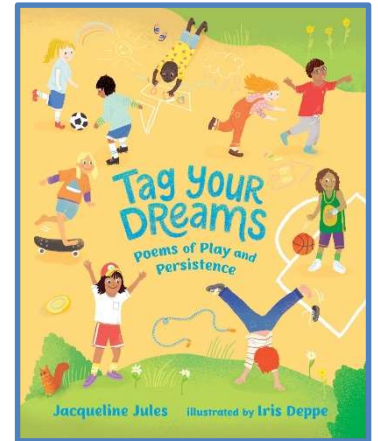


Teacher's Guide:
TAG YOUR DREAMS: Poems of Play and Persistence
by Jacqueline Jules, illus. by Iris Deppe

Tag Your Dreams: Poems of Play and Persistence celebrates being active, reaching goals, and learning limits. The poems employ figurative language devices such as alliteration, simile, metaphor, repetition, personification, and onomatopoeia. Each poem tells a story. This teacher's guide provides questions to discuss, ways to examine the poetry, and writing prompts.



TAG YOUR DREAMS

Discuss!

- What are your dreams for the future?

Examine the Poem!

- Identify verbs which refer to the game of tag, e.g., chase, running, reaching.
- Do dreams have strong legs? Is this personification— attributing human characteristics to something that is not human?

Write!

- Write about your dreams. Does anything stand in your way? Are you confident you will succeed or are you afraid of failure?

FOLLOW THE SIDEWALK

Discuss!

- Have you taken a walk or a run just before a thunderstorm?

Examine the Poem!

- A simile is a figure of speech comparing two things with the words “like” or “as.” Can you identify the poem’s simile?
- What does the poet mean by “follow the sidewalk”?

Write!

- Write a poem about the color of rain clouds. Include a simile.



FOUR SQUARE RECESS

Discuss!

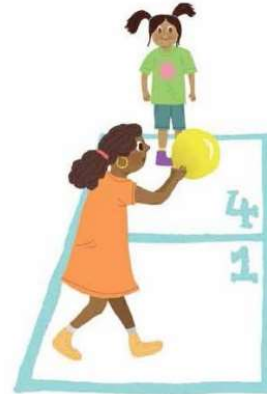
- Do you like fast-moving games or slower paced ones? Why?

Examine the Poem!

- How does the poet set the scene? Would you know this is a game of Four Square without the title?
- Identify action words which indicate the movement of the ball between players, e.g., send, smacks, hurls, hits.

Write!

- Write step-by-step instructions for playing Four Square.



CLAPPING HANDS

Discuss!

- Do you enjoy hand clapping rhymes? Share one you like.

Examine the Poem!

- What do we know about the girls in the poem? Identify the descriptive phrases.
- How many words are in the last stanza? Discuss how poets use economy of language to convey meaning with as few words as possible.

Write!

- Write a hand clapping rhyme and share it with a friend.



PEDALING TO PIANO

Discuss!

- Have you ever crashed on a bike? Were you injured? Were you wearing a helmet?

Examine the Poem!

- Alliteration is the use of the same consonants to create a musical sound in a poem. Identify words which use alliteration.
- This poem compares two bike accidents. How do the comparisons help tell the story?

Write!

- Write a personal narrative about recovering from an accident. Did you learn something about yourself?



AT BAT



Discuss!

- Do you play baseball or softball? How do you feel at the plate?

Examine the Poem!

- Did the narrator strike out last time at bat? Which phrase suggests that?
- The narrator wants to send “fear sailing over the fence.” Why?

Write!

- Create a comforting conversation between a player who has just struck out and a teammate.

IN THE OUTFIELD

Discuss!

- Do you ever remind yourself to take a breath and slow down?

Examine the Poem!

- Look at the short lines making the poem skinny on the page. Does it help describe the action in the poem?
- Name the words which refer to baseball, e.g., glove, cleats, field. How does using specific words paint a clearer picture in a poem?

Write!

- Write an essay about playing in the outfield vs. the infield.



CARTWHEEL LESSON



Discuss!

- Do you like cartwheels or gymnastics? Why or why not?

Examine the Poem!

- Is Sue bossy? What lines in the poem suggest this?
- What lines tell you the narrator has made a decision?

Write!

- Write a persuasive conversation between two friends in which one friend tries to convince another friend to try a gymnastics class.

LAST PICK FOR KICKBALL

Discuss!

- How should recreational teams be created? By captains? By counting? Other ways?

Examine the Poem!

