

JULIE ANDREWS'
*Collection of Poems,
Songs, and Lullabies*

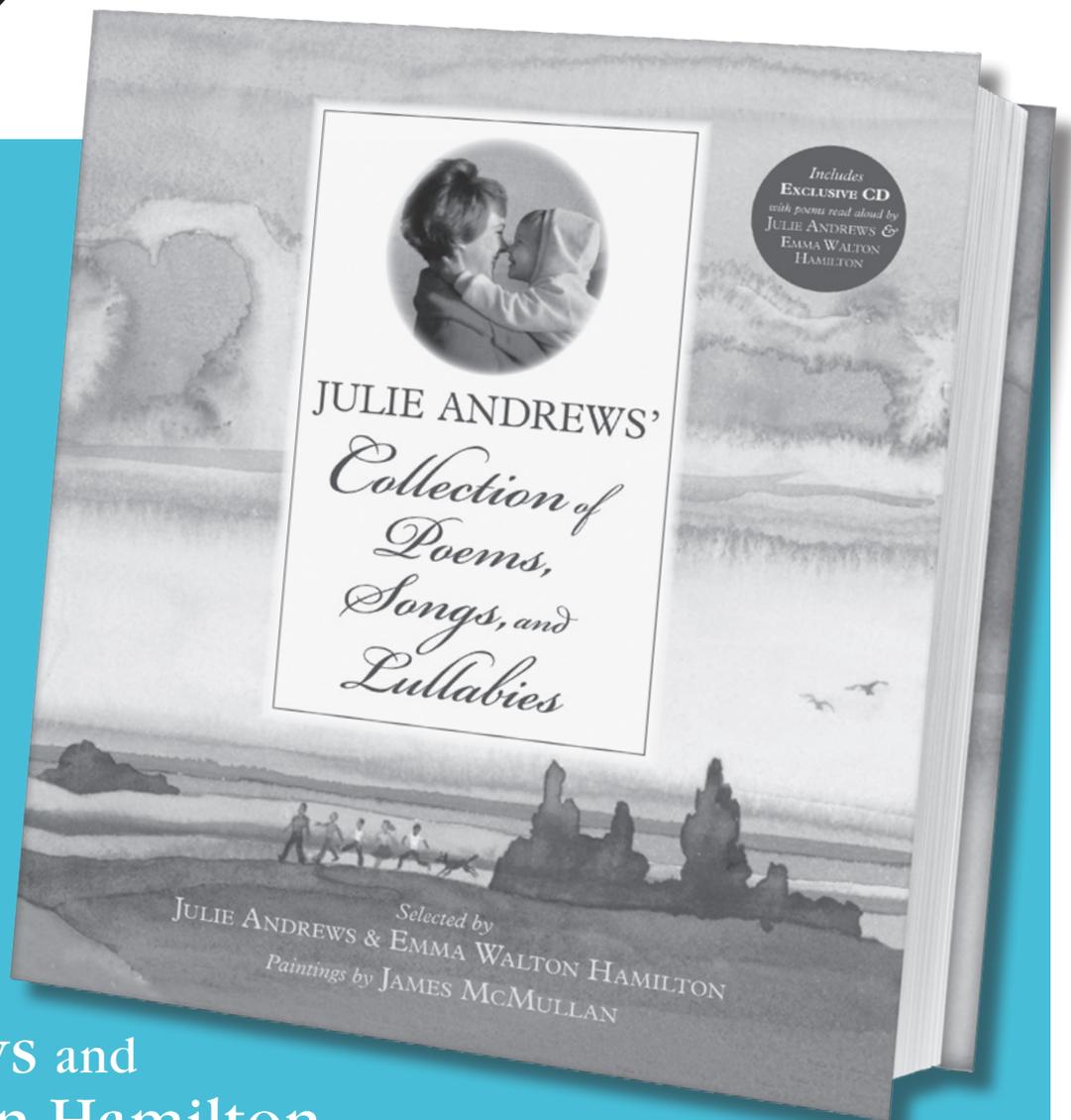
curriculum
connections

- ❖ Poetry
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ History

All Ages

by
Julie Andrews and
Emma Walton Hamilton

paintings by
James McMullan



Research in Practice: Poetry for All Ages

It is possible that educators and parents have heard their students and children groan a bit upon hearing the words “poetry unit.” In fact, it is possible a few educators have groaned a bit, too. Perhaps they think of poetry as the domain of tweed-wearing professors or exclusively for the nursery, but the beauty of poetry is that it can be enjoyed by people of all ages! Use it to reinforce and introduce literacy concepts, develop phonemic awareness, foster an appreciation of art and history, or as a springboard for other artistic endeavors. Poetry can be simply enjoyed or used as a tool to build other skills. The suggestions in this guide are just some of the ways to use the selections in *Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies* in classrooms serving students at all levels.



BUILDING BACKGROUND

What is Poetry?

Begin by posing the question to students: What is poetry? Ask students to generate a definition of poetry. Then, share definitions as a class. Work together using students' current understanding of poetry to generate a common definition. Write the definition on chart paper and date it. As students begin to explore different types of poetry throughout the unit, ask them to revisit the definition. For example, the original definition may include the idea that poetry must rhyme. After reading poems such as “My Symphony,” by William Ellery Channing (P.185) or “April Rain Song” by Langston Hughes (P.18), students may want to reconsider this idea. As new understandings are gained throughout the unit, work as a class to change the definition to reflect new learning. As a culminating activity, ask students to respond to the question, “What is Poetry?” either in writing (prose, song, poetic form), or by creating a short skit, dance, poster, or other artistic representation. Discuss together how students' original understanding of poetry may have changed over time.

Travelers, Guide to Poetry

Poems can take us on a journey, but just like visiting any new place, the language of poetry may be unfamiliar or confusing. Guidebooks can help travelers become more comfortable with an unfamiliar place. They often include

