

ELA: Grade 6, Lesson 20, Sticky Rice

**Lesson Focus:** In this lesson, students will read the poem “Ode to Kao Niew - Sticky Rice” as a companion text to the article, “A Taste of Sticky Rice, Laos’ National Dish.” They will focus on how their knowledge built from the informational text makes the poem more accessible and enjoyable.

**Practice Focus:** Students will write an ode of their own using today’s text as a model.

**Objective:** Students will use “Ode to Kao Niew - Sticky Rice” to read a more personal account about sticky rice with a focus on how knowledge built through informational text can be useful in other contexts.

**Academic Vocabulary:** mainstay, kao niew, ode, free verse, personification, water plains, Huay Xai, liberate, sacrifice

**TN Standards:** 6.RL.CS.4, 6.RL.CS.6, 6.W.PDW.4

**Teacher Materials:**

- The Teacher Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 20
- Chart paper or white board and markers

**Student Materials:**

- Paper, pencil, surface to write on
- The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 20 which can be found at [www.tn.gov/education](http://www.tn.gov/education)

**Teacher Delivery Notes:**

- In this lesson, students will apply their knowledge from the “sticky rice” informational text to help them understand a poem. I think it will be empowering for students to see that they can understand poetry better because of the knowledge they build in informational text.
- Pronunciations: This text is about the importance of sticky rice in the country of Laos. Laos rhymes with mouse. Khao niew(cow-now); Myanmar (mee-in-mar); Theravada (Terra-vah-nuh); Huay Xai (Hway-shay)

Teacher Do	Students Do
<p><b>Opening</b> (1 min)</p> <p>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today’s lesson is for all our 6th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the last in this week’s series.</p> <p>My name is ____ and I’m a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I’m so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</p> <p>If you didn’t see our previous lessons, you can find them on <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education">www.tn.gov/education</a>. You can still tune in to today’s lesson if you haven’t seen any of our others. But it might be more fun if you first go back and watch our other lessons, since today we’ll be talking about things we learned previously. Today, we will be reading a poem about sticky rice! Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper, pencil, surface to write on</li> <li>• The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 20 which can be found at <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education">www.tn.gov/education</a></li> </ul>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson’s content.</p>

<p><b>Ok, let's begin!</b></p>	
<p><b>Intro</b> (2 min)</p> <p>In our last lesson, we did a close read of the article, “A Taste of Sticky Rice, Laos’ National Dish,” and looked for how the author conveyed the idea that eating sticky rice is essential for people in Laos. We found that farmers needed this crop to support themselves and their families and that sticky rice helped keep people full longer than other foods.</p> <p>In the first four lessons in this series, we have focused on an informational text. Today our goal is to read and understand a poem about the same topic. We will read and analyze the poem together, and then there will be time for you to practice some analysis on your own with my support. Finally, I will assign you independent work that you can complete after the video ends.</p> <p>We’ve learned a lot about the country of Laos, the Laotian people, and sticky rice by reading and studying the informational article, “A Taste of Sticky Rice, Laos’ National Dish.” Let’s review some of that information before we read our poem for today.</p> <p>What did we learn about the country of Laos? Do you remember where it is in the world? [Pause.] [Show slide L20-A.] That’s right! Laos is a small, landlocked country in Southeast Asia just south of China. When we look closer at the map of Laos [Show slide L20-B.], we see that Laos borders several other countries. Remember, <i>landlocked</i> means that they do not have immediate access to an ocean for trading with other countries. If they want to import (buy) or export (sell) products to other countries, they must go through one of the 5 countries they border to do so. As I read a paragraph from the text, listen for words that describe the land in Laos. [Show slide L20-C.]</p> <p><i>Sticky rice grows in Laotian lowlands and uplands. Lowland farmers plant it in flooded paddies; upland farmers intercrop it on hillsides with companion crops like taro, cassava, and chili peppers. Because hillsides generally receive less-predictable supplies of water than paddies do, hillside rice fields tend to be more susceptible to drought.</i></p> <p>How was the land described? [Pause.] Yes! Sticky rice is grown in the lowlands and uplands but seems to grow better in water-soaked paddies in the lowlands. In this paragraph, the author also tells us that other crops are grown along with</p>	<p>Students prepare to follow the gradual-release trajectory, understanding that they will be doing more listening at first and more “doing” toward the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Student follows along as the teacher reviews the previous lessons.</p> <p>Students will listen for description of the land.</p>

sticky rice. In the uplands, the farmers battle drought and rodent infestations.