- The poem begins with an interrobang, a type of punctuation which combines question marks and exclamation points. Does this punctuation express the narrator's frustration?
- Did the narrator kick a home run? Which phrases tell you this?

Write!

- Write an essay about choosing teams by captain vs. counting off by numbers. Discuss the pros and cons.



MERMAID MANATEE



Discuss!

- How do you feel in the water?

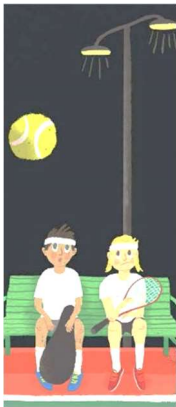
Examine the Poem!

- In this poem, the narrator is addressing a bully. Is the bully present?
- The narrator identifies with a manatee. What phrases describe manatees as beautiful creatures?

Write!

- Do some research on manatees and their connection to mermaid legends. Write an informative nonfiction piece.

COURTSIDE SONG



Discuss!

- How do you feel about waiting to play a game? Is it hard for you?

Examine the Poem!

- This poem uses onomatopoeia, words that imitate the sound they describe. Can you identify five onomatopoeic words?
- Name five specific noises the narrator hears in this poem.

Write!

- Write a poem or a paragraph about being outside at night. What noises do you hear? Do you find night noises comforting or scary?

STRINGS



Discuss!

- Have you flown a kite on a windy day?

Examine the Poem!

- What does the string represent? Is it just a kite string? Or is it a symbol in a relationship?

- Who is the kite in this poem? Does it represent the narrator?

Does the poet use personification in this poem?

Write!

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a kite. Does it love to fly? Does it fear trees?

KICK SCOOTERS

Discuss!

- Have you ridden a kick scooter? How would you describe it?

Examine the Poem!

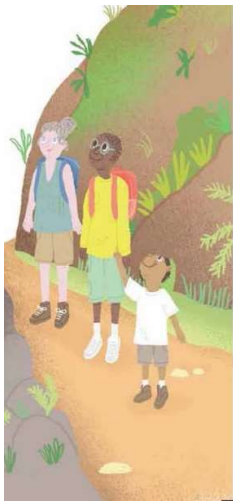
- This poem uses dialogue between the characters. How does this help portray the relationship discussed in the poem?
- Were you surprised by the ending?

Write!

- Write about a day at the park. What did you see? Did you have a picnic? Did it take time to get there?



THE RIVER TRAIL



Discuss!

- How do you feel outside in nature? Are you inspired by birds, waterfalls, and trees?

Examine the Poem!

- This poem uses details, such as a red-tailed hawk and sycamore trees. Why is it more vivid to name the specific kind of bird or tree?

- In the “I spy” guessing game, the items are listed as “a squirrel, a spider, a bird, a berry.” Would listing the items as “a squirrel, a bird, a spider, a berry” sound the same? Discuss why poets carefully place words in a poem.

Write!

- Describe a waterfall or a body of flowing water. Write a poem.

MINI GOLF GIGGLE

Discuss!

- Have you ever played mini golf?

Examine the Poem!

- How does the line “small body bubbling like the fountains beside us” describe two things at the same time?
- The words, “growl,” “giggles,” and “gurgles” are in close proximity. Can you spot other instances of alliteration?

Write!

- Write a story about two siblings playing mini golf. Include dialogue. What do they say to each other?



UMBRELLA DANCE

Discuss!

- Do you like to play in the rain?

Examine the Poem!

- The narrator says her little sister “doesn’t pout over canceled plans at the beach.” What does this say about the narrator?
- The baby sister is dressed in a rainbow coat, polka dot boots, and a frog umbrella. Does this show her personality?

Write!

- Write a poem about playing in the rain. Use sensory details.



PIÑATA

Discuss!

- What are your favorite party games?

Examine the Poem!

- What details in the poem suggest a piñata game?
- Do you think the narrator is determined? What lines suggest this?

Write!

- Write an article about different party games, including a description of each.





#64 SOCCER TRYOUTS

Discuss!

- Have you ever tried out for a sports team? How did you feel?

Examine the Poem!

- Which stanza shows that the narrator wants to impress the coach with her appearance?
- The last line says, “All goals reached.” What goals were described in the poem?

Write!

- Write a conversation between Lainey Steele and her father after soccer tryouts. What does she tell him? How does he respond?

KNOCKING DOWN GHOSTS

Discuss!

- Do you worry what people think when you bowl or play other games?

Examine the Poem!

- How does the poet use personification in this poem?
Can a bowling pin snicker?
- Who are the ghosts in this poem? Are they a symbol?

Write!