maps, recommendations of favorite places to visit, and lingo that would be helpful in that particular city or country. Have students create a “Travelers' Guide to Poetry” to be used as a guide for other students, perhaps in other classes, to help them as they explore the world of poetry. They may want to include definitions for words such as rhythm, rhyme, and meter, or explanations of different types of poems such as haiku, limerick, free verse, sonnet, etc. Students may choose favorite poems from the collection and include background information on the poets or the place where the poem was written. Looking at examples of travel guides for inspiration, encourage students to include a variety of information to assist others as they begin to discover poetry.

VISUALIZATION

Picture this Poem

Poetry is a feast for the senses. It evokes sounds, smells, tastes, images, and feelings. Students can practice the critical comprehension skill of visualization by exploring poetry. As students read and listen to a variety of poems, have them choose one to illustrate. Have students read it to themselves, read it aloud, and listen to it being read by someone else. Then, using colored pencils, paint, or crayons, have students draw what they visualize when they read the poem they chose. Many of the poems in *Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies* lend themselves beautifully to this exercise.

It's Personal

This exercise is designed to introduce students to the fact that each of us has our own unique response to, and interpretation of, a poem—which may be different from our friends', or even from the poet's.

In *Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies*, illustrator James McMullan didn't always paint the expected image for each poem. In fact, he frequently painted something that doesn't even show up in the poem, but was inspired by it nonetheless, such as the frog for Johnny Mercer's "Accentuate the Positive" (P. 42) or the cats by the fire for Ted Hughes' "Wind" (P. 31).

Students listen to a poem read by the teacher, then draw or paint whatever it evokes for them—but it must be something that isn't actually referred to in the poem. Students then share and compare the myriad variations/interpretations.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Rhyming Pond

After reading Alfred Noyes' "Daddy Fell into the Pond," (P. 142) build phonemic awareness by creating a rhyming pond. Cut fish shapes from card stock (or use fish stickers on 3x5 cards) and write words that rhyme with "grey," "day," "bright," "daft," and "quick" on the cards. Tie a string to a dowel or pencil and attach a magnet to the end. Attach paperclips to the word-fish and have students take turns "fishing" for a word. This could be a small group or whole group activity. Read students the words they have chosen from the pond. As you read the poem aloud, have students raise their fish if they have a word that rhymes with one in the poem. As an extension, use other poems and choose other words to add to the pond. Since this is a phonemic awareness exercise, the focus should be on hearing the rhymes, rather than reading the words.

