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Developing students' reading skills is a critical goal that begins in the primary grades. Yet with each successive grade, students must acquire increasing skills at reading and understanding a variety of texts. *The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills* provides valuable instructional tools and engaging materials and activities for increasing student skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. As you use the poems, lessons, and activities in this book, you will know that you are not only providing instruction based on solid educational research, but also giving students opportunities to learn and practice specific academic standards.

*The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills* has been designed to provide high-interest instructional texts and lessons based on best practices in reading education. The concept of the book was developed by Dr. Timothy Rasinski, Professor of Literacy Education at Kent State University and author of numerous articles, books, and publications on reading education. The poems in this book were written by Brod Bagert, whose catchy and humorous books of poetry have entertained and inspired scores of young people to embrace poetry.

In its *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2006), the National Reading Panel noted predominant themes in the research on the development of reading comprehension skills. The core of *The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills* revolves around the NRP's findings, specifically, 1) "Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that cannot be understood without a clear description of the role that vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play in the understanding of what has been read,"

and 2) "Comprehension is an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text."

## Making Connections

Studies show that making connections—drawing upon prior knowledge, emotions, opinions, understandings, and experiences—helps students better understand what they are reading (Harvey and Goudvis 2000). Keene and Zimmermann (1997) concluded that students comprehend better when they make different kinds of connections: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world.

**Text-to-self connections are those that are individual and personal.** For example, in Lesson 26 of this book, prior to reading a poem about a girl with a unique style, students are asked to reflect on a time when someone made a negative comment about their appearance and how it made them feel.

**Text-to-text connections are those that identify similarities between one thing that has been read (whether a whole book or a single word) and a new text.** In other words, students use the familiar to help them understand the unfamiliar.

**Text-to-world connections are those that are more global than personal.** These include information or impressions students have acquired from such things as reading stories and watching movies (narrative); studying science or social studies (expository); seeing ads on TV or in magazines (persuasive); and participating in discussions. One goal of this book is to challenge students to draw upon their prior knowledge and experiences to prepare them to better understand what they will read.

# About the Poet—Brod Bagert

## A Chorus of Voices

Although Shaneka, Devin, Alvin, Armando, and Veronica take the credit as the student members of the slam poetry team who contributed their collective works to create this book, the real author is poet Brod Bagert. It is his voice heard in all the poems.



Encouraged by his teacher, Brod Bagert wrote his first poem in the third grade and has been writing ever since. In high school, his relationship with poetry deepened as he struggled through

the love-hate experience of reading the classics in the original Greek and Latin. As a university student, he was intrigued when another student from a neighboring college requested permission to publish two of his poems in her school's poetry review, an experience that led him to discover the power of poetry in the dating ritual.

The world then began to nibble away at Brod's love for poetry. He graduated from law school, married his high-school sweetheart, got elected to public office, and wrote fewer and fewer poems. Then, as a young father, he began to write poems for his own children to recite in their school programs. He was hooked. Deriving less and less satisfaction from a law practice and public career, poetry soon became his full-time occupation.

Brod is now the award-winning author of 17 books of poetry: 10 for children, two for young adults, and five for adults. He is also the author of an Edgar Allan Poe anthology and coauthor of the U.S. Department of Education's *Helping Your Child Learn to*

*Read* (1993). He has appeared at hundreds of conferences, thousands of schools, and has performed his poetry in all 50 states and on five of the world's seven continents.

The heart of Brod's poetry is voice—not just his own voice, but a whole chorus of voices. In a poem for kindergartners, you will hear the voice of a kindergartner; in a poem for classroom teachers, you will hear the voice of a classroom teacher.

Brod's active performance schedule keeps him on the road about half the year. The other half he spends at home in New Orleans. He reads books, rides his bicycle, gardens with his wife, Debby, and dotes on their three rambunctious grandsons.

