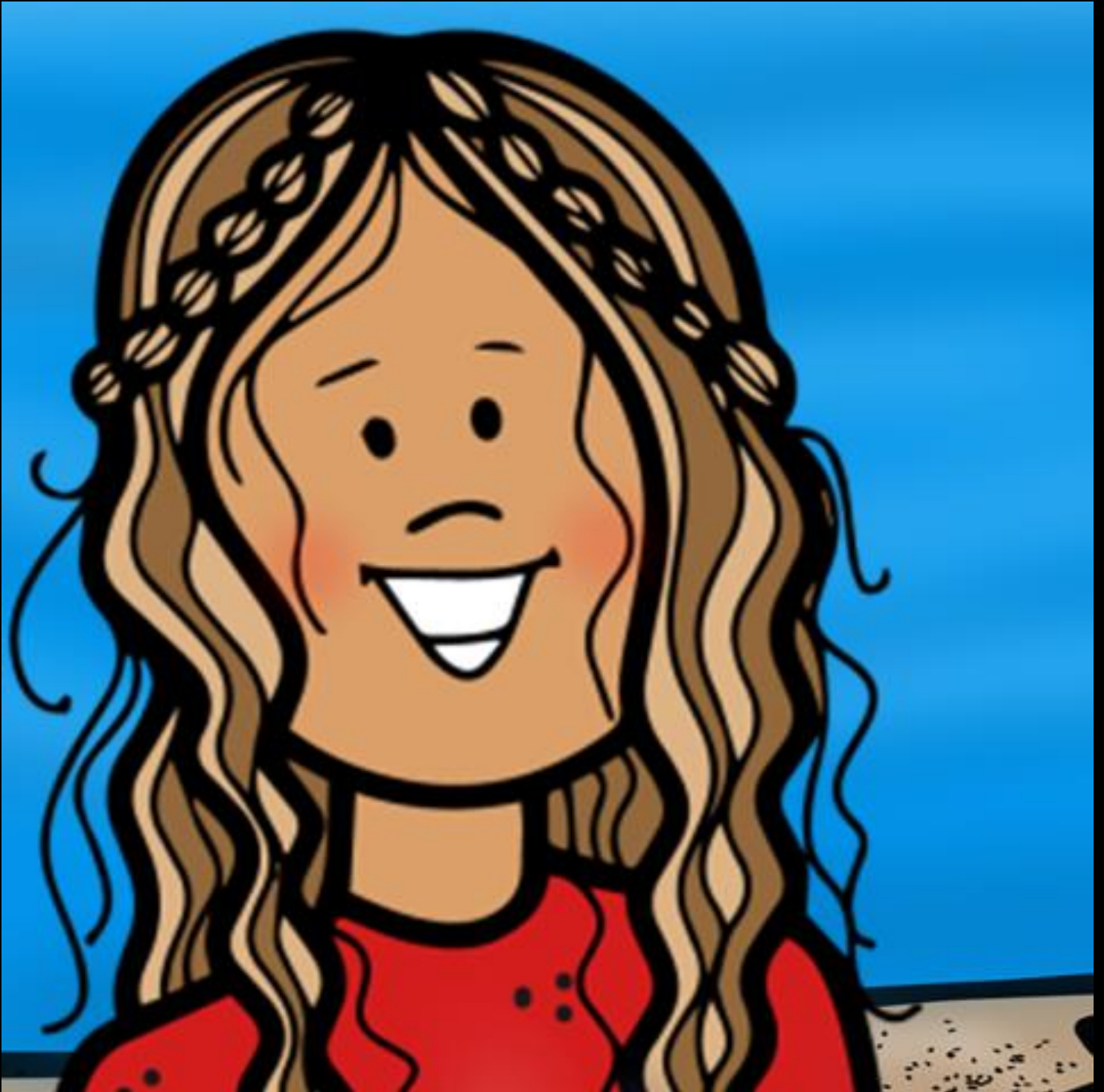


Song for a Whale

Poetry Activity



Created by Gay Miller

Iris's Handshape Poem

Leaves waving

Blowing, twirling

Floating current

Land on a riverbank

Mother bird grabs the leaf

And builds a new nest.

p. 8 - The trick was our hands had to keep the same shape for the whole story. Like if we started out with a closed fist, every sign for the rest of the story had to be made with a fist too. We'd go on and on like that until one of us couldn't think of something to add without breaking the handshape rule....We told the story with our hands open like the number five the whole way through.



