If young people do not act responsibly toward the environment, wild or crazy things might happen—or so this poet claims. What could those wild and crazy things be? Get ready to find out as you read “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out” and “Turning Off the Faucet.”

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out

Shel Silverstein

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would not take the garbage out!
She’d scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.
And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.
It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones.

In lines 1–10 circle the alliteration—repetition of the same beginning consonant sound. What effect does the use of alliteration have on you, the reader?

Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,  
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,  
Pizza crusts and withered greens,  
Soggy beans and tangerines,  
Crusts of black burned butter toast,  
Gristly bits of beefy roasts . . .  
The garbage rolled on down the hall,  
It raised the roof, it broke the wall . . .  
Greasy napkins, cookie crumbs,  
Globs of gooey bubble gum,  
Cellophane from green baloney,  
Rubbery blubbery macaroni,  
Peanut butter, caked and dry,  
Curdled milk and crusts of pie,  
Moldy melons, dried-up mustard,  
Eggshells mixed with lemon custard,  
Cold french fries and rancid meat,  
Yellow lumps of Cream of Wheat.  
At last the garbage reached so high  
That finally it touched the sky.  
And all the neighbors moved away,  
And none of her friends would come to play.  
And finally Sarah Cynthia Stout said,  
“OK, I’ll take the garbage out!”  
But then, of course, it was too late . . .  
The garbage reached across the state,  
From New York to the Golden Gate.  
And there, in the garbage she did hate,  
Poor Sarah met an awful fate,  
That I cannot right now relate  
Because the hour is much too late.  
But children, remember Sarah Stout  
And always take the garbage out!
If you don’t turn the faucet off tight
When you’re done in the bathroom,
You’ll be wasting water.
Also, the sink might fill up
And overflow and flood the bathroom,
And then the bathroom would fill up
And overflow and flood the bedroom,
And all your clothes would get soaking wet,
And when you wore them, you’d catch a horrible cold
And have to stay home from school
And you couldn’t learn anything
Or see your friends.

And after you’d missed school long enough,
All your friends would forget you
And you would be so sad and wet
You’d probably just stay in bed
Wearing your sad, wet clothes
With your sad, wet head
On your sad, wet pillow
Until you just shiveled up and wasted away.
And nobody would care.
Except your parents
And they’d be all sad and wet
And shivering and wasting away, too,
Because you didn’t turn the faucet off.
OWN THE POEMS

PRACTICING THE STANDARDS

**Tone and Meaning**  Fill in the Tone Cards on the following page to analyze the tone of each poem. Share your completed cards with a partner, noting similarities and differences in your choices.

**Tone**  Prepare one of these poems for reading aloud. The Silverstein poem is longer and more difficult. You might want to present that poem in a group reading. If you select a group reading, you will have to determine which lines will be spoken by which reader. In your reading, focus on pronunciation and fluency, but you will also have to think about tone. What tone do you want to convey in your poem?

KEEPING TRACK

**Personal Word List**  Record the words you learned from the poems in your Personal Word List.

**Personal Reading Log**  Record these poems in your Personal Reading Log. Write a few sentences telling how the poems might be the subject of a poster you find in a hallway or classroom of your school. Give yourself 1 point on the Reading Meter.

**Checklist for Standards Mastery**  Each time you read, you learn more. Check your progress in mastering the standards using the Checklist for Standards Mastery.
Interact with Literary Texts

Tone Cards Use the following cards to analyze the poems you have just read. When you finish, write a brief description of the tone of each poem.

Title: “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out”
Word Choice: ____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
Rhyme and Other Sound Effects: _________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Rhythm: ______________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Description of Tone: ____________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

Title: “Turning Off the Faucet”
Word Choice: __________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Rhyme and Other Sound Effects: _________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Rhythm: ______________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Description of Tone: ____________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________
Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out; Turning Off the Faucet

Shel Silverstein/Jeff Moss • page 287

INTRODUCE

- Tell students that these poems teach students lessons about life and responsibility as they entertain them simultaneously with vivid images and humor. Ask students if they are familiar with either of the poets. If so, have them share their opinions of other poems by the poet they have read.

MODEL

- Have students locate and read the first note, Word Knowledge, dealing with alliteration. Read aloud to students the first six lines of the poem, placing deliberate emphasis on the “s” sound. Point out to students that the alliteration in the rest of the poem may not be so heavily based on a single consonant sound, but that they should be able to find many other examples of the technique in almost every line of the poem.

TEACH

- Have students continue reading the poems, using the side-column notes to guide their reading.
- After students have finished reading, divide the class into small groups, and have students discuss their responses to the side-column notes.
- Have students add these poems to their Personal Reading Logs.

ASSESS

- Use the ‘Tone Cards on Interactive Reading page 291 to evaluate students’ understanding of tone.
- Photocopy and distribute the “Text Reformulation” Chart in Section Three of the Teacher’s Edition to use as an informal assessment.
- Use the Comprehension Check on Teacher’s Edition page 95 to evaluate students’ mastery of the comprehension standard.

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out; Turning Off the Faucet

- Learners Having Difficulty
  It might be helpful for students to hear these poems read aloud, line by line, as they sit back with closed eyes and visualize what is taking place in each.
- Benchmark Students
  Challenge students to create comic books for one of the poems. Make sure each comic book includes the title of the poem and accurately presents the character and events in the selection. The completed comic books may be used by other students as a reader’s guide to these poems.
- Advanced Students
  Have student groups discuss other topics of personal or social importance, such as eating nutritious foods or conserving energy. Ask students to develop a fact sheet to support their cause, and then have them find or write a poem that encourages their readers to take their message seriously. Students can present their research findings and poems to each other or to other classes.