*These poems are dedicated to  
Sue McCoy.*

*—Brod Bagert*

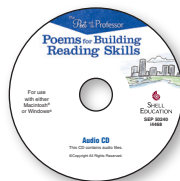
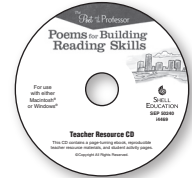
# How to Use This Book

*The Poet and the Professor: Poems for Building Reading Skills* is a succession of lessons built around a compilation of poems. The components are this book (which is a teacher's resource for using the poems to build reading skills), the Audio CD, and the Teacher Resource CD.

This book features original poems. Accompanying each poem is a lesson plan that contains the sections Making Connections, Comprehension Strategy, Standards-Based Skill Focus, and Vocabulary Word Study. Information and ideas about how to relate the poem to each of these areas is provided on this page. For more information about each section, see the Research section of the book (pp. 4–6). In addition, two activity pages are provided that relate to the Standards-Based Skill Focus and the Vocabulary Word Study sections of the lesson plan.

The Audio CD contains recordings of the prose and poems in the book. Students can follow the text on their own copies of the poem pages, on an interactive whiteboard, or on an overhead projector.

The Teacher Resource CD contains a variety of resources that can be used to enhance the lessons provided in this book. The poem pages can be photocopied on a transparency, displayed on an interactive whiteboard, or printed and copied for each student. The activity pages are included on the Teacher Resource CD. Finally, provided on the CD is a page-turning ebook that includes all of the poems used in this book. This page-turning ebook allows students to refer to all the poems in a digital format. This page-turning ebook can also be displayed on an interactive whiteboard for easy viewing during a whole-class lesson.



**Lesson Plan**

**Brain Power**  
In Alvin's next poem, he is concerned about energy and suggests using brain power to find alternative energy sources.

**Making Connections**

**Standards-Based Skill Focus: Using Reference Materials**

**Comprehension Strategy: Previewing Text**

**Vocabulary Word Study**

**Skill Focus**

**Research and Report**

compost	energy	fossil fuel
carbon	habitat	global
extinct	carbon	species
erosion	contaminate	landfill
pesticide	pollution	geothermal
conservation	endangered	population
recycle	catastrophe	diminish
emission	radioactive	harm
resources	renewable	biosphere
atomic fusion	ecosystem	contaminates

**Word Study**

**Brain Power**

**Directions:** Check your understanding of these words related to energy and the environment. Use words from the box below to fill in the missing words in the sentences.

conserve	fusion	carbon	species	conservation
landfill	global	article	renewable	

- CO<sub>2</sub> is the symbol for \_\_\_\_\_ dioxide.
- Solar power comes from atoms \_\_\_\_\_ from the Sun.
- Saving energy by using less is one form of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Coal and gas are types of \_\_\_\_\_ fuels.
- The reverse of resources is a nonrenewable, or a \_\_\_\_\_ problem.
- We need to find and use more \_\_\_\_\_ sources of energy.
- Everyone can help by cutting down on waste and \_\_\_\_\_ when possible.
- If everyone would \_\_\_\_\_ a little less, it would make a difference \_\_\_\_\_.
- We have to curtail and every other \_\_\_\_\_ that takes over \_\_\_\_\_ that take over \_\_\_\_\_.

**Extension**

Alvin's poem was about using renewable forms of energy rather than fossil fuels. What do you think is the best approach to ensure that we have the power we need today and also in the future? Write a paragraph that states your position and that tries to convince the reader to agree with you.

## Brain Power

In Alvin's next poem, he is concerned about energy and suggests using brain power to find alternative energy sources.

### Making Connections

- Help students connect their own experiences to what they are about to read. Ask students to think of three ways they used energy in the last 24 hours. If necessary, prompt them with the following questions: Did you use any hot water? Did you ride in a car? Did you use a computer? Did you watch TV? Ask students where they think the energy came from to heat water, fuel a car, or provide electricity.
- Ask students if they think conservation is important and why. Finally, ask a few volunteers to explain what it means to “go green.”
- Tell students that they will listen to a poem in which Alvin tells about the different ways we can get energy and why we need more renewable energy sources. Have students listen as you read the poem aloud.

