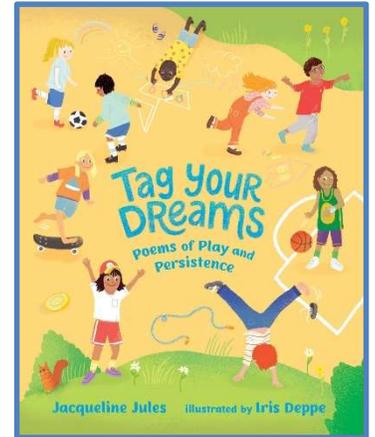


**Teacher's Guide:**  
**TAG YOUR DREAMS: Poems of Play and Persistence**  
**by Jacqueline Jules, illus. by Iris Deppe**

*Tag Your Dreams: Poems of Play and Persistence* celebrates being active, reaching goals, and learning limits. The poems employ figurative language devices such as alliteration, simile, metaphor, repetition, personification, and onomatopoeia. Each poem tells a story. This teacher's guide provides questions to discuss, ways to examine the poetry, and writing prompts.



***TAG YOUR DREAMS***

**Discuss!**

- What are your dreams for the future?

**Examine the Poem!**

- Identify verbs which refer to the game of tag, e.g., chase, running, reaching.
- Do dreams have strong legs? Is this personification— attributing human characteristics to something that is not human?

**Write!**

- Write about your dreams. Does anything stand in your way? Are you confident you will succeed or are you afraid of failure?

***FOLLOW THE SIDEWALK***

**Discuss!**

- Have you taken a walk or a run just before a thunderstorm?

**Examine the Poem!**

- A simile is a figure of speech comparing two things with the words “like” or “as.” Can you identify the poem’s simile?
- What does the poet mean by “follow the sidewalk”?

**Write!**

- Write a poem about the color of rain clouds. Include a simile.



## ***FOUR SQUARE RECESS***

### **Discuss!**

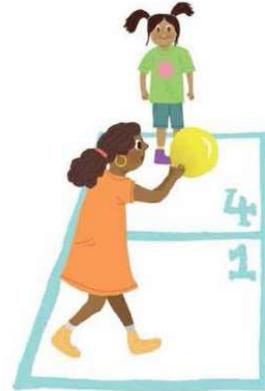
- Do you like fast-moving games or slower paced ones? Why?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- How does the poet set the scene? Would you know this is a game of Four Square without the title?
- Identify action words which indicate the movement of the ball between players, e.g., send, smacks, hurls, hits.

### **Write!**

- Write step-by-step instructions for playing Four Square.



## ***CLAPPING HANDS***

### **Discuss!**

- Do you enjoy hand clapping rhymes? Share one you like.

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What do we know about the girls in the poem? Identify the descriptive phrases.
- How many words are in the last stanza? Discuss how poets use economy of language to convey meaning with as few words as possible.

### **Write!**

- Write a hand clapping rhyme and share it with a friend.



## ***PEDALING TO PIANO***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever crashed on a bike? Were you injured? Were you wearing a helmet?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Alliteration is the use of the same consonants to create a musical sound in a poem. Identify words which use alliteration.
- This poem compares two bike accidents. How do the comparisons help tell the story?

### **Write!**

- Write a personal narrative about recovering from an accident. Did you learn something about yourself?



## ***AT BAT***



### **Discuss!**

- Do you play baseball or softball? How do you feel at the plate?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Did the narrator strike out last time at bat? Which phrase suggests that?
- The narrator wants to send “fear sailing over the fence.” Why?

### **Write!**

- Create a comforting conversation between a player who has just struck out and a teammate.

## ***IN THE OUTFIELD***

### **Discuss!**

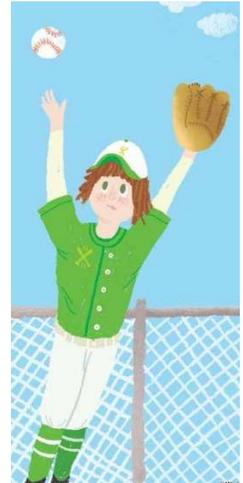
- Do you ever remind yourself to take a breath and slow down?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Look at the short lines making the poem skinny on the page. Does it help describe the action in the poem?
- Name the words which refer to baseball, e.g., glove, cleats, field. How does using specific words paint a clearer picture in a poem?

### **Write!**

- Write an essay about playing in the outfield vs. the infield.



## ***CARTWHEEL LESSON***



### **Discuss!**

- Do you like cartwheels or gymnastics? Why or why not?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Is Sue bossy? What lines in the poem suggest this?
- What lines tell you the narrator has made a decision?

### **Write!**

- Write a persuasive conversation between two friends in which one friend tries to convince another friend to try a gymnastics class.