Beginning Sound Switcheroo

Choose one of the shorter poems from the collection and write it on chart paper. Read it over and over, chant it together, and memorize it. Then, play "Beginning Sound Switcheroo." Call out a sound such as /S/ and say it is time to say the poem like a snake. Change the beginning of every word to the /S/ sound. Practice together with a variety of sounds. Then, move toward having students do it independently or with a partner.

Sound Detectives

Choose a poem to read aloud. Next, have students choose a beginning sound to listen for on the next reading. You could have students vote on a sound or you could tell them the target sound. Say the sound together and give several examples of words that might begin with that sound. Then, slowly read the poem as students become "sound detectives" and try to identify words in the poem beginning with the target sound. When they hear the sound, have them shake or tap a rhythm instrument, clap their hands, or stand up. After finishing the poem, choose a new sound and read it again. If some students have mastered the beginning sound activity, challenge them to listen for ending or medial sounds.

Syllable Sillies

The ability to hear word parts is an important literacy building block. Poetry is an excellent vehicle for teaching syllables. Many complicated poetry forms rely on syllable patterns for their structure, but even emergent readers can learn to identify syllables. Begin by talking about syllables. Demonstrate (using student names or familiar words) how we can hear the rhythm of words. Students may want to clap the syllables or use rhythm instruments. After students feel comfortable with the idea of syllables and understand how to identify them with guidance, choose some words from any of the poems you have read together. Have students take turns hopping out the syllables for the words you choose. After hopping, they might want to try bear walking the syllables or somersaulting the syllables. Integrating a bit of silliness and movement reinforces learning in a way that is fun and engaging. Students may even want to brainstorm a list of "sillies" to choose from when it is their turn to identify the syllables.

Poem Pockets

Creating a culture of literacy at home and in school is a foundation that reaps significant rewards. Poetry allows students to hear the potential beauty of language. Exposing students to a wide range of poetry and prose opens doors for their own language play, and playing with language is a way students develop their identity as readers and writers. Collecting favorite poems and phrases is a fun activity for children of all ages. A great way to store and share these favorite poems is by creating a “poem pocket.” Begin by reading “Keep a Poem in Your Pocket” by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers (P. 163). Talk about the meaning of the poem. Then, talk about how pockets in clothing are used to store precious things. Students may want to share what they keep in their pockets. Explain that they will be making poem pockets to store their favorite poems, phrases, and words. Poem pockets may take any shape and be almost any size. Provide a variety of materials and challenge students to create a special “pocket” for their favorite poems. They may want to make it from recycled material, cloth, or card stock. This is an activity families may enjoy, too. The end result should be some type of pocket or container to keep favorite poems. Then, ask students to begin collecting. As they come across poems they love, they can put them in their pocket. As pockets become full, students may want to host a special “pocket sharing day” and take turns looking inside each other’s pockets. How many had the same poems? How many had different poems? Why might this be?

SPRINGBOARD TO WRITING

You Can Write a Poem About Anything!

This is a two-part exercise, designed to teach students that any subject can be fodder for a poem, and that our senses are the first portal to creating poetry. Poems can be created as a group first, to demonstrate the technique of brainstorming, then individually.

A) GROUP BRAINSTORMING

The teacher picks a topic—e.g., the sea—and asks students to come up with sensory words (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch) that describe the ocean. These are then recorded on the board or a big piece of paper.

Sample questions to prompt ideas:

- What does the ocean look like? What color is it? How does it move? Is there an animal or other object that moves like it?
- What does it taste like? Is there a food it reminds you of?
- What does it smell like? Is there any other object or thing it smells like? What does it make you think or feel when you smell it?
- What does the ocean feel like? Does it have a texture? Does it remind you of anything else?
- What does it sound like? Is there a musical instrument, song, or type of music that reminds you of the ocean?
- If the ocean had any feelings, or thoughts, what might they be? If the ocean wanted something, what would it be? What feelings do you have around or about the ocean?