The website *Baby Sign Language* provides free printable flashcards with pictures and sign motions. The website also contains videos of the signs. Below are links to the signs that come as close to Iris's Handshape Poems as I could find. Even though some signs are not exact, they will give students a better understanding of the beauty of Iris's poem.

Leaves waving

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/leaf/>

https://www.babysignlanguage.com/flash-cards/f/fall_down/

Blowing, twirling

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/blow/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/flash-cards/c/circle/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/flash-cards/d/dance/>

Floating current

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/float/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/waves/>

Land on a riverbank drop touch

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/land/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/river/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/bank/>

Mother bird grabs the leaf

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/mommy/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/bird/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/grab/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/leaf/>

And builds a new nest.

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/build/>

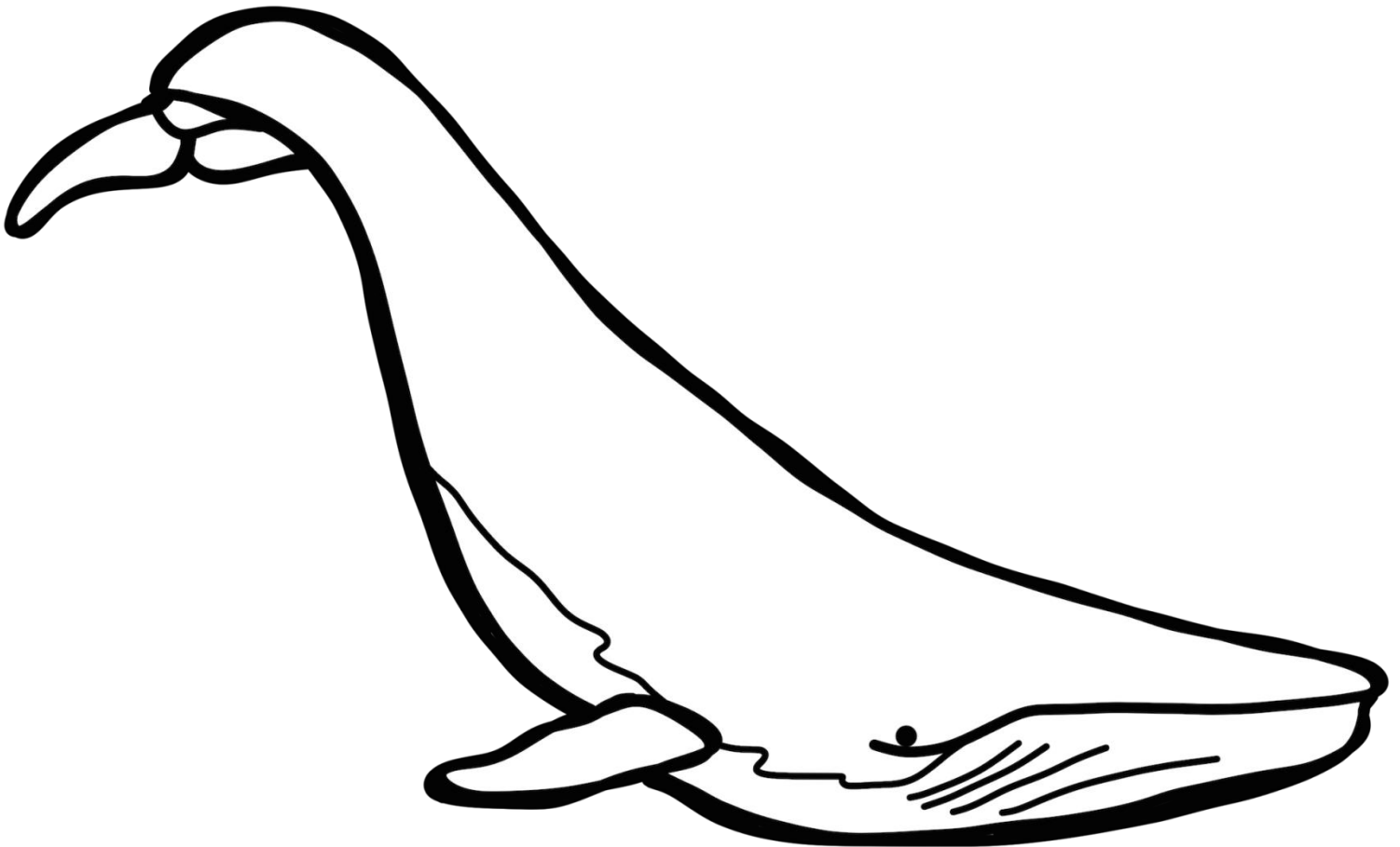
<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/new/>

