

Jessie Jane Lewis: Middle School Poetry Lesson

Original lesson, *Emotion in Art & Poetry*, written by Colleen J. Hodel

Lesson modified by Heidi Painter

Objectives (SWBT):

- Be introduced to the work of Jessie Jane Lewis
- Understand that art & poetry can both be meaningful tools for expressing difficult feelings
- Use art to understand and reflect their own emotions
- Identify, differentiate, and use similes and/or metaphors
- Make connections between art and other disciplines

Activities:

1. View slides 8 & 9 of the [JJL Slide Show](#) (created by Melissa Maddoni Haimes) featuring poetic plate art by Jessie Jane Lewis and [these slides](#) (created by Anya Rose) which make the connection between feelings and art & centers on Jessie Jane Lewis' feelings about living with multiple sclerosis.
2. Read the [Britannica \(Student\)](#) article about multiple sclerosis.
3. Discuss feeling "sad" or "scared". Ask:
 - "What about a MS (multiple sclerosis) diagnosis might cause a person to feel sad or scared?"
 - "How does Jessie Jane Lewis' art reflect/show fear or sadness?"
 - Consider the following elements:
 1. Line - a mark on a surface.
 2. Shape - a flat area of enclosed space.
 3. Space - the illusion of depth on a flat surface.
 4. Value - the lightness or darkness of objects.
 5. Form - the height, width and depth of a work of art.
 6. Texture - the way in which art feels or would seem to feel to the touch.
4. Allow the students to talk about times that they felt sad or or scared.
5. Discuss the definitions of [Similes](#) & [Metaphors](#), and explain that they give us a way to make abstract concepts explicit. Say, "Experiencing "cold sweat", getting "cold feet" and "hair that stands up on the back of one's

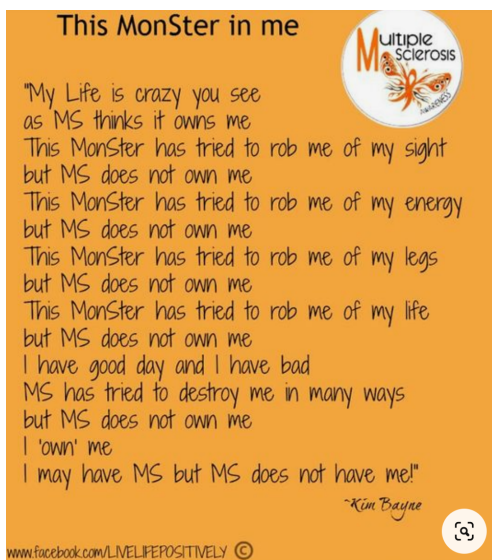
neck” have become figurative language to talk about fear, yet they are also rooted in its physical experience.

6. Ask students to practice writing similes and metaphors for sadness and fear. Brainstorm a list together as a class that can be referenced later.

Ex.

- Scared like a wild bird flies.
- Sadness is as gray as a rain cloud.
- Sadness is a far-off train whistle.

7. Read poems written by people who are living with MS ([LINK HERE](#)).



8. Ask students to write poems inspired by the artwork OR about their own experiences with sadness and/or fear. Encourage the use of simile and/or metaphor for the emotions of the person in the artwork. Allow students to select from the brainstormed list if they choose, but they should also create some similes and metaphors of their own.
9. Students who may have trouble with simile and metaphor could write an acrostic poem using the word SADNESS or FEARFUL.

For example:

- Sorrowful
- Alone
- Dreadful feelings.
- Not sure what to do next
- Endless crying
- Sniffing &

- Sobbing

Students could also try a W-poem. The W stands for who, what, where, when, and why. The students ask themselves questions about what is happening in the artwork you have presented. Each line of their poem answers the questions.

For example:

- A lonely man (who is the subject?)
- Stands staring (what is happening?)
- Across a pond (where does it happen?)
- After the race has ended (when did it happen?)
- Feeling lost (why did it happen?)

Evaluation:

- Are students able to identify the work of Jessie Jane Lewis?
- Are students able to express ideas and feelings through poetry?
- Can students identify, differentiate, and use similes and/or metaphors?
- Do students understand the connection between visual art and English?