Preparing to Read

Birdfoot's Grampa / Valentine for Ernest Mann

Literary Focus

Lyric Poems Some poems tell stories, while others vividly express the thoughts and feelings of the speaker. Poems that express thoughts and feelings are called **lyric poems.** Lyric poems are usually short, and they evoke—rather than state directly—a single, strong emotion.

Reading Focus

Reading a Poem The first time you read a poem, don't worry about identifying literary elements; just enjoy! Then, read the poem again, paying closer attention to its individual parts, such as its title, the writer's word choice, and punctuation.

Into Action As you read the poem, keep track of what you get out of the poem each time you read it by filling in a chart like this one.

Birdfoot's Grampa	Valentine for Ernest Mann
First reading:	First reading: I like the way the speaker talks directly to me. I think the part about the skunks is funny.
Second reading:	Second reading:

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Find It in Your Reading Both of these poems use imagery to help the reader see ordinary things in a new light. **Images** appeal to the reader's sense of sight, smell, touch, hearing, or taste. As you read these poems, list at least three sensory images from each poem in your *Reader/Writer Notebook*.

Reader/Writer Notebook

Use your **RWN** to complete the activities for these selections.

Vocabulary

Valentine for Ernest Mann

spirit (SPIHR iht) *n.:* courage; liveliness. *Asking a famous poet to write you a poem shows spirit.*

drifting (DRIHF tihng) *v.* used as *adj.:* being carried along as if by a current of air or water. *We can catch beautiful, poetic images drifting throughout our lives.*

re-invented (ree ihn VEHN tihd) *v.:* created again, or made new. *Poets have re-invented ordinary things to help readers see them in a new way.*

Language Coach

Connotations Words have two kinds of meanings: **denotations** you find in a dictionary, and **connotations** are the feelings and associations the words bring forth. Think about the word *spirit,* listed above. What connotations does that word evoke?

Learn It Online

To observe a good reader in action visit:

go.hrw.com L8-683 Go

Selection Resources

Collection 7 Resources, on-level practice and assessment, pp. 7, 10, 13

PowerNotes, interactive lesson presentations with activities

Teacher One Stop™, on-level lesson plans and all print resources

Holt Audio Library

Holt Audio Library: Selections and Summaries in Spanish

The Holt Reader, p. 254

The Holt Reader, Adapted Version, p. 212

Holt Audio Tutor

Differentiating Instruction, modified lesson plans and leveled assessment

Holt English Language Development, systematic instruction and scaffolded content

Supporting Instruction in Six Languages, selection summary

Resources for Teaching Advanced Students, lesson plans

Analyzing Visuals Transparencies, p. 55

ThinkCentral Online Assessment, Selection Test

Preteach

Introducing Vocabulary

- Review the Vocabulary words, definitions, and sentences with students.
- Reinforce the importance of the Vocabulary words in "Valentine for Ernest Mann." Explain that the speaker admires the **spirit** of a person who asks her for a poem. She encourages readers to **re-invent** their lives to find poetry in unusual places, such as in **drifting** shadows.

Language Coach

Use **Language Coach** to help English-language learners acquire word knowledge. ***Answer:*** Spirit *has positive, energetic connotations.*

Give the examples of *cheap* and *inexpensive.* Explain that while both words denote "costing little money," the connotation of *cheap* is negative.

Literary Focus

As you read and discuss the selections with students, have them note characteristics of lyric poems.

Reading Focus

Give students a copy of the Reading Focus graphic organizer. (See **Collection 7 Resources.**) Have them use their responses to answer the questions on the Applying Your Skills page.

Writing Focus

As they read, have students record sensory images in their **Reader/Writer Notebooks**.

Learn It Online

Online reading support for these selections includes audio segments that model the thought processes of a good reader. These Think-Aloud models are followed by prompts that let the students record their own thoughts about the selections. Preview at **go.hrw.com**.

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Selection Introduction

More About the Writers

- **Joseph Bruchac's** writing is shaped by his connection to his family roots. For many years, he has served as storyteller-in-residence for Native American groups and for schools throughout North America.
- **Naomi Shihab Nye** was born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a Palestinian father and an American mother. She spent her high school years living in Jordan, Jerusalem, and Texas. Peace and heritage are common themes in her poetry.

Think About the Writers

Ask students to share their opinions about what poetry can express. Have them compare their opinions to the thoughts of each poet. Ask students how the poets' backgrounds might have shaped their beliefs about what poetry can express.