The goal is to amass a large collection of rich and evocative words that describe the ocean. Students can be encouraged to go even further with word choices (i.e. “it’s blue” might lead to “What kind of blue? Light blue like the sky, dark velvet blue like the night, blue-green like a jewel?” etc.)

The class then begins to put the poem together, either as a group or individually, drawing on these words, ideas, and images and playing with their sequence to create sentences or lines. (The teacher might also review the poems in the “Sea-Fever” section of *Julie Andrews’ Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies* to see what senses and choices of words poets have drawn from.)

Once a group poem has been written, students can use the same method to brainstorm their own poems.

B) NO TABOO TOPICS

The teacher asks what subjects the students can’t imagine as lending themselves to a poem... for example: cheese, homework, or dirty diapers. The teacher might begin by asking, “What subject can’t you write a poem about?” Students throw out ideas, the teacher chooses one and the group brainstorms words, tastes, colors, textures, feelings, sounds, etc. as above, so that the poem can emerge.



ABC Poems

Spike Milligan's "The ABC" (P. 144) takes the alphabet and playfully crafts a story about every letter. Here is another fun exercise using the alphabet which reinforces the idea that poems can be borne from anywhere.

Students write a poem in which each word begins with the next letter of the alphabet, starting with A. Lines and sentences must make grammatical and structural sense; accommodations may be made for the letter X (such as words that begin with "ex").

Example:

At Breakfast, Coffee Drinkers Exchange
Friendly Greetings...

To encourage spontaneity, try this as a timed exercise. Then repeat, reversing the direction of the alphabet, Z to A.

Found Poetry

"Found Poems" take existing words, phrases, or even whole passages from other sources and reframe them as poetry. Found Poetry is often made from newspaper or magazine articles, speeches, letters, street signs, or even other poems. It can be created individually, with a partner, or in groups, and is achieved by changing the spacing and/or lines (and consequently meaning) of existing text, or altering it by additions and/or deletions.

Explain to students that poetry is just a group of words put together in a way that is interesting or expresses a particular feeling or idea. Distribute magazines or newspapers for students to work with, along with scissors. Have students cut out paragraphs, sentences, and words that catch their eye or interest them. There are no right or wrong words—but an effort should be made to include some nouns, verbs ("action words"), adjectives ("describing words"), and other necessary joining words like "a," "the," "and," etc.

Once students have collected their sentences and words, pass out blank paper and have them lay out their words and sentences on the page. Encourage them to move the words around, trying different combinations, even silly ones—but ask them to strive for structure, meaning, and sense. Once they are satisfied with their arrangements, they can glue the words in place, thus creating their Found Poem.

Poetry is Like...

Poetry relies heavily on the power of imagery and metaphor. This exercise is designed to encourage students to think metaphorically, and thus to come up with more lyrical imagery and richer language choices.

Begin by reading Robert Louis Stevenson's "My Bed Is a Boat" (P. 78). Explore Stevenson's use of metaphor, and ask students to imagine whether they would know what the poem was about if the poet hadn't actually used the word "bed" anywhere in the poem.

Teachers then write a prompt on the board, such as:

"When I'm _____ it's like _____."

(For this choice, each student chooses a feeling to insert after "When I'm" and then compares the feeling to an activity, object, type of weather, etc. For example, "When I'm angry, it's like a thunderstorm.")

"The wind is like _____."

"My bed is _____."

Students then complete the sentence using metaphors, such as objects, places, weather, living things, temperatures, colors, etc. Invite each student to read his or her metaphor sentences/paragraph aloud, but omitting the "prompt" part of the sentence. The other students then guess the topic or feeling that is being described simply by hearing the metaphor.

I'd Like to Be a...

Rachel Lyman Field's "I'd Like to Be a Lighthouse" (P. 125) is a fine example of personification, another popular poetry technique. Field breathes life into her subject, and imagines what it actually *feels* like to be that lighthouse.