What did we learn about sticky rice? Let's read another paragraph from the text. [Show slide L20-D.]

***(8) But sticky rice is still the primary staple in Laos and parts of the five countries bordering it: China, Myanmar (mee-in-maí), Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. In Laos, slightly larger in area than Utah, per-capita sticky rice consumption is the highest on earth at more than 345 pounds per year. The average American, by contrast, eats less than 20 pounds of rice annually, according to the United States Drug Administration. [Pause.]***

Wow! They eat a LOT of sticky rice in Laos, don't they? The author referred to sticky rice as the mainstay of Laotian cuisine. Mainstay can mean the most important part or something that is depended upon. Both definitions seem to apply here.

One of the important characteristics about sticky rice is that it makes a person feel full, or sates their hunger for a long time. In the narrative part of the text, Luck's story, both the author and Luck ate their sticky rice with their hands, and the author referred to that as "Laotian style."

Let's think about how the author showed us some characteristics of the Laotian people in this text. I'm going to read a few lines from the text. [Show slide L20-E.]

***But Evans, the author of several books about Laos, also says he doesn't know a single Laotian person who never eats sticky rice. From a cultural perspective, he explained, sticky rice is still "the way the Lao identify themselves."***

***Sticky rice figures in religious traditions across Laos, where the predominant faith is Theravada (Terra-vaí-nuh) Buddhism... During the popular back ceremony, uncooked sticky rice grains are tossed into the air after communal prayers. And when a Laotian is dying, a village elder may rub sticky rice on the person and throw the rice away to banish bad spirits.***

***The threat of hunger didn't diminish their hospitality.***

Students will note details about sticky rice from the paragraph.

Students will note characteristics of Laotian people.

<p><b>So, how do the people see sticky rice as part of their lives?</b> [Pause.] <b>Exactly! They identify themselves with sticky rice. Sticky rice is even part of their religious traditions. And I think the most inspiring thing about the people of Laos is their hospitality. Even those who didn't have much were willing to share with neighbors and strangers.</b></p> <p><b>I think you will be surprised to see how the knowledge you've gained from the informational text will help you better understand the poem we will read today.</b></p> <p><b>Just a reminder-typically, when we study literary texts, we refer to the person who wrote the text as the author. For poetry, we say "poet." And while we talk about a narrator in stories, we use the term "speaker."</b></p> <p><b>Let's get started!</b></p>	
<p><b>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud (16 min)</b> <b>Today, we are going to read the poem, "Ode to Kao Niew - Sticky Rice". Kao Niew means "sticky rice" in Laotian. An ode is a poem that pays tribute to or praises a specific thing. In our poem today, the author writes an ode for sticky rice.</b></p> <p><b>This poem might look a little different from the poems you are used to. That's because this poem is written in free verse; that means that the poem does not rhyme and it doesn't have a predictable pattern.</b></p> <p><b>Poems can be tricky to understand; so as we read, we'll pause to analyze certain lines to better comprehend what the author is saying. There will even be times when we need to analyze a single word to get a better understanding.</b></p> <p><b>To help you organize your thoughts, I'd like you to make a T-Chart. On the left side it should say "TEXT" and on the right side it should say "ANALYSIS". Here's an example: [Pause and show slide L20-F.]</b></p> <p><b>As we read, I might ask you to write down a line or word from the text in the left column, then write your analysis of that line or word in the right column. Let's get started. [Show Slide L20-G.]</b></p> <p><b>"Ode to Kao Niew - Sticky Rice"</b> <b>By: Krysada Phounsiri</b></p> <p><b>I meet you in Laos as a seed</b></p>	<p>Students follow along, comprehending the text. They use teacher think-alouds and tips (e.g., definitions of words) to support their comprehension, and they think or write as directed in response to prompts and questions.</p> <p>Students create their own copy of the T chart for notes.</p>

just a simple  
existence of hard rice

Before I read any further I need to make sure I understand who this poem is about. In the first line it says “I meet you”. Look carefully at the poem so far, you can look ahead, too, to see if you can figure out who “I” is and who “you” is. [Pause.]

