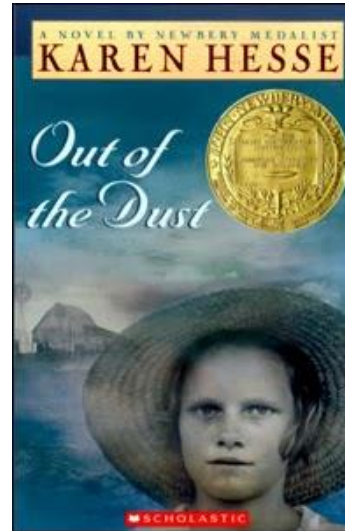


Out of the Dust

Writing Prompts



ISBN-13	9780590371254
ISBN-10	0590371258
Author	Karen Hesse
Publisher	Scholastic
Copyright	1997
Lexile	1040L
Genre	Historical fiction; poetry
Synopsis	Billie Jo and her family live in Oklahoma during the 1930s. Using poetry, Billie Jo describes the hardship and challenges of the dustbowl, and how playing the piano provides a sense of hope.
Themes	Overcoming obstacles; Grief; Anger; Perseverance; Great Depression

Objective: This lesson provides both a historical overview of the dust bowl and an introduction to reading poems.

Notes:

1. This lesson comes with a glossary of poetry terms. The glossary can be found at the end of the lesson plan.
2. Recommended graphic novel for additional reading: *The Great American Dust Bowl*; written and illustrated by Don Brown (ISBN-13: 978-0547815503).

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Out of the Dust, Day 1



Analyze the poem.

“On Stage” (p. 13)

1. Based on the adjectives Billie Jo uses, can you guess what kind of music she plays? Explain your answer using quotes from the poem.
2. In a visual poem, the lines form a pattern that is associated with the content of the poem. What pattern do you see in this poem? Why did the poet use this pattern?

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Respond to the writing prompt. Write a minimum of two paragraphs (200 words). Provide evidence from the text and use as many details as possible.

- **Billie Jo describes her hobby – playing the piano. How does playing the piano makes her feel? What hobbies and activities make you happy?**

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Out of the Dust, Day 2



Analyze the poems.

“Wild Boy of the Road” (pp. 58-59)

“Family School” (p. 121)

1. What is the significance, if any, of the boy not having a name?
2. In what ways are these poems similar? What themes do they share?
3. What virtues do the Kelby family and Miss. Freeland practice by offering assistance to the migrating visitors?
4. How do the titles relate to the poems message?

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Respond to the writing prompt. Write a minimum of two paragraphs (200 words).
Provide evidence from the text and use as many details as possible.

- **The poems “Wild Boy of the Road” (pp. 58-59) and “Family School” (pp. 121-122) show interactions between Billie Jo’s family and the community. What values can you find in these poems that serve as an example of ways families and communities can support one another?**

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Out of the Dust, Day 3



Analyze the poem.

“First Rain” (p. 104)

1. What themes are present?
2. What is the tone?
3. How do the first two stanzas contrast from the rest of the poem?
4. Besides water, what else does the rain provide Billie Jo and the farmers?

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Respond to the writing prompt. Write a minimum of two paragraphs (200 words).
Provide evidence from the text and use as many details as possible.

- **The poem “First Rain” (pp. 104-106) shows the community feeling hope and gratitude for the rain. What are ways communities can feel hope and increase moral during times of hardship?**

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Out of the Dust, Day 4



Analyze the poem.

“Met” (p. 206)

1. Billie Jo’s father met her at the station; in what figurative ways are they meeting each other?
2. Billie Jo returned to her father despite her intent to go West to escape the dust. What themes do her actions imply? What themes are explicitly stated?
3. Billie Jo says she cannot escape the dust because it is inside her. Within this context, what can the dust be a metaphor for?

EXTEND

Write a short product based on today’s prompt to connect to the unit theme.

Respond to the writing prompt. Write a minimum of two paragraphs (200 words).
Provide evidence from the text and use as many details as possible.

- **How can forgiveness change the relationship Billie Jo has with herself and her father?**

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompts

Out of the Dust, Day 5



Analyze the poem.

