

This poem lends itself wonderfully to study of the parts of speech.

The Job of an Apple

The job of an apple is to be hard, to be soft, to be crisp, to be red, yellow and green. The job of an apple is to be pie, to be given to the teacher, to be rotten.

The job of an apple is to be bad and good, to be peeled, cored, cut, bitten and bruised. The job of an apple is to pose for painters, roll behind fridges, behind grocery aisles, to be hidden, wrapped in paper, stored for months, brought out in the dry heat of India and eaten like a treasure.

The job of an apple is to be handed over in orchards, to be wanted and forbidden.

The job of an apple is to be Golden Delicious, Granny Smith and crab.

The job of an apple is to be imported, banned and confiscated going through customs from Montreal to New York.

The job of an apple is to be round. Grow. Drop. Go black in the middle when cut.

To be thrown at politicians. To be carried around for days, to change hands, to change hands, to change hands. The job of an apple is to be a different poem in the mouth of every eater.

The job of an apple is to be juice.

After reading the poem carefully, pass around different fruits and vegetables for students to examine; then, invite them to rewrite the poem, substituting words, phrases, and clauses that apply to the item they were given. Or, ask them to substitute the name of a character from whatever literary selection (play, novel, short story, or poem) they have been reading. This activity enhances awareness and appreciation of poetry, underscores how language works, and encourages students to generate rich descriptions of items or characters.

Formula poetry

Formula poetry — in particular, diamantes — is a useful means of encouraging students to understand and use parts of speech in creative ways:

Line 1: a *noun*, indicating the subject of the poem

Line 2: two *adjectives*

Line 3: *-ing* words, or *participles*

Line 4: a four-word *phrase*

Line 5: three *-ing* words, or *participles*

Line 6: two *adjectives*

Line 7: a *noun synonym* for the noun in line one