Let’s write our ideas down. Write “*I meet you*” under the TEXT side of your chart. Were you able to figure out who “I” is and who “you” is? [Pause.] It’s a tough question because when the speaker says you, he isn’t talking about a person. On the right side of your chart under ANALYSIS write: *The speaker meets sticky rice*. [Pause and show slide L20-H.]

This is an example of personification, which is not a new term for you. Remember, personification is when a poet gives human characteristics to nonhuman things. As we keep reading, be on the lookout for more examples of personification.

Now that we have updated our chart, remember every time you see the word “I” that is the speaker. And every time we see the word “you” that is a single grain of sticky rice.

Let’s start from the top again: [Show slide L20-I.]

I meet you in Laos  
as a seed  
just a simple  
existence of hard rice  
seeded inside Huay Xai’s (Hway-shay) dirt  
until water plains  
cradle and nourish your infant body

Those are some interesting lines. Let’s make sure we understand it. [Show Slide L20-J.] On your chart under the TEXT side write:

- “Huay Xai”
- “water plains” and
- “infant body”

[Write the above words on chart.]

Try to think about what these phrases mean in your ANALYSIS. I’ll give you the first one. Huay Xai is a town in Laos. [Pause.]

Students add the example on their chart under “text”.

Students add the example on their chart under “analysis”.

Students add the 3 examples on their chart under “text”.

Students add the example on their chart under “analysis”.

<p><b>Analyzing poetry can be tough work. You have to think like a detective and never give up. I hope you at least attempted to write something down under ANALYSIS. Here's what I've got so far:</b> [Show slide L20-J and read it aloud.] [Pause and allow students to copy or make corrections.]</p> <p><b>Let's move on and read the next few lines:</b> [Show slide L20-K.]</p> <p><b>'till you sprout above water banks where you tickle yourself with sunshine like a child who spends all day with the wind</b></p> <p><b>Okay, there's some more great stuff for us to take a closer look. Can you find the simile in this section?</b> [Pause.] <b>That's right! "Like a child who spends all day with the wind". What is the poet comparing to "a child who spends all day with the wind"? [Pause.] If you said rice plants, you are on it today! When you grow rice it looks like a field of tall grass which is easily moved by the wind. Here's a picture!</b> [Refer to picture on slide L20-K.]</p> <p><b>Let's write this simile on our chart. On the left side write: "<i>like a child who spends all day with the wind</i>". On the right side, I'm going to write: <i>rice plants growing and blowing in the wind (simile)</i>.</b> [Pause and show slide L20-L.]</p> <p><b>Let's keep reading. Remember when it says "you" it is talking about a grain of sticky rice:</b> [Show slide L20-M.]</p> <p><b>when you mature people pull your roots carry you in bulk back home along with your friends</b></p> <p><b>What happens when crops mature?</b> [Pause.] <b>That's right! When crops are ready to be picked we harvest them. What do you think the poet means by "your friends"? [Pause.] I think you're right, the poet means other grains of sticky rice. This is another example of personification. Let's put that on our chart. On the left write: "<i>your friends</i>" and on the right write: <i>other grains of sticky rice (personification)</i>.</b> [Pause and show slide L20-N.]</p> <p><b>Let's keep reading:</b> [Show slide L20-O.]</p> <p><b>moisten your skin</b></p>	<p>Students add the example on their chart under "text".</p> <p>Students add the example on their chart under "analysis".</p> <p>Students add the example on their chart under "text".</p> <p>Students add the example on their chart under "analysis".</p> <p>Students add the example on their chart under "text".</p> <p>Students add the example on their chart under "analysis".</p>
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steam under flames and  
boiling water  
only a bath where  
dirt splashes off  
while you try to hold  
breaths underwater  
your skin does not wrinkle  
only softens  
to stick with other rice  
and sink in perfection

What is happening here? [Pause.] It might be hard for you to answer that if you've never made rice before or seen it made. I bet a few of you out there know exactly what is happening. In this section, the poet is using descriptive language to show that the harvested sticky rice is being cooked. To cook rice, you have to bring water to a boil then simmer the rice in hot water until the water disappears.

