

WALK LIGHTLY

by J. Patrick Lewis

Genre: Poetry

Poetic Element: Personification

Comprehension Strategy: Analyze Text Structure

Think-Aloud Copying Master number 5



Before Reading

Genre: Tell students you will read aloud a poem about the natural world. Explain that the names of places have been capitalized even though they are not proper nouns. This gives added emphasis to these places and is a way to personify them, or give them human qualities.

Expand Vocabulary: To help students better understand the poem's imagery, introduce these words before reading:

companion: a friend

lightly: softly

grandeur: beauty

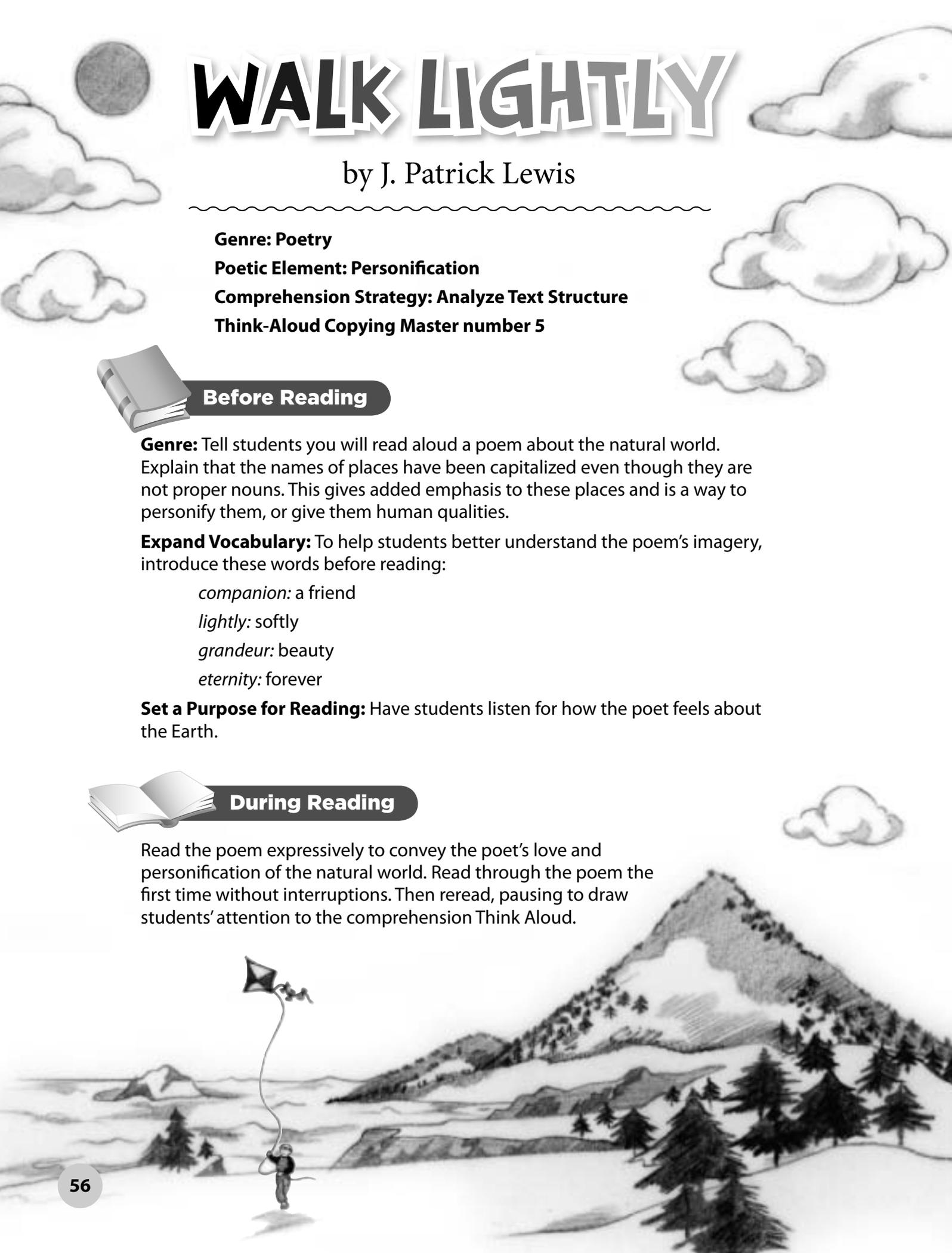
eternity: forever

Set a Purpose for Reading: Have students listen for how the poet feels about the Earth.



During Reading

Read the poem expressively to convey the poet's love and personification of the natural world. Read through the poem the first time without interruptions. Then reread, pausing to draw students' attention to the comprehension Think Aloud.



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Make the Earth your companion.

Walk lightly on it, as other creatures do.

Let the Sky paint her beauty—she is always
watching over you.

Learn from the Sea how to face harsh forces.

Let the River remind you that everything will pass.

Let the Lake instruct you in stillness.

Let the Mountain teach you grandeur.

Make the Woodland your house of peace.

Make the Rainforest your house of hope.

Meet the Wetland on twilight ground.

Save some small piece of Grassland for a red kite
on a windy day.

Watch the Icecaps glisten with crystal majesty.

Hear the Desert whisper hush to eternity.

Let the Town bring you togetherness.

Make the Earth your companion.

Walk lightly on it, as other creatures do.¹



Genre Study

Poetry: The poet personifies nature, or makes it seem like a real person. He uses the word *she* to give the impression that the sky is a woman. He gives the sky human actions such as painting with beautiful colors and watching over the Earth.

Think Aloud

¹ I notice that each line of this poem is a complete sentence. The author also repeats some words. This makes the poem sound like a chant, prayer, or song. The structure helps me understand the meaning of the poem.



After Reading

Set a Purpose for Rereading: Reread the poem for the purpose of exploring the poet’s message.

Student Think Aloud

Use Copying Master number 5 to prompt students to discuss how the author used the structure of a poem to make his point.

“I noticed the author used . . .”

Think and Respond

1. What do you think the poet means when he says “walk lightly”? *Possible responses: Don’t harm Earth; be gentle.* **Critical**
2. How does the poet personify, or give human characteristics to, the sky, mountain, and desert? Give some examples. *Possible responses: The poet describes them doing things that people do. The poet says the sky can paint, the mountain can teach, and the desert can whisper.* **Genre**
3. What do you think the poet is saying about the way people should treat Earth? *Possible responses: He is saying that we should be kind to Earth and treat it like a friend. The poet is saying we should take care of all the different places on Earth because they are beautiful.* **Author’s Purpose**