The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary. Many more GaDOE approved instructional plans are available by using the Search Standards feature located on GeorgiaStandards.Org.

Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 7-8th Grade

Grade: 8  
Topic: Bait Bucket Poetry  
Instructional unit: Poetry/Drama  
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The task:  
“Writing is like fishing; to catch a really great idea, you need really good bait.” —Leeann Pope Cornett

Bait Bucket Poetry is a technique for collecting and combining words into sentences that have the “feel” of a poem. Using these word groups as a guide (they are the “bait” needed to “catch” really good ideas), students should put them into original sentences that fit together and make sense.

The teacher should model the process of taking four words in a group and putting them into 3 or more related sentences by theme. For example, the teacher could write on the overhead or board the words: courage, lion, butterflies, and father. A model of the poem would be:

Like a lion,  
My father dozes on the porch.  
I was in my room  
When he came home.  
Has he seen the broken window?  
Has my mother told him yet?  
My stomach’s full of butterflies.  
Courage, a lion’s courage—  
Do I have it?

After the process has been modeled, the teacher should divide the students into small, manageable groups. The students will randomly draw a word group and will combine the four words into three or more sentences. (Having at least three sentences implies that there is a beginning, middle, and end). The sentences should NOT rhyme. They may re-combine the word groups if they prefer, and they may also change the forms of the words if there is a need. The students will then combine with other word groups to form stanzas (the process of gathering new word groups can also be done randomly—as each group finishes with a word group, a member can forward and draw a new one). The teacher will decide how many stanzas he or she wishes for the students to compose.

Ultimately, the students will use this model to create their own poem individually.

Differentiation/Modification:
- Provide the following as an example for the student to have in hand *
- Let the student select two words to make a poem from
- Provide words at the students’ reading levels
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*If the words were courage, lion, butterflies, and father, a model of the poem would be:

Like a lion,
My father dozes on the porch.
I was in my room
When he came home.
Has he seen the broken window?
Has my mother told him yet?
My stomach’s full of butterflies.
Courage, a lion’s courage
Do I have it?

Focus Standard:

**ELA8W1** The student produces writing that establishes an appropriate organizational structure, sets a context and engages the reader, maintains a coherent focus throughout, and signals a satisfying closure. The student

a. Selects a focus, organizational structure, and a point of view based on purpose, genre expectations, audience, length, and format requirements.
b. Writes texts of a length appropriate to address the topic or tell the story.

**ELA8W2.** The student demonstrates competence in a variety of genres.
The student produces a narrative (fictional, personal, experiential) that:
f. Includes sensory details and concrete language to develop plot, setting, and character (e.g., vivid verbs, descriptive adjectives, varied sentence structures, and specific narrative action).

Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers:
More accomplished writers may ask to bend/break rules of structure in order to enhance the effect rather than to shorten the assignment. This is teacher discretion.

There are many variations to this lesson; be creative! Students can create their own “bait lists,” or teachers can create content specific lists.

Students can also select their own word lists rather than drawing randomly.
Bait Bucket Poetry-Word Bank

coins  snake  hens  pasture  June
leaves  weeds  mist  saltlick  breeze
heart  slow  reds  fireflies  grave
sky  quick  dawn  moon  field
God  ideas  rooster  barefoot  kiss
kingdom  sparks  snow  sunrise  brook
window  listen  boards  words  pebble
shine  afternoon  cold  green  rain

mountain  crow  road  east  beans
frost  eternity  mirage  west  garden
coil  eye  dog  sky  squash
stars  sunflower  dust  blooms  noon

traveler  horse  voice  morning  dance
body  muscles  cliff  birds  girls
spirit  wet  child  curtain  fiddle
night  mane  soul  breeze  shoes

doves  dragon  bark  clouds  pleasures
corn  leaves  fog  horizon  sundown
sounds  rake  duck  thunder  tractor
truck  smoke  lake  dream  dark
harvest  supper  journey  loft  mother
friends  bread  patience  ladder  folds
silver  water  deeds  straw  memories
wind  kiss  worth  calf  hands

pillow  watermelon  grass  paint  black
window  cold  sunset  insects  white
lullaby  smooth  God  brush  winter
owls  yard  bless  glory  barn

dragonfly  freckles  sycamore  faucet  mailbox
pond  beauty  river  sparrow  ditch
face  twirl  paradise  rainbow  snowflake
silence  smiles  shine  song  inch

Adapted from Sandy Lyne’s “Poetry Sketching”
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