Using Shel Silverstein’s Poetry to Foster Communication throughout the Curriculum

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Listen to Shel Silverstein recite his poetry

Ickle was captain,
And Pickle was crew,
And Tickle served coffee
And mulligan stew,
As higher
And higher
And higher they flew,
Increasing Vocabulary

The Farmer and the Queen
From Shel Silverstein's "Where the Sidewalk Ends", p. 32

"She's coming", the farmer said to the owl.
"Oh, what shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?
Shall I bow when she comes? Shall I twiddle my thumbs?"
And the owl asked, "Who, who?"

"The queen, the queen, the royal queen.
She'll pass the farm today.
Shall I salute?", he asked the horse.
And the horse said, "Nay, nay."
Increasing Vocabulary

“What’s In the Sack?”

What’s In the Sack from Where the Sidewalk Ends by Shel Silverstein; adaptations by Jessie Moreau using Boardmaker PCS and Writing with Symbols by Mayer-Johnson, LLC
I opened my eyes
And looked up at the rain,
And it dripped in my head
And flowed into my brain,
And all that I hear as I lie in my bed
Is the slishity-slosh of the rain in my head.

“Where the Sidewalk Ends”, p. 40

RAIN
I step very softly,
I walk very slow,
I can’t do a handstand—
I might overflow,

So pardon the wild crazy thing I just said—
I’m just not the same since there’s rain in my head.
Homonyms are words that are usually spelled the same but have different meanings. Here are some examples:

- “Turkey?” (Falling Up, p. 34) drumstick (turkey leg) drumstick (music)
- “Safe?” (Falling Up, p. 25) safe (to cross the street) safe (falling from building)
- “Overdues” (A Light in the Attic, p. 65) fine (something you pay) fine (feeling)
- “Traffic Light” (Where the Sidewalk Ends, p. 121) light (brightness) light (weight)
Homophones are words that sound alike but are different in meaning and spelling.

Here are some examples:

- “Little Hoarse” (Falling Up, p. 29) hoarse horse
- “Anteater” (A Light in the Attic, p. 61) anteater aunt eater
- “Wild Boar” (Where the Sidewalk Ends, p. 68) shore sure
Parts of Speech - Opposites

“The Googies are Coming”

The googies are coming, and maybe tonight,
To buy little children and lock them up tight.

Eighty cents for husky ones,
Quarter for the weak ones,
Penny each for noisy ones,
A dollar for the meek ones.
The gookies are coming, the old people say,
To buy little children and take them away.

50¢  Fifty cents for fat ones,
20¢  Twenty cents for lean ones,
15¢  Fifteen cents for dirty ones,
30¢  Thirty cents for clean ones,
5¢   A nickel each for mean ones.
Learn everything you need to know to become a "Giggle Poet!" The easy-to-follow instructions on this page will have you up and writing funny poems in no time at all. Choose from the following lessons:

"Down By The Bay" Part I

"What Bugs Me" Poem

Teacher's Lunch Poem

Tabloid Headline