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a bowling ball who hates loud noises.



TAE KWON DO

Discuss!

- What do you know about martial arts?

Examine the Poem!

- Does the line “I breathe till the knot on my belt rises” create a better image than saying “I breathe deeply”?
- What line in the poem lets you know that the narrator is ready to face the next challenge?

Write!

- Write a story about a girl who wants to try martial arts. How does she convince her parents?



REBOUNDING LUCK



Discuss!

- What does a gym sound like during a basketball game?

Examine the Poem!

- Where do you see alliteration in this poem?
- What does “slipping off without a swish” mean? Is the word, “swish,” onomatopoeic, a word that sounds like what it means?

Write!

- Write a poem which suggests the sound of a bouncing ball. Use onomatopoeia, repetition, and alliteration.

VOLLEYBALL

Discuss!

- Why is volleyball a team sport?

Examine the Poem!

- What does “The ball sails on my strength alone” mean? Does this narrator like to be in control?
- What is the “tough white sphere?” How does a descriptive phrase rather than a single noun increase imagery?

Write!

- Write your own poem about playing volleyball.



ON THE PLAYGROUND

Discuss!

- Do you know more than one language?

Examine the Poem!

- Can you feel the rhythm of jumping rope in the poem? How do the short lines help?
- This poem describes several sounds. What are they?

Write!

- Write a jump rope rhyme.



FLAG FOOTBALL

Discuss!

- Have you ever tried a sport because a parent insisted?

Examine the Poem!

- Two words explain what Dad is worried about. What are they?
- How does the repetition of the word “no” compare flag football to tackle football?

Write!

- Write an essay comparing flag football to tackle football. How are they different? How are they the same?



RUNNING BACK

Discuss!

- Do you watch games on television?

Examine the Poem!

- How do you know the narrator in this poem is watching rather than playing? What lines suggest this?
- At the end of the poem, the narrator wishes to run “past all those guys trying to knock me down.” What does this mean?

Write!

- Write a personal narrative about a Super Bowl party or a time when you watched a game with someone special to you.



THE HILL

Discuss!

- Have you ever gone sledding? Describe the experience.

Examine the Poem!

- What are the similes in this poem? Do they help paint a picture of snow in your mind?
- Talk about sensory details, how the narrator describes physical sensations, e.g., bubbling inside, cool air nipping my cheeks, legs tiring.

Write!

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a person seeing snow for the first time. Be sure to use sensory details and describe emotions.



NOT TOO SMALL FOR A SNOWMAN

Discuss!

- Do you play with your family when it snows?

Examine the Poem!

- The first three snowballs are described as “the size of my brother’s boot.” How do comparisons help description?
- The poem lists six items the snowman was dressed in. What are they? How do details help description?

Write!

- Write a personal narrative about playing in the snow with friends or family members.



GRACELESS GIRL SKIS DOWN SLOPE

Discuss!

- Have you ever gone skiing? Describe the experience.

Examine the Poem!

- What consonant sound is repeated? Examine how the “s” sound suggests the sound of skiing.
- What does the narrator mean when she says her old self is “spinning off in a fine white powder”?

Write!

- Write a personal narrative about successfully participating in a sport. Did it change your image of yourself?



OLYMPIC SKATER

Discuss!

- Have you ever watched the Winter Olympics on television? What is your favorite sport?

Examine the Poem!

- This poem begins with a question, “Did you see how...?” Does this question set the tone for the poem?
- Identify and discuss alliterative phrases. Would saying “Spinning airborne, he grins” instead of “Spinning airborne, he smiles” sound as musical to the ear?

Write!

- Write an interview between a Winter Olympic athlete and a newscaster. What questions are asked? What are the answers?



FRESH ICE

Discuss!

- Have you ever attended a hockey game? Describe the experience.

Examine the Poem!

- The narrator says, "Zamboni has shaved the old layer off and left a magic mirror." What does that mean? What is the "magic mirror"?
- Identify alliterative phrases. How do they make the poem musical without rhyme?

Write!

- Write a personal narrative about rooting for a team during a losing season. How did you keep your spirits up?



HOCKEY PUCK

Discuss!

- Have you ever ice skated? How does it feel to move on skates?

Examine the Poem!

- How did you feel when you read the line "Everyone wants to control it." Can you identify with the way the narrator feels?
- Point out the action verbs. How does using action verbs like "charge, chase, slap, flies" create a feeling of movement?

Write!

- Write a poem or story from the viewpoint of a hockey puck who loves speeding across the ice. Describe the hockey puck's glee slipping past the goalie.



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