Ask students to choose something they'd like to be, whether a person, animal, or object, and to write as if they *were* that, concentrating on how it feels to be that, and what they, as that, might want.

Poems as Gifts

Julie Andrews and her daughter Emma Walton Hamilton often write poems for each other, and other family members, as gifts. Students can write poems as gifts for Mother's Day, Father's Day, or in celebration of any special occasion. Poems from *Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies* that might inspire ideas include "Home! You're Where It's Warm Inside" by Jack Prelutsky (P. 60) and "Growing Up" by Julie Andrews (P. 58).

SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY

Finding Your Voice

Poetry is a way that many people express their thoughts, dreams, and fears. In many cases, life circumstances, historical events, and personal experiences influence the way a poet interprets the world. Have students choose a poet (either one represented in this collection or another) and research his or her life and literary contributions. Extending beyond a traditional biography project, ask students to choose several key moments in the author's life and present several pieces of the poet's writing that reflect those major events. How did these experiences shape their poetry? You could also challenge students to integrate technology and play with word choice by using "Wordles" to present their information. This simple visualization tool can be found at www.wordle.net and has many applications for the classroom. In this case, students could input words, dates, and phrases that represent key moments. The online tool creates a visual representation that can be used as a poster. If students do not have access to computers, a hand-created poster would work too!

ART, MUSIC, AND PERFORMANCE

Got Rhythm?

Even the most reluctant reader can get excited about poetry once they learn a little about rhythm. Begin by introducing

the concept. By definition, rhythm is a uniform or patterned recurrence of a beat, accent, or the like. This can be illustrated more easily by showing examples of rhythm. It can be seen in artwork, dance, and sports. It can be heard in music and the spoken word. Gather many examples of rhythm: clips of sporting events such as a football player kicking a field goal, paintings that show a pattern of color or a repeated image, the sound of rain beating on the roof, dancers from around the world performing their steps, or people chanting at a sporting event. Explore together how each of these examples has its own rhythm. Once students have a good understanding of the concept of rhythm, choose several poems to read. Listen for the rhythm and discuss together. Then, using a drum, other percussion instruments, or a drum track from pop music, chant or "rap" the poem accompanied by the drum beat. Experiment with different poems, beats, and rhythms. Discuss how changing the rhythm may change the meaning or feeling conveyed by the poem. After students have chosen a beat and poem, use recording software to capture their efforts or offer a live performance.

Painting Poems

Stephen Sondheim's "Sunday" (P. 157) is actually the lyrics to a song about Georges Seurat's famous painting, *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*. Poems inspired by art are called ekphrasis and have a great tradition in literature.

Invite the class to explore other poems inspired by paintings, then have students select a painting, photograph, or drawing to write a poem about.

The Music of Poetry

Music plays a big part in *Julie Andrews' Anthology of Poems, Songs and Lullabies*, in that many song lyrics are included as poems. Teachers can read song lyrics as a poem first, then introduce students to the music/song. Students can then be challenged to find and bring in other songs they love, whose lyrics stand alone as poems. (This pairs nicely with the "Got Rhythm?" exercise.)



Poetry Slam-wich!

Poetry takes on a new dimension when read and/or performed aloud. Begin by exploring the difference between reading a poem quietly to oneself and reading it aloud. (Excellent choices for this exercise are Gerard Manley Hopkins' "Pied Beauty," P. 15, A.A. Milne's "The King's Breakfast," P. 146 and Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "The Brook," P. 130.) Listen to the CD recording of Julie Andrews and Emma Walton Hamilton reading these and other poems from the anthology aloud. Are there any surprises in the way of emphases, rhythms, alliterations, or vocal colors and textures?

