

# Questions for the Sky

By Eva Sierra

**Education level:** Any

**Genre:** Poetry

**Time frame:** 1 hour

**Objective:** Identify use of personification and display understanding by creating a conversational poem with the sky.

**Prior knowledge and skills:** None

**Required materials:** Pen and paper. A white board, projection board, page, or document for brainstorming.

**Literary model:** “Sky” by Cecelia Nuñez

## Sequence of activities:

### Introduction (15 minutes):

This lesson is suitable for all age groups. I have found that younger students enjoyed writing individual poems for this lesson, while older students embraced the group poem model for this lesson.

Begin with asking the class: *What is the sky made of? (Specifically, we are asking what entities are in the sky? Clouds, stars, sun, moon, etc.)* Call upon students to name what is in the sky. You can write these down on the board if it feels helpful.

Next, share Cecelia Nuñez’s “Sky.” The poem can be found by visiting this link:

<http://www.hanksville.org/voyage/poems/sky.html>

Since the poem is short, read it twice. When working with younger students (if it is possible), invite the class to read along with you during the second time. Use a pointing tool (or your hand) to help guide the class as they follow along.

After sharing, invite students to share any thoughts or impressions they might have about the poem.

Take some time to point out the personified characteristics given to the sky in “Sky.”

*“Stars / there they are, / they watch over me.”*

*“Moon / she’s coming up / coming to light my way.”*

Ask students to take a moment to silently ponder what it would look like if the sky really did watch over us, help us, and even show us love. Next, invite students to silently ponder the

question: “If the sky knows us and watches over us, what does it know about us?” As they silently ponder, supplement their thinking by offering follow-up questions:

*Would the sky know your favorite color? Your favorite places to go? Would the sky know your favorite people, and where they live? Would the sky know what makes you feel better when you are sad?*

**Brainstorming (0-15 minutes):**

To teach this lesson for the creation of a group poem, you can skip the brainstorming and go straight to the next section.

If you are teaching this lesson for the creation of individual poems, create a circle map labeled: “Questions for the Sky.” Ask students “If the sky knows just about everything about you, what would you like to know about the sky?” Call upon students to share their responses and add them to the circle map. Try to collect ideas from all of the students in the group. Invite students to ask questions about the sky’s personality, experiences, hopes, and dreams. Also invite students to ask questions about themselves, their communities, and society, given the sky’s omniscient nature.

Try to gather as many contributions to the map as possible. In moments where ideas slow down, repeat out loud the contributions that you find interesting—chances are they might inspire other ideas!

After the class feels satisfied with their list, ask students to take a few moments to look at the answers the class generated, or repeat the list out loud. Next, ask students to take time to silently ponder the responses, and think about which contributions they relate to.

**Writing Exercise (10-20 minutes):**

Students will write a poem asking the sky questions.

Students writing individual poems can reference the group brainstorming responses and write a poem of questions for the sky. Encourage students to not only address the sky (“Dear Sky...”), but also the individual parts of the sky that we noted at the beginning of the lesson: “Dear Clouds,” “Dear Sun,” “Dear Moon,” “Dear Stars,” etc. Remind students to ask questions about the sky’s personality, experiences, hopes, dreams, and anything else they might want to ask. Let them know they will be writing for ten minutes. If at ten minutes the class is still writing, silently extend the time by 3-5 minutes.

If creating a group poem, invite students to ponder the question: “If the sky knows just about everything about us, what would we ask the sky?” As students respond, write down their questions. Invite students to ask questions about the sky’s personality, experiences, hopes, and dreams. Also invite students to ask questions about themselves, their communities, and society,

given the sky's omniscient nature. You can ask students to raise their hand or call out their ideas, until the poem feels complete. Add the ideas one at the time to the poem, in real time. With this model, make sure each student makes at least one contribution. Collect responses from the class until the poem feels complete. This may take longer than writing individual poems, up to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the class.

**Viewing/Sharing (5-10 minutes):**

If writing individual poems, invite students to share what they have written. If students are feeling shy, ask if anyone is willing to let you read their work out loud on their behalf. This usually encourages students to share.

If writing a group poem, you can read the poem back to the class and project it on the board when possible. Invite students to share their thoughts on the poem.

Examples of an individual poem and a group poem created using this lesson are included below:

**Cataleya Mosley, MILES ELC**

**“Dear Sky”**

Dear Sky, are you a dog person?  
Dear Sky, do you want to be my BFF?  
Dear Sky, is your favorite color yellow?  
Dear Sky, do you like music?  
Dear Sky, do you like dancing?  
Dear Earth, do you eat pizza?  
Dear Earth, do you know how to play Roblox?  
Dear Earth, do you have a little buddy?

**Tree Windsong's High School Class, ASDB**

**“Questions for the Sky”**

How do you float?  
How far do you go?  
What are your hobbies?  
Where does rain come from?  
How soft are you?  
Can you change color?  
    (Is it a rule to stay white?)  
Can you cover the sun?

Can the night last longer?

Are you gentle and kind?

How long will you live?

Will you one day kill us all?

Do mice control the weather?

What makes you colorful?

Do you hear my hopes?

What is your favorite smell?

Do you like horses?

If there are seahorses, are there *skyhorses*?

Will I travel to the sky when I move on from this life?

Why doesn't it rain in the desert?

How do you connect with other galaxies?

Where do you reside?

How is my family in Mexico?

Is it snowing up north?

Where do you keep peace?

Where do you see peace?

Do you see?

Do you smell?

Do you feel?

How do you know about me?

How do you heal?

Are there things you don't like?

Do you believe in me?