



## Poetic Justice: Understanding the Life of a Tethered Dog

**Grade Levels:** 3-5

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Character Concepts:** Justice, Citizenship, Responsibility, and Fairness

**Objective:** Students will review, identify, and explain how language develops mood and meaning. Students will also review the topic of author's purpose using details from the text. Figurative language will be identified and examined in terms of how it is used to describe characters and objects.

### National Standards Addressed:

[NL-ENG.K-12.3](#) Evaluating Strategies

[NL-ENG.K-12.5](#) Communication Strategies

[NL-ENG.K-12.6](#) Applying Knowledge

[NL-ENG.K-12.7](#) Evaluating Data

[NL-ENG.K-12.12](#) Applying Language Skills

### Materials Needed:

- copy of chained dog comic for each student at the end of this lesson (Optional: create a poster-sized comic or project comic on the wall)
- copy of the poem "Chained Dog's Plea" by Edith Lassen Johnson for each student at the end of this lesson
- copy of [\*The Facts About Chaining or Tethering Dogs\*](#) for each student
- highlighters for each student
- lined paper for each student
- construction paper for each student
- pens or pencils for each student
- crayons, markers, or other art supplies
- tape or rubber cement
- Optional: copy of [\*Chaining and Tethering\*](#) for each student
- Optional: a copy of [\*Buddy Unchained\*](#) by Daisy Bix

### Helpful Background Information:

[\*Teaching the Cinquain: The Quintet Recipe\*](#)

### Opening:

1. Show comic to the students.
2. Ask students to identify what message the artist was trying to convey. (Answers may include, but are not limited to: Chaining dogs takes away their freedom. Chained dogs are lonely.)
3. Review with students that tethering, or chaining, not only takes away the freedom of the dog, but it presents risks to the community as well.

**Lesson Body:**

1. Ask students to read *The Facts About Chaining or Tethering Dogs*. (Notes: You may also wish to include *Chaining and Tethering* or to show the video located on that page. The educator can read the item aloud for younger students or less advanced readers.) As they read, ask students to highlight answers to the following questions:
  - Why is tethering bad for dogs?
  - Why is tethering dangerous for people?
  - Are tethered dogs usually treated well?
2. Review answers to the above questions referring back to the comic shown in the opening; recalling how the author was trying to convey a message similar to the information presented in the reading.
3. Review with students that messages can be conveyed in many ways other than comics or in paragraph form. Distribute the poem “Chained Dog’s Plea” by Edith Lassen Johnson.
4. Ask students to read the poem, looking for the poet’s main message. (If being used in a language arts classroom discuss the approach and figurative language such as rhyme, alliteration, personification used to create the message.)
5. Ask students to compare and contrast the message of the poem with the message of the comic. Accept all answers.
6. Ask students to create their own anti-chaining message using a form of figurative language. Introduce the form of poetry known as a [cinquain](#). Read the below example aloud. (Note: You may wish to post the cinquain pattern in the front of the room.)

**Pattern**

**Line 1**= 1 word (noun) that tells the subject

**Line 2** = 2 words (adjectives) that describe the noun

**Line 3** = 3 words (verbs ending with “ing” about the noun

**Line 4** = 4 word sentence describing your feelings about the noun

**Line 5** = 1 word (synonym) for the noun

**Example**

chains

cold, metal

confining, choking, imprisoning

locks away your friend

shackles

7. Pass out lined paper to each student. Ask participants to write their own cinquain about why tethering is bad for both dogs and people.
8. After students have completed their cinquain ask each participant to choose a piece of construction paper and decorate their poem.

**Closure:**

1. Ask students to share their poems.
2. Discuss answers to the following questions: (Note: These can also be used as writing prompts.)
  - Besides comics and poems, what other ways could an anti-chaining message be conveyed?
  - Can chaining a dog outside ever be considered fair or just? Why or why not?
  - What is the most important reason for not chaining dogs?
3. Hang the student created poems on a bulletin board.

**Extension:**

1. Hang the poems in the school lobby during open house or conferences, in a local library, or other community location.
2. Ask students to participate in ["Have A Heart for Chained Dogs."](#)
- 3 Read *Buddy Unchained* and compare/contrast Buddy's life before and after tethering.
4. Ask students to write letters to the editor promoting that tethered dogs be brought indoors and asking for stronger anti-tethering laws.

## The Wish List



## **CHAINED DOGS PLEA**

by Edith Lassen Johnson

I wish someone would tell me  
What it is that I've done wrong  
Why do I have to stay chained up  
And left alone so long?

They seemed so glad to have me  
When I came here as a pup.  
There were so many things we'd do  
While I was growing up.

But now the Master "hasn't time."  
The Mistress says I shed.  
She doesn't want me in the house.  
Not even to be fed.

The Children never walk me.  
They always say, "Not now."  
I wish that I could please them.  
Won't someone tell me how?

All I had, you see, was love.  
I wish they would explain  
Why they said they wanted mine,  
And then left it on a chain.