

PART 1: LESSON 180 • ESSENTIAL POEM VOCABULARY (12 WORDS)

POEM VOCABULARY • 26PX TRACKS

weather /wɛðər/ atmospheric state; climate

lasted /læstɪd/ endured through time

skates /skeɪts/ ice blades for gliding

sleds /sleɪdz/ snow vehicles on runners

watching /wɑːtʃɪŋ/ looking attentively

springtime /sprɪŋtaɪm/ season of budding flora

robins /rəʊbɪnz/ red-breasted songbirds

honey-bees /hʌnɪbiːz/ nectar-gathering insects

pussies /pusɪz/ pussy-willow fuzzy catkins

cunning /kʌnɪŋ/ quaintly charming; artful

willow-trees /wɪləʊtriːz/ slender water-loving trees

hurry /hʌrɪ/ move with eager haste

PART 2: MEMORY LESSON • “LITTLE BIRD BLUE” (COMPLETE 12-LINE POEM)

POETRY • DICTATION • 26PX TRACKS

Stanza 1: Winter Weariness
Little Bird Blue, come sing us your song;
The cold winter weather has lasted so long,
We're tired of skates, and we're tired of sleds,
We're tired of snow-banks as high as our heads;
Now we're watching for you,
Little Bird Blue.

Stanza 2: Springtime Revival
Soon as you sing, then, the springtime will come,
The robins will call and the honey-bees hum,
And the dear little pussies, so cunning and gray,
Will sit in the willow-trees over the way;
So hurry, please do,
Little Bird Blue!

Wheeler Memory Task: Transcribe your favorite two rhyming lines from memory:

PART 3: SOCRATIC INQUIRY • CONTRACTIONS, CATKINS & SUFFIX INFLECTION

GRAMMAR • 26PX TRACKS

1. What is **we're** a contraction of, and what does the apostrophe replace?

2. What is **pussies** the plural of, and how was it formed?

3. What change is needed when you add **s** to **hurry**?

PART 4: SENTENCE COMPOSITION • APPLY ANY FOUR TARGET WORDS

SYNTAX • 26PX TRACKS

Compose four expressive sentences connecting the poem's springtime imagery:

1. Sentence with **springtime**, **robins**, or **honey-bees**:

2. Sentence with **we're** and **watching**:

3. Sentence with **weather**, **skates**, or **lasted**:

4. Sentence with **hurry** (or **hurries**) and **willow-trees**:

SECTION 1: LITERARY EXEGESIS, CONTRACTION MECHANICS & BOTANICAL HOMONYMS

EXEGESIS • MORPHOLOGY

Literary Context & Botanical Imagery:

- "Little Bird Blue" is a celebrated 19th-century American nature lyric capturing the transition from winter sports (skates, sleds, snow-banks) to springtime vernal awakening.
- Botanical Homonym "pussies": Refers to pussy willows (*Salix discolor*), whose soft, silken, silver-gray male catkins emerge in early spring before leaves, resembling fuzzy kittens.
- The metaphor "sit in the willow-trees over the way" personifies these soft catkins clinging along the branches.

Contraction & Inflection Rules:

- Contraction "we're": Formed from pronoun *we* + verb *are*. The apostrophe marks the elision of the vowel *a*. Contrast with possessive pronoun *our* and past tense *were* (/wɜːr/).
- Consonant + y Rules:
 - pussy* → *pussies*: Noun plural changes -y to -i- and adds -es.
 - hurry* → *hurries*: Third-person singular verb changes -y to -i- and adds -es (but preserves y before -ing: *hurrying*).

SECTION 2: COMPLETE WORD ANALYSIS & PHONETIC KEY (14 WORDS)

IPA • ORTHOGRAPHY • ETYMOLOGY

WORD	IPA	MORPHOLOGICAL / PHONETIC RULES	WORD	IPA	MORPHOLOGICAL / PHONETIC RULES
weather	/ˈwɛðər/	Digraph <i>ea</i> = short /ɛ/; voiced <i>th</i> = /ð/	we're	/wɪər/	Contraction of <i>we are</i> ; elides letter <i>a</i>
lasted	/ˈlæstɪd/	Base <i>last</i> + inflectional past suffix -ed	springtime	/ˈsprɪŋtaɪm/	Compound: <i>spring</i> + <i>time</i> (split digraph <i>i-e</i>)
skates	/ˈskeɪts/	Dutch <i>schaats</i> ; split vowel digraph <i>a-e</i> = /eɪ/	robins	/ˈrɒːbɪnz/	Short <i>o</i> in open syllable; plural -s = /z/
sleds	/ˈsleɪdz/	Short <i>æ</i> before voiced alveolar stop -d	honey-bees	/ˈhʌnɪbiːz/	Compound; short /ʌ/; digraph <i>ee</i> = /iː/
watching	/ˈwɑːtʃɪŋ/	Base <i>watch</i> (OE <i>wæccende</i>) + -ing	pussies	/ˈpusɪz/	Plural of <i>pussy</i> (catkin); y → i + es
snow-banks	/ˈsnoʊbæŋks/	Compound: <i>snow</i> (/oʊ/) + <i>banks</i> (/æŋks/)	cunning	/ˈkʌnɪŋ/	Short <i>u</i> doubles consonant -nn- before -ing
willow-trees	/ˈwɪləʊtriːz/	Compound: <i>willow</i> (short <i>ɪ</i> , -ow = /oʊ/) + <i>trees</i>	hurry	/ˈhʌːri/	Ends in consonant + y; inflects to <i>hurries</i>

SECTION 3: MASTER ORAL DICTATION SCRIPT, SOCRATIC INQUIRY & EVALUATIVE RUBRIC

DICTIONATION • SOCRATIC • 20-POINT RUBRIC

Oral Dictation Sentences:

- "The cold winter *weather* has *lasted* so long in our valley."
- "*We're* watching for the cheerful return of *Little Bird Blue*."
- "In the *springtime*, happy *robins* sing while *honey-bees* hum."
- "The dear little *pussies* sit softly upon the gray *willow-trees*."
- "Please *hurry*, little bird, before another cold storm arrives."

Socratic Inquiry Key:

- Q1: "What is *we're* a contraction of?"
A: "It is a contraction of **we are**. The apostrophe takes the place of the omitted letter *a*."
- Q2: "What is *pussies* the plural of, and how was it formed?"
A: "Plural of **pussy** (referring to *pussy-willow* buds). Formed by changing final *y* to *i* and adding -es."
- Q3: "What change is needed when you add *s* to *hurry*?"
A: "Change *y* to *i* and add -es, making **hurries**."

Scoring Rubric (20 Pts):

- 1. Memory Verse Spelling (5 pts): Flawless orthography of poem vocabulary (*weather*, *lasted*, *watching*, *springtime*).
- 2. Contraction Mechanics (5 pts): Flawless placement of the apostrophe in *we're* and understanding of elision.
- 3. Consonant + y Laws (5 pts): Accurate explanation and spelling of *pussies* and *hurries*.
- 4. Penmanship & Syntax (5 pts): Strict 26px line discipline; expressive original sentences.

Mastery: 18–20 | Proficient: 15–17 | Developing: 12–14 | Emerging: <12