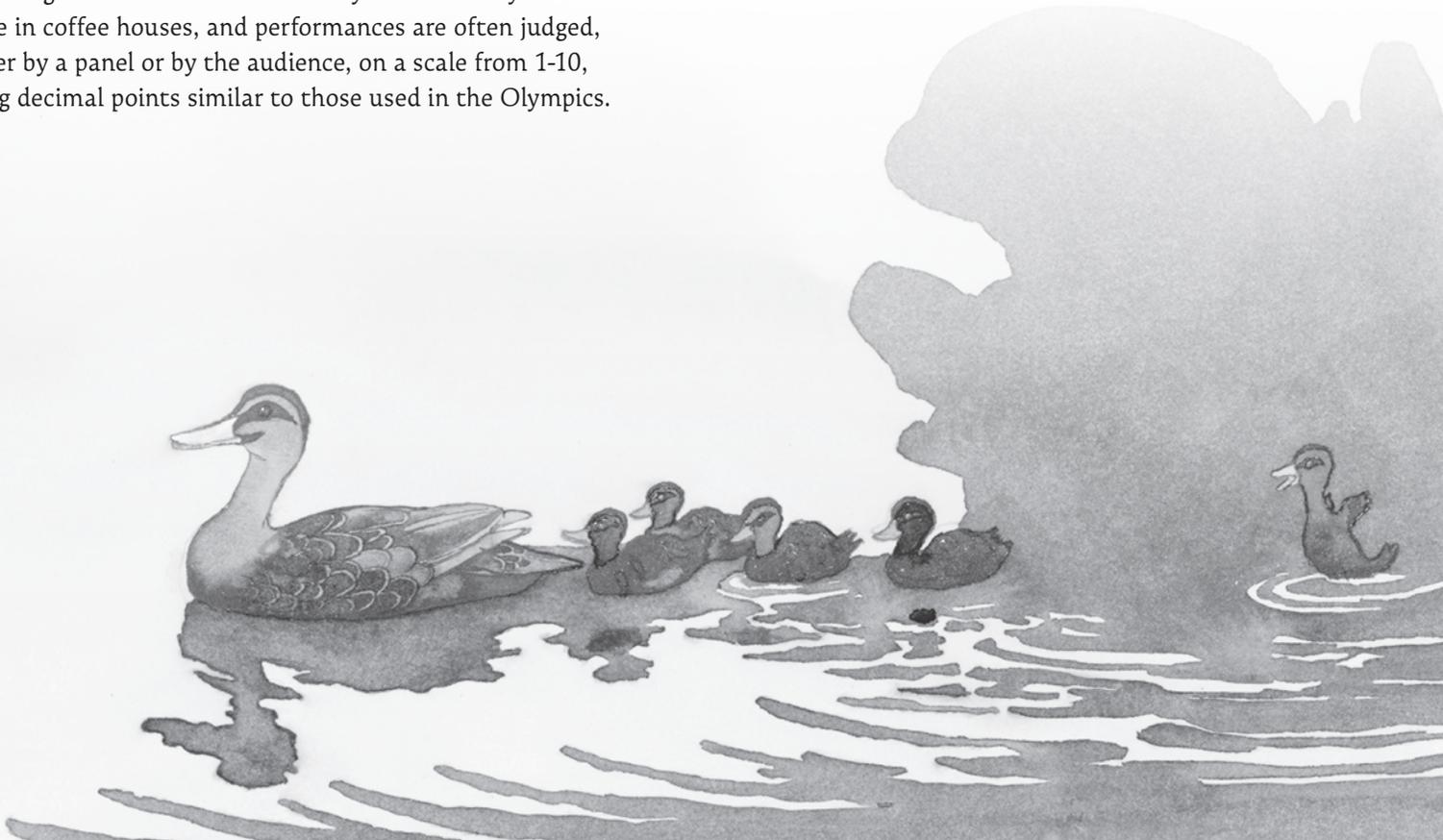
A Poetry Slam is a wonderful culminating event for a poetry study, and is even more lively and fun than a poetry reading. Slams emphasize rhythm, tone, gesture, and pacing, and are highly interactive between performer and audience. They can teach students how to use voice and body techniques to help convey a poem's meaning, and also to write for the ear and not just the page. Slams can be performed with student-written poems, found poetry or poems by other authors.

Introduce the concept of the Poetry Slam by exploring its history. Discuss how people have been performing poetry aloud as far back as the oral traditions of Ancient Greece, but that the Poetry Slam as we know it today originated in Chicago in the 1980s. Modern-day slams usually take place in coffee houses, and performances are often judged, either by a panel or by the audience, on a scale from 1-10, using decimal points similar to those used in the Olympics.

