

Teaching of Poetry

Musical and metrical form of language is poetry. Poetry is a thing of beauty of form, beauty of thought and beauty of emotions. It is intimately limited with life. According to Wordsworth, poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. In other words we may say that poetry is beauty. It is the beauty of language, beauty of thought, mood or feeling. It is the most intimate expression of man's spirit. Poetry is regarded as the noble thoughts and noble emotions caught in noble language. Its main importance in the classroom is that it brings the students into contact with the human nature and also with feelings and aspirations of great souls. It enriches their emotional life and develops the aesthetic sense among them. Students get pleasure through rhythm and rhyme of poetry. Hence poetry occupies an important place in school curriculum.

Poetry not only contains the content, the theme, or the subject matter but also the way it is recited, the rhythm, the special beauty and the music, the poetic diction etc. Poetry conveys the poet's imagination, mood and feelings through words as well as music. These are to be conveyed to the learners while teaching poetry this is where the teaching of poetry differs from teaching of prose. The focus of prose lesson is more on teaching language but the aim of poetry lesson is appreciation or enjoyment. Teaching of poetry should be lively.

Advantages of teaching poetry: -

It helps in all-round development of pupils the value of teaching poetry in English language course at the secondary school level is immense. It leads to the development of the whole personality of pupils, particularly the emotional, imaginative, intellectual, aesthetic and intuitive sides". The advantages of teaching poetry may as follows: -

ÉIt enriches the experiences of the pupils.

ÉIt facilitates the natural aptitude for poetry in pupils.

ÉIt enables students to learn speech rhythm through the rhythm of poetry.

ÉIt has cathartic value because it helps in expression and training of emotions.

ÉPoetry always imparts enjoyment and pleasure to students.

ÉIt introduces variety.

ÉIt teaches pattern of sentences because of repetition of certain patterns in a poem.

Aims of teaching of poetry: -

The main aim of teaching of poetry is to develop the power of appreciation of beauty.

General Aims of teaching of poetry are as follows: -

- ÉTo enable students to appreciate the beauty, rhyme and style of the poem.
- ÉTo enable pupils to read aloud the poem with proper rhythm and intonation.
- ÉTo enable students to enjoy recitation, individual or chorus of the poem.
- ÉTo make students understand the thought and imagination contained in the poem.
- ÉTo train the emotions of students.
- ÉTo create a love for English literature in them.
- ÉTo create a lore for English literature in them.
- ÉTo develop their aesthetic sense.

Specific aim of teaching poetry: -

The specific aims of teaching poetry differ from poem to poem. They depend largely on situation, scene, feeling and thought depicted in the poem. Each poem brings a special and exclusive message from the poet. The following are the specific aims of teaching any poem:

- ÉTo enable students to appreciate the poem namely.
- ÉTo enable students to read this poem with correct rhyme and rhythm.
- ÉTo enable students to understand the idea of the poem.
- ÉTo communicate the pupils the exclusive message of the poem.

Importance of teaching Poetry: -

Poetry is the most intimate expression of man's spirit. It is the beauty of language. Musical and metrical form of language is poetry. Poetry gives pleasure, poetry increases the child's sensitiveness to beauty and helps to develop his imagination. In other words we can say the importance of teaching poetry as follows:

- ÉPoetry provides reading pleasure to children.
- ÉPoetry increases the power of imagination of students.
- ÉPoetry lays the foundation for an appreciation of the beauty of language.
- ÉPoetry is more memorable than prose.
- ÉPoetry helps in learning pattern sentences because certain patterns are repeated.

É Poetry has a special appeal for the aesthetic and intuitive sides of the pupils' personality.

É Poetry brings the students into contact with the human nature and feelings.

É It enriches the experiences of pupils.

É It enables students to learn speech rhythm through the rhythm of poetry.

É Children are very fond of poetry due to its musical sounds and rhythms.

Planning a lesson for teaching Poetry

There is no definite method of teaching poetry. But Mr. Ryburn says, "A good poem is a complete whole." After deciding on the content the teacher follows the following steps:

1. General Aims:

The main aim of teaching of poetry is to develop the power of appreciation of beauty. The general aims of teaching poetry are:

É To enable students to appreciate the beauty, rhyme and style of the poem.

