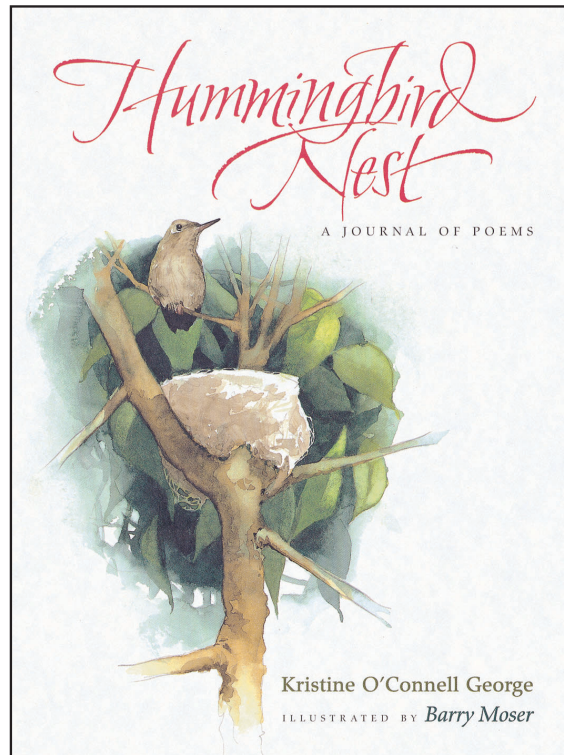


# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO



## *Hummingbird Nest: A Journal of Poems*

*By Kristine O'Connell George  
Illustrated by Barry Moser*

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**I**DEALLY, POETRY SHOULD BE an ongoing part of the language arts curriculum, not just a one- or two-week unit. Many teachers routinely read a poem aloud every day, as part of their opening activities. After this exposure to poetry, many children spontaneously begin to write poems in their journals, with no instruction or direction to do so. Favorite poems can be shared repeatedly. Try for a variety of humorous, narrative, and descriptive poems, in different styles.

## GENERAL CONCEPTS

### SENSE COMES FIRST

Poetry is meant to be read aloud, and children need a good model for how to do this effectively. The sense of a poem can be lost when children simply stop at the end of each line. Children must be taught to look for the end of a thought before pausing. Simply listening to an adult who pauses appropriately while reading a poem is the best instruction.

### LOOKING CLOSER

After children have absorbed the poem as a whole, and reacted to or discussed it, they are ready to look closer. Guide them in deciding whether the poem is rhymed or not. If it is, point out the rhyme scheme.

### WRITING POETRY

Some children love to write poetry and almost intuitively understand how to do so. For those who are daunted—or even frightened—by the challenge, try “copy change” exercises. Have the children choose a poem and then re-create its style or structure, but with their own adaptations of content. For instance, a child doing a copy change with “Little Miss Muffet” might write:

*Little Bobby Blair  
Sat on a chair,  
But wanted to run and shout.  
His teacher said, “Dear,  
We don’t do that here!  
That’s why you got a time-out.”*



## Ideas for working with *Hummingbird Nest* *A Journal of Poems*

1. Have the children examine the book’s jacket. Are there hummingbirds in the area where you live? If so, have the children ever seen a nest? If not, have the children ever seen a hummingbird? Where?
2. The children may already be quite familiar with humorous poems and story poems. Point out that the poems in this book describe part of the life cycle of a bird. Ask the children why nature might be a favorite topic for some poets.
3. Read the poems aloud to the children, one or two each day. Be sure to read the date that accompanies each poem.
4. Read the author’s note at the end of the book to the children. Have them choose a particular tree or a small area outdoors that they can easily observe. Have them keep a journal for six weeks, with about two entries each week, of changes in or visitors (birds, squirrels, insects, people) to “their” special area. Each entry could also note the weather and/or the time of day.
5. Have each child choose one of his or her journal entries and write a poem about it, in any style. Then have the children illustrate their poems.
6. Point out the “More about Hummingbirds” section at the end of the book, in case anyone develops a deep interest in these birds.



For more information, visit Kristine O’Connell George’s website: [www.kristinegeorge.com](http://www.kristinegeorge.com).

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