## ***LAST PICK FOR KICKBALL***

### **Discuss!**

- How should recreational teams be created? By captains? By counting? Other ways?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- The poem begins with an interrobang, a type of punctuation which combines question marks and exclamation points. Does this punctuation express the narrator's frustration?
- Did the narrator kick a home run? Which phrases tell you this?

### **Write!**

- Write an essay about choosing teams by captain vs. counting off by numbers. Discuss the pros and cons.



## ***MERMAID MANATEE***



### **Discuss!**

- How do you feel in the water?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- In this poem, the narrator is addressing a bully. Is the bully present?
- The narrator identifies with a manatee. What phrases describe manatees as beautiful creatures?

### **Write!**

- Do some research on manatees and their connection to mermaid legends. Write an informative nonfiction piece.

## ***COURTSIDE SONG***



### **Discuss!**

- How do you feel about waiting to play a game? Is it hard for you?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- This poem uses onomatopoeia, words that imitate the sound they describe. Can you identify five onomatopoeic words?
- Name five specific noises the narrator hears in this poem.

### **Write!**

- Write a poem or a paragraph about being outside at night. What noises do you hear? Do you find night noises comforting or scary?

## ***STRINGS***



### **Discuss!**

- Have you flown a kite on a windy day?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What does the string represent? Is it just a kite string? Or is it a symbol in a relationship?

- Who is the kite in this poem? Does it represent the narrator?

Does the poet use personification in this poem?

### **Write!**

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a kite. Does it love to fly? Does it fear trees?

## ***KICK SCOOTERS***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ridden a kick scooter? How would you describe it?

### **Examine the Poem!**

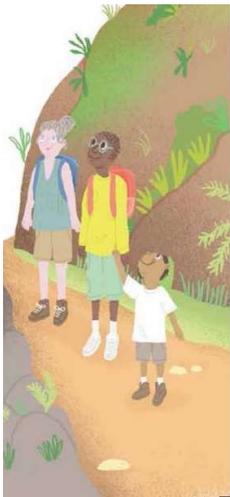
- This poem uses dialogue between the characters. How does this help portray the relationship discussed in the poem?
- Were you surprised by the ending?

### **Write!**

- Write about a day at the park. What did you see? Did you have a picnic? Did it take time to get there?



## ***THE RIVER TRAIL***



### **Discuss!**

- How do you feel outside in nature? Are you inspired by birds, waterfalls, and trees?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- This poem uses details, such as a red-tailed hawk and sycamore trees. Why is it more vivid to name the specific kind of bird or tree?

- In the “I spy” guessing game, the items are listed as “a squirrel, a spider, a bird, a berry.” Would listing the items as “a squirrel, a bird, a spider, a berry” sound the same? Discuss why poets carefully place words in a poem.

### **Write!**

- Describe a waterfall or a body of flowing water. Write a poem.

## ***MINI GOLF GIGGLE***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever played mini golf?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- How does the line “small body bubbling like the fountains beside us” describe two things at the same time?
- The words, “growl,” “giggles,” and “gurgles” are in close proximity. Can you spot other instances of alliteration?

### **Write!**

- Write a story about two siblings playing mini golf. Include dialogue. What do they say to each other?



## ***UMBRELLA DANCE***

### **Discuss!**

- Do you like to play in the rain?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- The narrator says her little sister “doesn’t pout over canceled plans at the beach.” What does this say about the narrator?
- The baby sister is dressed in a rainbow coat, polka dot boots, and a frog umbrella. Does this show her personality?

### **Write!**

- Write a poem about playing in the rain. Use sensory details.



## ***PIÑATA***

### **Discuss!**

- What are your favorite party games?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What details in the poem suggest a piñata game?
- Do you think the narrator is determined? What lines suggest this?

### **Write!**

- Write an article about different party games, including a description of each.





## #64 SOCCER TRYOUTS

### Discuss!

- Have you ever tried out for a sports team? How did you feel?

### Examine the Poem!

- Which stanza shows that the narrator wants to impress the coach with her appearance?
- The last line says, “All goals reached.” What goals were described in the poem?

### Write!

- Write a conversation between Lainey Steele and her father after soccer tryouts. What does she tell him? How does he respond?

## KNOCKING DOWN GHOSTS

### Discuss!

- Do you worry what people think when you bowl or play other games?

### Examine the Poem!

- How does the poet use personification in this poem? Can a bowling pin snicker?
- Who are the ghosts in this poem? Are they a symbol?

### Write!

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a bowling ball who hates loud noises.



## TAE KWON DO

### Discuss!

- What do you know about martial arts?