É To enable pupils to read aloud the poem with proper rhythm and intonation.

É To enable students to enjoy recitation, individual or chorus of the poem.

É To make students understand the thought and imagination contained in the poem.

É To train the emotions of students.

É To create a love for English literature in them.

É To develop their aesthetic sense.

2. Specific aims:

The specific aims of teaching poetry differ from poem to poem. They depend largely on situation scene, feeling and thought depicted in the poem. Each poem brings a special and exclusive message from the poet. Nevertheless, the following are the specific aims of teaching any poem:

É To enable students to appreciate the specific poem taught.

É To enable students to read this poem with correct rhyme and rhythm.

É To enable the student to understand the idea of the poem.

ÉTo communicate the pupils the exclusive message of the poem.

3. Teaching Aids: -

There is no need of material aids for teaching poetry. If the poetry is not explaining the scene clear, material aid of a picture depicting the scene is enough.

4. Previous knowledge: -

The teacher should know the age, previous experiences and mental development of students. These help him in teaching the poetry and linking the new knowledge to the previous one.

5. Introduction/Motivation: -

Before teaching the poem, the teacher should give an appropriate introduction to poem to arouse the interest of pupils and to create the proper atmosphere for the poem. Introduction differs from poem to poem. Thompson and Wyatt have suggested three ways of introduction:

- (i) The best method is to read a parallel poem similar in subject matter with the poetry to be taught. If possible the parallel poem should be by the same poet.
- (ii) Second method is to give the gist of the poem.

(iii) The third method is to give the life sketch, style and characteristics of the poet. Introduction can also be done as follows:

- (i) Introduction can be done by playing sonic music.
- (ii) The teacher can ask some questions on the previous knowledge of students.
- (iii) If the poem to be learnt is descriptive, a picture can be shown. Two or three questions on picture should be asked.

Before introducing the poem the teacher should give a short introductory talk either in the pupils' mother tongue or in simple English about the background and the general theme of the poem. The introductory talk must have a bearing on the poem.

6. Statement of aim: -

After making students curious to know about poem by introduction, the teacher should state the aim briefly in clear words.

7. Presentation: -

During teaching of poetry the presentation part includes: -

Model recitation by the teacher: -

Students get pleasure from the poetry by its rhythm and musical sound. Therefore the teacher should read the poem aloud, it may be done once, twice or thrice. This recitation of poetry by the teacher brings out clearly the beauty of sound and rhythm, of thought and emotion, and the feelings of the poet when writing it. Ryburn rightly says, "A good poem should be taught whole." If, of course, it is very long, it should be divided into units.

Loud recitation by pupils: -

The teacher should ask two or three students to read the poem just as the teacher has read. The teacher should help them in reciting it with effect but not check them while reading, because it mars the flow.

Silent recitation by the pupils: -

Pupils should then be asked to read the poem silently and try to grasp the general meaning. The students should be encouraged to bring their language difficulties to the notice of the teacher.

Meaning of difficult words: -

After the silent recitation by the pupil the difficult words are dealt with. The teacher asks the students to find out difficult words. The teacher tells their meaning one by one orally. He should not give much time to it.

Explanation: -

The teacher should explain the gist of the poem, as the meaning of the difficult words has been dealt with the teacher beforehand the students can easily understand the poem.

8. Comprehension Questions: -

The purpose of such questions is to know if the meaning of poem is clear to students and to make certain ideas more clear. These questions should be simple and should not break the continuity of the poem. Their number depends upon the length and ideas of the poem.

9. Appreciation Questions: -

These questions aim to make clear the (i) beauty, (ii) feeling and (iii) main idea of the poem. These questions used to test:

• Appreciation of the beauty of thoughts.

• Appreciation of the beauty of images.



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ÉAppreciation of the beauty of emotions.

ÉAppreciation of the beauty of style and language.

10. Assignment: -

There is not much importance of assignment in poetry teaching. The teacher may ask the students to memorize the lines of the poem or to write, the gist of the poem.