### Comprehension Strategy: Previewing Text

- Distribute copies of the poem or display it for the class.
- Explain that a good way to approach text that may have technical or unfamiliar terms is to preview the text. Ask students to skim the poem to find and highlight such terms. Write these on the board and discuss their meanings. Examples:  $CO_2$  (the symbol for carbon dioxide), *atomic fusion* (a nuclear reaction that releases energy), *geothermal* (heat contained inside Earth).

### Standards-Based Skill Focus: Using Reference Materials

- Tell students that using reference materials used to mean having to look through a book such as a dictionary or encyclopedia. Although these are still valid, today's students also have the opportunity to use the Internet.
- Make only one copy of page 80. Cut apart the environment-related terms and give out one word per student or two per pair of students to research and report back to the class on the findings. Note that some terms can have applications for other topics. As you distribute the words, direct students to find the meanings that are relevant to energy, conservation, or the environment.

### Vocabulary Word Study

- Distribute copies of page 81.
- Be sure that you have reviewed the words from page 80 and their meanings before having students complete this activity. Ideally, have the students who received these as their research words explain their meanings. Clarify and expound on their explanations as needed.

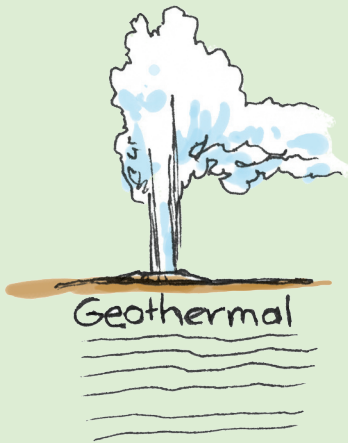
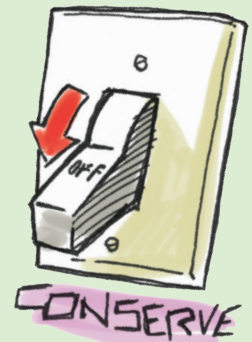
# Brain Power

by Alvin Lofton



The facts are in, it's really true,  
we're making too much CO<sub>2</sub>.  
So energy from fossil fuel  
is fast becoming so uncool.

If Earth is where we want to stay,  
we've got to find another way.  
And we can do it if we're smart;  
great minds have given us a start.



Atomic fusion from the sun  
makes solar power number one.

A windmill spun by moving air  
gets energy from everywhere.

And geothermal's all around.  
It's steamy water underground.

And conservation? Can you guess?  
Makes energy by using...LESS!

So don't go hide beneath your bed;  
just use that thing inside your head.  
To counteract the power drain,  
use the power of your brain.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Research and Report

**Directions:** Find the meaning of each term as it relates to energy, conservation, or the environment. Be prepared to share your findings with the class.

consume	energy	fossil fuel
ozone	habitat	global
extinct	carbon	species
erosion	contaminate	landfill
pesticide	pollution	geothermal
conservation	endangered	population
recycle	catastrophe	diminish
emission	radioactive	fumes
resources	renewable	biosphere
atomic fusion	ecosystem	contaminant

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Brain Power

**Directions:** Check your understanding of these words related to energy and the environment. Use words from the box below to fill in the missing words in the sentences.

consume	fusion	carbon	species	conservation
fossil	global	recycle	renewable	

1. CO<sub>2</sub> is the symbol for \_\_\_\_\_ dioxide.
2. Solar power comes from atomic \_\_\_\_\_ from the sun.
3. Saving energy by using less is one form of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Coal and gas are types of \_\_\_\_\_ fuels.
5. The overuse of resources is a worldwide, or a \_\_\_\_\_ problem.
6. We need to find and use more \_\_\_\_\_ sources of energy.
7. Everyone can help by cutting down on waste and \_\_\_\_\_ when possible.
8. If everyone would \_\_\_\_\_ a little less, it would make a difference.
9. We owe to ourselves and every other \_\_\_\_\_ that share our planet to protect Earth's future.

### Extension

Alvin's poem was about using renewable forms of energy rather than fossil fuels. What do you think is the best approach to ensure that we have the power we need today and also in the future? Write a paragraph that states your position and that tries to convince the reader to agree with you.