<https://www.babysignlanguage.com/dictionary/nest/>

52 - A Tale of Loneliness by Johnny DePalma

For whales find whales not just with eyes,
But also with their vocal cries.
Yet, ever since I've tried to call,
It's like I'm not quite here at all.

But have no fear!
I'm doing fine.
I've found some ways to pass the time.
Ummm, lonely?
Yes, but that's okay
I'm sure I'll have a friend someday.



Comparing Poems

Iris's Handshape Poem

Who is the audience?

How is the speaker/narrator of this poem?

How did the poem make you feel?

What is the mood in this poem? How did the poem make you feel?

Explain figures of speech – metaphors, similes, imagery, symbols.

What is the tone in this poem? How does the author feel about the topic of the poem?

Write the theme of this poem in a single sentence.

Does this poem rhyme? If so, what is the rhyming scheme?

How did the poem make you feel?

52 - A Tale of Loneliness by Johnny DePalma

Who is the audience?

How is the speaker/narrator of this poem?

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How did the poem make you feel?

Comparing Poems Sample Answer Key

Iris's Handshape Poem

Who is the audience?

People who know sign language.

How is the speaker/narrator of this poem?

a third person narrator

How did the poem make you feel?

The poem is beautiful. It contains strong imagery.

What is the mood in this poem? How did the poem make you feel?

Peace – Beauty of Nature - The poem represents a picturesque scene in nature. The images of the floating leave and the bird are charming.

Explain figures of speech – metaphors, similes, imagery, symbols.

The appeal of the poem is the flowing hand motions that dance as they tell the story.

What is the tone in this poem? How does the author feel about the topic of the poem?

The author wants the audience to realize that poems come in many formats. Not all poems rhyme.

Write the theme of this poem in a single sentence.

Nature (and sign language) is beautiful.

Does this poem rhyme? If so, what is the rhyming scheme?

This poem is free verse. It does not rhyme.

How did the poem make you feel?

Answers will vary.

52 - A Tale of Loneliness by Johnny DePalma

Who is the audience?

adults and children

How is the speaker/narrator of this poem?

Blue 52 – the whale

How did the poem make you feel?

The poem is written as if the reader is floating through the ocean with Blue and feeling the same emotions that Blue feels.

What is the mood in this poem? How did the poem make you feel?

Compassion – The reader feels compassion for the lonely whale that has no friends.

Explain figures of speech – metaphors, similes, imagery, symbols.

Personification - bellied ground, a whale with characteristics of a person

What is the tone in this poem? How does the author feel about the topic of the poem?

The author wants to teach people especially children that they should accept everyone – even those who are different.

Write the theme of this poem in a single sentence.

People should be kind to everyone even those who are different.

Does this poem rhyme? If so, what is the rhyming scheme?