For Independent Reading

- For more poems about Native American cultures, suggest *Harper's Anthology of Native American Poetry*, edited by Duane Niatum.
- If students are interested in reading poetry by international writers, they might enjoy *Voices: Poetry and Art from Around the World,* compiled by Barbara Brenner.

Learn It Online

Writers' Lives offers more information on the life of Joseph Bruchac as well as Holt's interactive resources pertaining to the author. Preview at **go.hrw.com**.

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MEET THE WRITERS

Learn It Online
Learn more about Bruchac at:
go.hrw.com L8-684 Go



Joseph Bruchac

(1942–)

When You Least Expect Them

Joseph Bruchac was born in Saratoga Springs, New York, and raised there by his grandmother and grandfather, who was a member of the Abenaki people. Bruchac studied wildlife conservation in college. Today he is a well-known editor, publisher, poet, and collector of folk tales. He says that "Birdfoot's Grampa" describes a lesson he was taught "in the way most good lessons come to you—when you least expect them."



Naomi Shihab Nye

(1952–)

Finding Poetry in the Familiar

Naomi Shihab Nye often runs workshops in schools to help students find the poetry hidden in their imagination. She is inspired by everyday activities and tasks. In her poems, Nye makes the tiniest, most mundane details exceptional and wonderful. She once said:

> "Familiar sights, sounds, smells have always been my necessities. Let someone else think about future goals and professional lives! I will keep track of the bucket and the hoe . . . and clouds drifting in from the horizon."

For more information about Naomi Shihab Nye, see page 164.

Think About the Writers

What does each of the poets believe poetry can express?

Preview the Selections

The speaker of "Birdfoot's Grampa" is frustrated when his grandfather stops their car again and again to move small toads out of the way.

In "Valentine for Ernest Mann," the speaker responds to someone who has asked for a poem.

Differentiating Instruction

Readers Gaining Proficiency

Organize students into mixed-ability pairs and have them read both poems, stopping after each stanza to paraphrase it. If students become confused, encourage them to read sentence by sentence, completing these stems: The poet says _____. I think she means _____.

See **Differentiating Instruction** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching readers gaining proficiency.

Advanced Learners

Acceleration Have students brainstorm lists of objects or places that are not usually thought of as inspirational or important. Ask them to choose one item from their list and write a poem about it.

See **Resources for Teaching Advanced Students** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching advanced learners.

Read with a Purpose Read this poem to find out what is important to the speaker's grandfather.

BIRDFOOT'S GRAMPA

by **Joseph Bruchac**

The old man
must have stopped our car
two dozen times to climb out
and gather into his hands
the small toads blinded
by our lights and leaping,
live drops of rain. Ⓐ



The rain was falling,
a mist about his white hair
and I kept saying
you can't save them all
accept it, get back in
we've got places to go.

But, leathery hands full
of wet brown life,
knee deep in the summer
roadside grass,
he just smiled and said
they have places to go to
too. Ⓑ

Ⓐ **Read and Discuss** What is Grampa doing?

Ⓑ **Literary Focus** **Lyric Poem** The speaker and Grampa have different ideas about what is important. What idea do you think the poem is expressing?

Direct Teach

Think About/Talk About

Read with a Purpose Have students read the Read with a Purpose statement. Ask them how the viewpoints of a grandfather and grandson might differ. Then, have students read to find out what the grandfather finds important in life.

Comprehension

Ⓐ Read and Discuss

Possible response: *Grampa keeps stopping his car to rescue toads from a rainy roadway.*

Analysis

Ⓑ Literary Focus

Possible response: *Grampa believes that any life, even that of a toad, is important. The speaker disagrees. The poem is expressing the idea that all life is valuable.*

Extend the Discussion

Analyzing Word Choice Why do you think the poet describes the toads as "leaping" rather than "jumping"? ***Possible response:*** *"Leaping" has a lighter connotation, which works better than "jumping" because the toads are small.*

Differentiating Instruction

Learners with Diverse Needs

Tell students that the single idea expressed in "Birdfoot's Grampa" is that all life is valuable. Have students work in pairs to find words and phrases from the poem that support this statement.

See **Differentiating Instruction** for lesson plans and strategies for teaching learners with diverse needs.

Naturalist Learners

Ask students to think about the natural sensations of the grandfather's experience. For example, what might the grandfather feel when he picks up the toads? What noises might he hear as he does this? How does the grass feel against his legs? What does the wet summer air smell like?

Have students work in pairs to write a sensory image in answer to one of these questions. Ask students to share the image with the class and identify the senses to which it appeals.