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| **Lesson Title:** Revise Poetry | | **Theme:** Reading | |
| **Practice Activity:** PHL-09-130 | | **Class:** JSS 3 | |
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| **Learning Outcomes**  By the end of the lesson, you will be able to:  1. Recall details of subject matter in a prescribed poem.  2. Recall literary devices used in a poem. | | | |

**Overview**

The poem ‘The Village Schoolmaster’is part of a longer poem called *The Deserted Village*. It was written in 18th century England. The poet is Oliver Goldsmith. The poem is humorous. It makes readers laugh.

The poem is one **stanza**. It describes the village Schoolmaster. The speaker of the poem was one of the Schoolmaster’s pupils. We know this because he says, ‘I know him well, and every truant’. Remember, truants are pupils who leave school without permission.

The speaker describes the Schoolmaster as a strict man. He says, ‘The Schoolmaster looked very strict and severe’. He also tells us that pupils were afraid of the Schoolmaster; the poet calls them, ‘boding tremblers’. The poet uses **personification** to describe how pupils quietly warn each other when the Schoolmaster frowns. He says, ‘The busy whisper circling round.’ This is personification because a whisper cannot be busy; ‘busy’ is a human characteristic. However, the speaker notes that even though the Schoolmaster was strict, he was also kind and made many jokes. The poet uses **repetition** to stress that this strict man could really joke – he uses the word ‘joke’ twice in one line.

Full well they laugh’d, with counterfeited glee,

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he.

It is **ironic**, though, because the pupils do not enjoy the jokes; they only laugh because they fear the Schoolmaster. He calls their fake laughter ‘counterfeited glee’.

According to the speaker, the Schoolmaster’s love for learning was so great that he knew almost everything. The poet uses **alliteration** to talk about some of the things that he could do. For example, ‘times and tides passage’. This means that he could foretell time. He was much more educated than the villagers. He could also write, gauge, measure lands and argue. We learn that the Schoolmaster is stubborn and persistent; he would never give up an argument. The poet talks about the argument as if he is describing a war, in the expression ‘though vanquish’d he could argue still’. Even though he was defeated in an argument, the Schoolmaster would not stop arguing. The poet says that the Schoolmaster used ‘words of learned length and thundering sound’. This is a **hyperbole**. He is exaggerating the sound and importance of the words used by the Schoolmaster.

The term ‘gazing rustics’ tells us that people in the village were uneducated or illiterate and did not understand the words that the Schoolmaster used. Thus, the confused people stopped arguing. Ultimately the villagers admired the Schoolmaster for all that he knew and wondered how there could be so much knowledge in his small head. For the village people, the more someone knew, the bigger his head should be.

**Practice**

**Activity 1**

Summarise the poem in your own words.

The Village Schoolmaster

by Oliver Goldsmith

A man severe he was, and stern to view;

I knew him well, and every truant knew;

Well had the boding tremblers learn’d to trace

The day’s disasters in his morning face;

Full well they laugh’d, with counterfeited glee,

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;

Full well the busy whisper, circling round,

Convey’d the dismal tidings when he frown’d;

Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,

The love he bore to learning was in fault;

The village all declar’d how much he knew,

‘T’was certain he could write, and cypher too;

Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,

And e’en the story ran that he could gauge.

In arguing too, the parson own’d his skill,

For e’en though vanquish’d he could argue still;

While words of learned length and thund’ring sound

Amazed the gazing rustics rang’d around;

And still they gaz’d, and still the wonder grew,

That one small head could carry all he knew.

**Activity 2**

Define the following literary terms. Give a definition in your own words. Then, write your own example sentence for each.

1. personification
2. alliteration
3. hyperbole
4. repetition
5. irony

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**Activity 1**

This poem is about a schoolmaster who was very strict, and his pupils were afraid of him. Even when he told jokes, they could only fake laughter. However, he was also intelligent and he loved to teach and learn.

**Activity 2**

1. Personification is when human qualities are given to something not human.

Example: The sun glared down at us.

1. Alliteration is when the same letter or sound is used multiple times in the same sentence.

Example: The dog drank deliriously from his dish.

1. Hyperbole is when something is greatly exaggerated and not meant to be taken literally.

Example: I was so hungry I could eat a whole cow.

1. Repetition is when a word or phrase is repeated to emphasise something.

Example: And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.

1. Irony is when language is used to have a meaning that is opposite of its literal meaning.

Example: I just love getting poor marks when I study hard.