TEACHER TO TEACHER

Both of the poems in this selection lend themselves to partnered or group reading in which two or more students take turns reading a line from a poem and explaining in prose (that is, reformulating) the meaning and tone expressed in the line through the poetic elements of rhyme, repetition, rhythm, word choice, sentence structure, punctuation, or figurative language.
Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would Not Take the Garbage Out; Turning Off the Faucet

Interactive Reading, page 287

Reading Standard 3.4 Define how tone or meaning is conveyed in poetry through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition, and rhyme.

Academic Vocabulary

- **tone**: attitude the speaker takes toward the subject
- **rhyme**: sound repeated at the ends of words
- **rhythm**: musiclike pattern of stressed and unstressed sounds
- **word choice**: selection of words for sound (rhyme and rhythm) and sense (meaning) in a poem

A. Circle the letter of the correct response to each item.

1. How would you describe the pattern of **rhymes** in “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out”?
   - A Only the first and last lines rhyme.
   - B Every line has the same rhyme.
   - C Every fourth line rhymes.
   - D Every two lines rhyme.

2. How would you compare the pattern of **rhythm** in Silverstein’s and Moss’s poems?
   - F Neither poem has a pattern of accented and unaccented syllables.
   - G The poems have two stressed syllables in each line.
   - H The first poem has a pattern of stressed syllables in each line, but the second poem does not.
   - J The first poem has no regular rhythm, and the second poem has a lot of rhythm.

3. Which of the following words from Silverstein’s poem shows how **word choice** affects a poem’s **tone**?
   - A out
   - B gloppy
   - C tangerines
   - D fate

B. Suppose that you were reading these poems to younger children. What would you say to them about these poems as a brief introduction?
Chapter 7

Practice Read: The Just Us Club

Comprehension Check, page 92
A: 1. B
   2. H
   3. A
B: Answers will vary. Sample answer: I hope my friend will learn to be friendly with everyone and not treat some people as if they were inferior.

If We Didn’t Have Birthdays . . .

Comprehension Check, page 93
A: 1. C
   2. G
   3. B
B: Answers will vary. You might suggest a list of tones and ask them to choose among serious, funny, sarcastic, preachy, cruel, awed, affectionate, etc.

Save Our Earth

Comprehension Check, page 94
A: 1. A
   2. G
   3. D
B: Answers will vary. Most students will point out that the article is well researched, full of statistical evidence.

Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out;
Turning Off the Faucet

Comprehension Check, page 95
A: 1. D
   2. H
   3. B
B: Answers will vary. Students could say that there is a message beyond each poem. The poets use funny language to get the messages across to children.
Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout
Would Not Take the Garbage Out

She'd scour the pots and scrape the pans,
Candy the yams and spice the hams,
And though her daddy would scream and shout,
She simply would not take the garbage out.

And so it piled up to the ceilings:
Coffee grounds, potato peelings,
Brown bananas, rotten peas,
Chunks of sour cottage cheese.

It filled the can, it covered the floor,
It cracked the window and blocked the door
With bacon rinds and chicken bones,
Drippy ends of ice cream cones.

In lines 1–10 circle the alliteration—repetition of the same beginning consonant sound. What effect does the use of alliteration have on you, the reader?

Sample response: Alliteration makes the poem funny.

If you don't turn the faucet off tight
When you're done in the bathroom,
You'll be wasting water. Also, the sink might fill up
And overflow and flood the floor.

And after you'd missed school long enough,
All your friends would forget you
And you would be so sad and wet
You'd probably just stay in bed
Wearing your sad, wet... your parents
And they'd be all sad and wet
And shriveling and wasting away, too,
Because you didn't turn the faucet off.

This poem is a series of comical causes and effects.
The first event, the original cause, is cited in line 1.
The final event occurs in line 20.
Underline all the events that happen in between.
You should be able to find ten events.

1. If you don't turn the faucet off.
2. The sink might fill up.
3. Overflow and flood the floor.
4. You'll be wasting water.
5. After you've missed school long enough.
6. All your friends would forget you.
7. You would be so sad and wet.
8. You'd probably just stay in bed.
9. Wearing your sad, wet...
10. Your parents.

Notes:


Chapter 7
Prune pits, peach pits, orange peel,
Gloppy glumps of cold oatmeal,
Pizza crusts and withered greens,
Soggy beans and tangerines,
Crusts of black burned butter... right now relate
Because the hour is much too late.
But children, remember Sarah Stout
And always take the garbage out!

What do you think happened
To Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout?
Answers will vary.

Underline the adjectives in lines 16–33 that describe the garbage.
What effect do these words have on you?
Most students will say the adjectives make the garbage disgusting.
Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out; Turning Off the Faucet

Interactive Reading, page 287

Interact with Literary Texts

Title: "Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out"
Title: "Turning Off the Faucet"

Rhyme and Other Sound Effects: none
Rhyme and Other Sound Effects: normal; expected words for the situation described

Word Choice: conversational; some sentences repeated for rhythm
Word Choice: normal; expected words for the situation described

Rhythm: conversational
Rhythm: conversational

Description of Tone: serious but silly
Description of Tone: humorous, whimsical

Use the following cards to analyze the poems you have just read. When you finish, write a brief description of the tone of each poem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: &quot;Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out&quot;</th>
<th>Word Choice:</th>
<th>Rhythm:</th>
<th>Description of Tone:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title: &quot;Turning Off the Faucet&quot;</td>
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