

Lesson Plan: Acrostics for Everyone

- *Shaking Things Up* is a book of poems about smart and courageous women by Susan Hood. Each poem profiles a different woman and is illustrated by a different author (including this year's BTT author Shadra Strickland). This lesson will cover the poem profile about Pura Belpré who was a "children's author and the first Latina librarian at the New York Public Library" (Hood, 17). This poem was illustrated by Sara Palacios. The focus of this lesson is for ELL or Dual Language students but can be used with any K-2 students.

The lesson plan is inspired by [this plan](#) from readwritethink.org by Christine Kalemba. It has been adapted here for use with the Pura Belpré poem from *Shaking Things Up*. It can also be used with any bilingual book you have available in your classroom.

- Resources & Preparation
 - The book *Shaking Things Up* by Susan Hood.
 - Pencils and paper (or Chromebook or other typical classroom writing implement)
 - If internet access is available to students, consider the additional ideas of student interactives and apps [here](#).
- Instructional Plan
 - Student Objectives: (adapted from Kalemba's [plan](#))
 - Improve English comprehension and fluency and learn new vocabulary words in their non-native language using readings of a bilingual poem
 - Reinforce their knowledge of vocabulary by talking about and writing words that describe a person they know.
 - Apply what they have learned and practice the writing process by writing a simple acrostic poem.
 - Actions
 1. Read the poem "The Storyteller" on page 17 of *Shaking Things Up* aloud to students.
 2. Tell the students that this is an acrostic poem and explain "that it is a poem about a person or thing and that every line of the poem relates to and starts with a letter in the word." (Kalemba)
 3. Read Pura Belpré's short biography and/or talk about who she was.
 4. Show them the illustration that accompanies the poem and talk to them about what they see in the picture. (*Possible Prompts: who is the main character in this picture? What is she doing in this picture? What are the children doing?*)
 5. Read the line at the bottom of the picture: "I wished to be like Johnny Appleseed...to plant my story seeds across the land."
 6. Make sure each child has sheets of paper and a pencil.
 7. Tell your students to think about someone they know and would like to write a poem about. Suggestions include parent/grandparent/sibling/cousin/friend/neighbor.
 8. Instruct your students to write the name of the person in the middle of their paper and draw a circle around the name. Next, ask them to think about words that describe their

family member and write those words down on the paper (preferably 5-6 words, depending on time and ability). These words can be in English or Spanish (or other language as necessary)

9. On another piece of paper, have your students write the alphabet down a line on the left side of their paper. Show them the poem in *Shaking Things Up* as an example. Tell them this list of the alphabet is the beginning of an acrostic poem like the one about Pura Belpré.
10. Help your students put the words describing their person of interest into their acrostic poem by the correct letter. If a student has multiple words that start with the same letter, start a conversation about other words that mean something similar.
11. Set the poem aside and tell your students to add words to their acrostic poem when they think of more interesting and fun things about their person of interest.
12. Encourage students to read their poems aloud to their classmates, or later to the person about whom they wrote their poem.
13. To build on this lesson, see more suggestions from [Kalemba](#).

- Additional Resources

For more about Pura Belpré, see these links below.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/books-authors/pura-belpr%C3%A9-her-life-and-legacy>

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-storyteller-s-candle-la-velita-de-los-cuentos>