Performances are timed, and do not rely on props or costumes, but simply the spoken word and the vocal and physical energy of the performer. Non-competitive slams can also be entirely engaging, with added emphasis on audience response and interaction via applause, foot-stamping, cheering, etc.

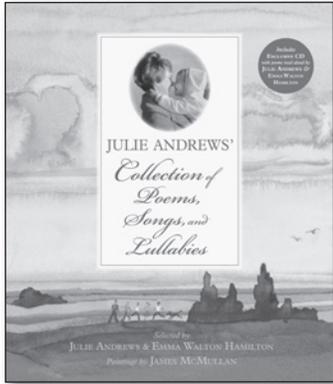
There are numerous resources to assist in creating a Poetry Slam, including websites, films, books, and organizations (Poetry Slam Inc. is a good place to start), but the main keys to a successful slam are a sense of humor and a spirit of fun. Other recommendations include:

- Consider setting the scene for a slam by decorating the venue—be it classroom, cafeteria, or performance space—as an '80s coffee house.
- Enlist a charismatic emcee, whether a student or a teacher, and encourage him or her to rouse the goodwill and enthusiasm of the audience through finger snapping, foot stomping, clapping, and cheering.
- Select a window of time for each performer to conform to: 1, 3, or 5 minutes.
- Give extra points for creative use of rhythm, vocal energy, pacing, elocution, etc.



JULIE ANDREWS' COLLECTION OF POEMS, SONGS, AND LULLABIES

about the book



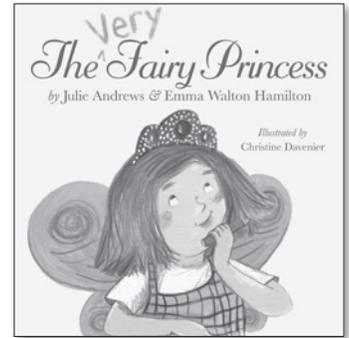
Julie Andrews' Collection of Poems, Songs, and Lullabies

978-0-316-04049-5 HC
978-1-600-24758-3 Audio

Julie Andrews and her daughter, Emma Walton Hamilton, have hand-selected a wonderful mix of their most cherished poems, songs, and lullabies in this rich and diverse poetry collection. Brought to life with James McMullan's stunning watercolor paintings, this volume features nearly 150 treasured works, including beloved classics and modern favorites from Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Jack Prelutsky, Shel Silverstein, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and more—twenty-one of which are theatrically and playfully read aloud by Andrews and Hamilton on the accompanying CD.

This deluxe anthology is bound to inspire an early love of poetry and song and become a classic for families to grow with and treasure throughout the years.

also by Julie Andrews and Emma Walton Hamilton



The Very Fairy Princess

978-0-316-04050-1

about the author and illustrators



DAVID RODGERS

JULIE ANDREWS EDWARDS is one of the most recognized figures in the world of entertainment, best known for her performances in *The Sound of Music*, *Mary Poppins*, and, more recently, *The Princess Diaries*. Julie has been a celebrated children's book author for thirty years and her works include *Mandy*, *The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles*, and the Little Bo series. Her memoir, *Home*, was #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

Learn more about the Julie Andrews Collection titles at <http://www.julieandrewscollection.com/>

EMMA WALTON HAMILTON is a bestselling children's book author, editor, educator, and theater professional. She has co-authored and published 19 books for children and young adults, six of which were *New York Times* bestsellers, including *Dumpy the Dump Truck*, *Simeon's Gift*, and *The Great American Mousical*. Emma is also the author of *Raising Bookworms: Getting Kids Reading for Pleasure and Empowerment*.

JAMES MCMULLAN is an award-winning illustrator whose work has appeared in a variety of books for adults and young readers. He has been internationally recognized for his seventy posters for Lincoln Center Theater. McMullan received the *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book award in 2002 for the picture book *I Stink!*, and has also been awarded the Society of Illustrators' prestigious Hamilton King Award.