

BIOPOEM

Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen
New York: Bantam, 1993

Purpose: The purpose of the Biopoem is to help writers synthesize their learning about a subject—a person, place, think, concept, or event. The Biopoem follows a pattern that makes it easier for beginning writers to complete as they play with ideas.

Rationale: Using this activity, students are able to explore certain characters, especially Sarney and John. This activity can be done before reading the last two chapters of the book or after finishing the novel. By this time, the students should be comfortable enough with the characters to write about them.

DIRECTIONS

Step One *Introduce the activity*

Introduce the activity by placing the Biopoem format on an overhead and also giving them a handout of the format. Go through the format and explain anything the students do not understand. Then, present them with an example of a Biopoem. The example can be of yourself, or of a character from a book the class is familiar with. (preferably not from the novel currently studying)

Step Two *Write*

Tell the students to choose a character from Nightjohn to write a biopoem about. Give the students about 15-20 minutes to compose their own poem about their character. If you want, ask them to cite page numbers where they found their information, but this is not necessary as they may have inferred some of their information.

Step Three *Present*

Give the students a chance to present their work. Only ask for volunteers. It might be helpful if you have composed one about a character from Nightjohn to share if the students aren't comfortable with sharing theirs.

Assessment

Assessment occurs as the teacher surveys the student's ability to synthesize knowledge about a character and produce a piece of writing. Assessment depends on creativity and originality of the writing.

BIOPOEM FORMAT

Line 1: First

Line 2: Four traits that describe character

Line 3: Relative (brother, sister, daughter, etc.) of _____.

Line 4: Lover of _____ (list three things or people)

Line 5: Who feels _____(three items)

Line 6: Who needs _____(three items)

Line 7: Who fears _____(three items)

Line 8: Who gives _____(three items)

Line 9: Who would like to see _____(three items)

Line 10: Resident of _____

Line 11: Last Name