### Examine the Poem!

- Does the line “I breathe till the knot on my belt rises” create a better image than saying “I breathe deeply”?
- What line in the poem lets you know that the narrator is ready to face the next challenge?

### Write!

- Write a story about a girl who wants to try martial arts. How does she convince her parents?



## ***REBOUNDING LUCK***



### **Discuss!**

- What does a gym sound like during a basketball game?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Where do you see alliteration in this poem?
- What does “slipping off without a swish” mean? Is the word, “swish,” onomatopoeic, a word that sounds like what it means?

### **Write!**

- Write a poem which suggests the sound of a bouncing ball. Use onomatopoeia, repetition, and alliteration.

## ***VOLLEYBALL***

### **Discuss!**

- Why is volleyball a team sport?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What does “The ball sails on my strength alone” mean? Does this narrator like to be in control?
- What is the “tough white sphere?” How does a descriptive phrase rather than a single noun increase imagery?

### **Write!**

- Write your own poem about playing volleyball.



## ***ON THE PLAYGROUND***

### **Discuss!**

- Do you know more than one language?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Can you feel the rhythm of jumping rope in the poem? How do the short lines help?
- This poem describes several sounds. What are they?

### **Write!**

- Write a jump rope rhyme.



## ***FLAG FOOTBALL***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever tried a sport because a parent insisted?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- Two words explain what Dad is worried about. What are they?
- How does the repetition of the word “no” compare flag football to tackle football?

### **Write!**

- Write an essay comparing flag football to tackle football. How are they different? How are they the same?



## ***RUNNING BACK***

### **Discuss!**

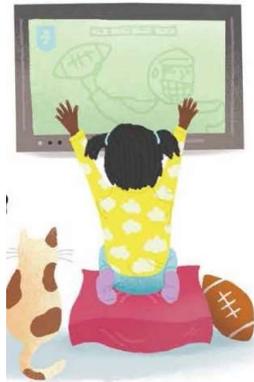
- Do you watch games on television?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- How do you know the narrator in this poem is watching rather than playing? What lines suggest this?
- At the end of the poem, the narrator wishes to run “past all those guys trying to knock me down.” What does this mean?

### **Write!**

- Write a personal narrative about a Super Bowl party or a time when you watched a game with someone special to you.



## ***THE HILL***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever gone sledding? Describe the experience.

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What are the similes in this poem? Do they help paint a picture of snow in your mind?
- Talk about sensory details, how the narrator describes physical sensations, e.g., bubbling inside, cool air nipping my cheeks, legs tiring.

### **Write!**

- Write a story from the viewpoint of a person seeing snow for the first time. Be sure to use sensory details and describe emotions.



## ***NOT TOO SMALL FOR A SNOWMAN***

### **Discuss!**

- Do you play with your family when it snows?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- The first three snowballs are described as “the size of my brother’s boot.” How do comparisons help description?
- The poem lists six items the snowman was dressed in. What are they? How do details help description?

### **Write!**

- Write a personal narrative about playing in the snow with friends or family members.



## ***GRACELESS GIRL SKIS DOWN SLOPE***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever gone skiing? Describe the experience.

### **Examine the Poem!**

- What consonant sound is repeated? Examine how the “s” sound suggests the sound of skiing.
- What does the narrator mean when she says her old self is “spinning off in a fine white powder”?

### **Write!**

- Write a personal narrative about successfully participating in a sport. Did it change your image of yourself?



## ***OLYMPIC SKATER***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever watched the Winter Olympics on television? What is your favorite sport?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- This poem begins with a question, “Did you see how...?” Does this question set the tone for the poem?
- Identify and discuss alliterative phrases. Would saying “Spinning airborne, he grins” instead of “Spinning airborne, he smiles” sound as musical to the ear?

### **Write!**

- Write an interview between a Winter Olympic athlete and a newscaster. What questions are asked? What are the answers?



## ***FRESH ICE***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever attended a hockey game? Describe the experience.

### **Examine the Poem!**

- The narrator says, "Zamboni has shaved the old layer off and left a magic mirror." What does that mean? What is the "magic mirror"?
- Identify alliterative phrases. How do they make the poem musical without rhyme?

### **Write!**

- Write a personal narrative about rooting for a team during a losing season. How did you keep your spirits up?



## ***HOCKEY PUCK***

### **Discuss!**

- Have you ever ice skated? How does it feel to move on skates?

### **Examine the Poem!**

- How did you feel when you read the line "Everyone wants to control it." Can you identify with the way the narrator feels?
- Point out the action verbs. How does using action verbs like "charge, chase, slap, flies" create a feeling of movement?

### **Write!**

- Write a poem or story from the viewpoint of a hockey puck who loves speeding across the ice. Describe the hockey puck's glee slipping past the goalie.



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