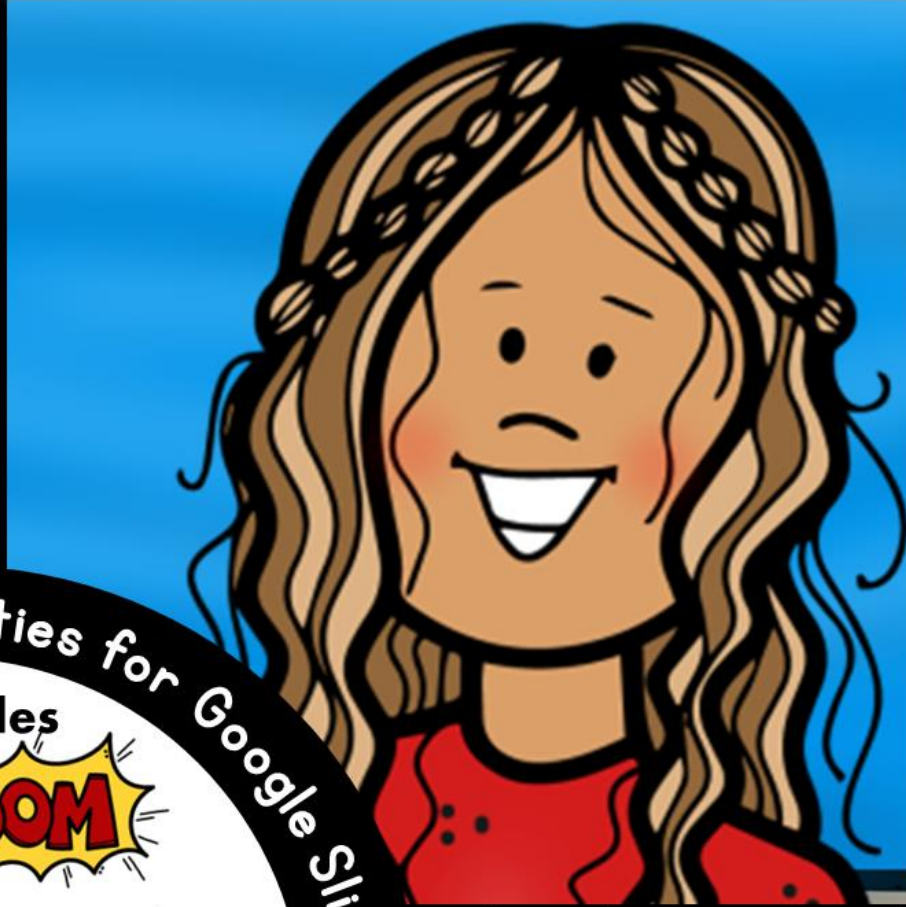
The poem varies between verses but it mostly follows the AABB pattern.

How did the poem make you feel?

Answers will vary.

Song for a Whale

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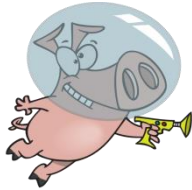
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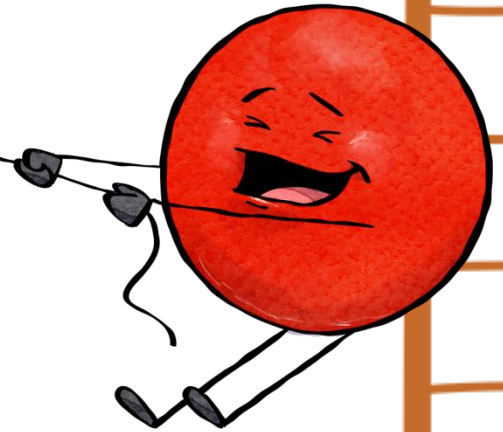


MyCuteGraphics



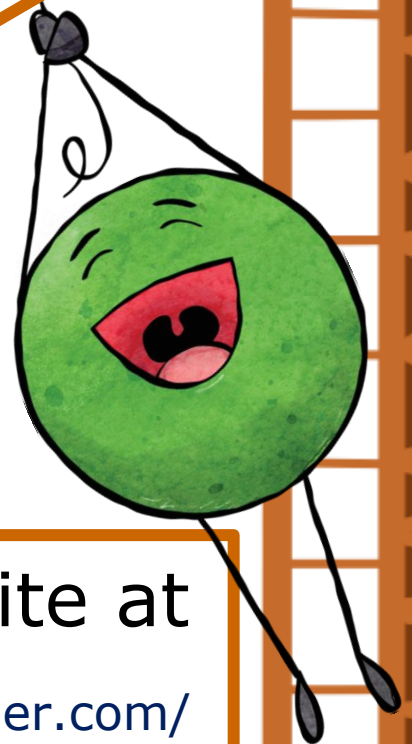
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