sound together? How is the rhythm?

Use Comparisons – Metaphors (The moon was an ornament hanging in the sky) and similes (She jumped like a rabbit) are poetry basics.

Break It Up – Write your poem several different ways, using the same words, but breaking it into lines in different spots. Find the version that “fits” your words the best.

Be Casual – Don't feel like poetry has to be proper and formal. It should reflect you and your mood and your topic—funny, sad, sarcastic...whatever is YOU.

Play With Forms – Check out *A Kick in the Head: An Everyday Guide to Poetic Forms*, selected by Paul B. Janeczko.



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