“Finding a Way” (p. 225)

1. In what ways is the growing of crops related to Billie Jo’s idea of growing as a person?
2. Consider the context of this poem. What can you infer as happening in the background?
3. Why do you think the book ended with this poem? What emotions does this poem evoke? What meaning does it leave readers with?

EXTEND

Write a final writing product related to the unit theme.

Final Writing Product

Your final writing product will be an expository essay in response to the following question:

The Dust Bowl and Great Depression occurred in the 1930s, but without preventative measures, environmental and financial hardships of a similar nature can occur again. Consider current events and how they compare to the events in the book.

- **What roles can individuals and communities act upon to help prevent an environmental disaster such as the Dust Bowl from occurring in the future?**

Remember that even small changes can make a difference.

Your essay should include at least 300 words (one page double-spaced).

The essay should be concise – avoid repetition and redundancy in statements. Use the following checklist to evaluate your work:

- The essay begins with a clear argument.
- The essay provides examples to clarify on the reasoning.
- The essay includes good transition sentences and phrases.
- The essay thoughtfully presents counterarguments.
- There is a topic sentence in each paragraph.
- There is a logical progression from one paragraph to the next.
- The essay ends with a strong conclusion.

Create a timeline to organize your writing schedule.

- Add dates in the right-side column.
- Add lines to the schedule, as needed.

What	When
Create a thesis statement.	
Collect and organize ideas and facts.	
Complete an introduction paragraph.	
Complete the body paragraphs.	
Complete the conclusion paragraph.	
Read through and refine.	
Submit first draft.	
Revise based on feedback.	
Submit final draft.	

Poetry Glossary

Day 1

Genre- A category of a work of literature. Literature is broadly divided into prose, poetry, and drama. Poems can be further divided into genres such as narrative, lyric, dramatic, epic, etc.

Stanza- Two or more lines of a poem that are combined in a pattern, often based on subject matter, rhyme, or meter.

Couplet- A pair of rhyming lines within a poem.

Refrain- Repeated lines or phrases in a poem.

Narrative poem- A form of poetry that tells a story.

Day 2

Tone- Describes the author's attitude towards the material or audience. Tone may be easier to identify when the poem is read aloud. Example words to describe tone are *serious, funny, sarcastic, and somber*.

Metaphor- A figure of speech that uses the comparison of seemingly unlike things to suggest similarity. Metaphors make the writing vivid, imaginative, and meaningful. Example: You have a heart of gold.

Simile- A comparison using the words *like* and *as*. Example: Your smile is as bright as the sun.

Free verse- A form of poetry that does not have rhyming lines, rhythm, or a fixed meter.

Blank verse- A description of a poem that does not rhyme. These poems are typically written in iambic pentameter; a form of meter.

Day 3

Onomatopoeia- A word that has its meaning imitate a sound. Example: Hiss, Buzz, Boom, Purr.

Assonance- The repetition of vowel sounds in a group of words or lines of poetry. Example: The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plains.

Consonance- The repetition of consonant sounds in a group of words or lines of poetry. Example: Tick, tock went the clock.

Alliteration- The repetition of sounds, especially initial consonant sounds, in two or more words. Example: A brisk breeze blew by.

Synecdoche- A figure of speech in which part of a thing is said to represent the whole thing; or the other way around. Example: "Look at my new wheels!" (wheels is a part said to represent the whole new car)

Day 4

Meter- A pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Feet or Foot- A unit used to determine the meter.

Image- Language used to describe sensory information.

Symbol- A symbol is anything that represents itself and stands for something else. Usually a symbol is something concrete that represents something abstract. Example: Scales used as a symbol for justice and law.

Allusion-a reference to something that is thought to be commonly known, such as a book, myth, or historical event.

Day 5

Paradox- A statement that appears to be contradictory, but contains some degree of validity.

Parallelism- The framing of words, phrases, or sentences to give structural similarity. Parallelism is often used to attract attention, add emphasis, or add rhythm.

Personification- A figure of speech in which an object, concept, or animal is given human attributes.

Hyperbole- A figure of speech that uses deliberate exaggeration or overstatement, often in a comedic manner.

Understatement- The opposite of hyperbole. The deliberate presentation of something as less significant than it is.