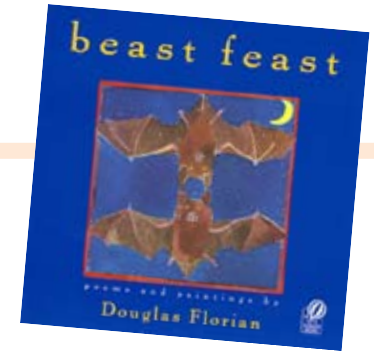


## Beast Feast

by Douglas Florian



### Introduce *Beast Feast*

This is a collection of funny poems about real animals, including a whale, a firefly, and a boa constrictor. Each poem is paired with an amusing illustration.

Get kids curious about *Beast Feast*. Ask if anyone has heard of one of the less common animals, such as the rhea. Have kids guess what a rhea looks like before showing them the picture of the rhea and reading the poem about it.

### Discuss *Beast Feast*

After reading a few poems aloud, ask kids whether they liked the poems you read and why. Help guide a discussion about poetry by asking:

1. Who or what is the poem about? Was it silly or serious? Did the poem rhyme? Why do some poems rhyme while others don't?
2. Do you remember any words from the poem? Were any of the words made up or were they all real? Why do you think the poet used made-up words?
3. What images did you picture while hearing the poem? What sounds came to mind as you listened (for example, a whisper, a moving train)?
4. Which poem did you like best? Why?
5. Read aloud two different poems more than once. Then compare them. What is similar about these poems? What makes them different? Which do you like better and why?

*Optional:* To extend your poetry discussion, choose a few poems from another poetry book (see More Suggested Books) and compare them to the animal poems.

### Activities

Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. **Write a group animal poem.** Explain to kids that some poems (called concrete poems) are shaped like the object they describe. You can show kids the Anteater poem from *Beast Feast*. Choose an animal with a shape that is easy to recognize (such as a snake). Create a group poem by having each child contribute a line (verse) about the animal you're describing. Write the lines in the shape or outline of the animal.
2. **Write an "I am . . .", "I remember . . .", or "I like . . ." poem.** Have kids write a poem, with each line or verse starting with the words "I am." Tell kids their poems can rhyme or not rhyme, be short or long, funny or serious. Remind your young poets to sign their poems. Have them illustrate their poems. (If you have an instant camera, display each poem with a photo of the child.)

- 3. Make the link between music and poetry.** Bring in a popular song and play it. Then read the lyrics aloud like a poem. Is there repetition, rhyme, a beat, or colorful imagery? Play some music and have the kids write a poem inspired by it. Or, read a rhythmic poem and have kids tap out the beat.
- 4. Do a poetry reading or poetry slam.** Invite volunteers to read poems (from books or their own). Use a microphone if you have one. This might be a great time to invite family members to attend the book club. *Note:* Select poems appropriate to your kids' reading level. Review any challenging words beforehand.

### Get Involved

Many animals in your local community need a good home. Have the kids launch an **adopt-a-pet campaign**. Invite staff or a volunteer from the local animal shelter to talk with the kids about the shelter and about animals that need homes. Create flyers (with kids' art) to encourage people to adopt pets. Kids can post the flyers at the library, in their schools and school newsletters, and at other locations throughout the community.

### Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

[pbskidsgo.org/cyberchase/games/patterns/patterns.html](https://pbskidsgo.org/cyberchase/games/patterns/patterns.html)

Introduce kids to the **Cyber-Pattern Maker**. They can create complex beats and music, including repeating, reversed, and percussion sounds. Can kids write a line of poetry with the same beats or pattern as the music they created on the Cyber-Pattern Maker?

[pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/family/pets/](https://pbskidsgo.org/itsmylife/family/pets/)

This **It's My Life** Web site provides many ways for kids to explore the topic of pets, including articles on why we have pets and pet responsibilities, a place to share information about your pet and read about other kids' pets, a survey on pets, and more.

[pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/poetry/](https://pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/poetry/)

Explore **Fern's Poetry Club** on the Arthur™ Web site and have kids write a poem online, read other kids' poems, or learn and read different poetry styles, such as narrative, limericks, Haiku, and cinquains.

[pbskidsgo.org/zoom/sendit/poems-ales](https://pbskidsgo.org/zoom/sendit/poems-ales)

Kids can write their poems online send them to **ZOOM®**.

### More Suggested Books

*Spin a Soft Black Song* by Nikki Giovanni

*It's Raining Laughter* by Nikki Grimes

*Meet Danitra Brown* by Nikki Grimes

*Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers: A Collection of Family Poems*  
by Mary Ann Hoberman

*My Chinatown: One Year in Poems* by Kam Mak

*Lunch Money and Other Poems about School* by Carol Diggory Shields

*Sweet Corn: Poems* by James Stevenson