Can you find an example of personification in this section of text? [Pause.] Excellent! The phrase "hold breaths underwater" is an example of personification. Can rice breathe? No! So why does the poet describe the rice like this? [Pause.] Well, when you cook rice, all the grains of rice sink to the bottom so that they can be submerged under water and cook properly. This is the poet's way of describing this scene so that we can visualize how rice is cooked.

Let's include this on our chart. On the left side write: *"holds breaths underwater"*. On the right side write: *to show how rice is cooked (personification)*. [Pause.] [Show slide L20-P.]

Let's go back two lines and continue reading: [Show slide 20-Q.]

to stick with other rice  
and sink in perfection  
of the basket  
where my mother's hands  
shake and shuffle you  
into a ball  
to roll on a plate  
now fully grown ready to  
liberate our hunger  
with your body  
that is how we meet

Students add the example on their chart under "text".  
Students add the example on their chart under "analysis".

So far we've read about rice seeds being planted in rice paddies, being collected and harvested, and being cooked. What does this section of text show us? Notice the last 4 lines. [Pause.] Yeah! The rice is now being served to be eaten. This might sound like a sad thing for the rice, but the poet continually uses words to imply the joy and love that exists in this process of growing rice and eating it. Have you noticed these words? [Pause.] Words like "cradle", "nourish", "tickle", "sunshine", and others all have very positive connotations. Even the phrase "mother's hands" has such a calming effect, don't you think? [Pause.] Odes are typically very happy poems. They are poems that show a person's gratitude. Keep that in mind as we continue on.

Before we do though, let's add to our chart. There are few lines that I would like us to analyze. What do you think the line "now fully grown" means? [Pause.] Correct, the rice is ready to eat. Let's include this on our chart. On the left side write: "now fully grown". On the right side write: *ready to eat*. [Pause and show slide L20-R.]

Also, take a look at the phrase "to liberate us from our hunger." The word liberate means "to free". How does this connect to our reading from the previous lessons where we read the article "A Taste of Sticky Rice, Laos' National Dish"? [Pause.] Yes, we learned that sticky rice makes you feel full for long periods of time. So when we read the line "to liberate us from our hunger" we can understand that the author is trying to show that eating sticky rice will fill the speaker and his family up.

Let's keep reading: [Show slide L20-S.]

everyday even now  
when I chew you in big bites  
you never fail to fill  
my head with steam  
and make my tummy your  
cozy home  
sometimes I eat you too fast  
you burn my tongue

This stanza explains how the speaker eats his sticky rice. Think back to the article. How do people in Laos eat sticky rice? Did you notice the line in the poem that says "I chew you in big bites"? [Pause.] If you said by hand, you are correct! In the article it described how people ate large amounts of sticky rice by hand. There's also another line in

Students brainstorm the meaning and relevance of "liberate".

Students follow along as teacher continues reading.

Students answer questions.



this stanza that stands out. What does the line “you never fail to fill” emphasize? [Pause.] True, it’s talking about filling the speaker’s head with steam, but the line also emphasizes the nutritional value of sticky rice and how it fills people up.

I want to read the last stanza without interruption so you can get a better idea of the flow of the poem. Be on the lookout for the theme, or message, of the poem in this final stanza. Let’s keep reading: [Show slide L20-T.]

and mom says  
I am crazy for eating too fast  
but it don’t matter  
when I can cool  
squeeze to pebble-size bits  
dip you in fish soup  
or papaya salad  
Kao Niew  
my family sits together  
on the floor legs folded  
or on a dinner table  
you cuddle inside our bellies  
warm our lips  
all  
the way  
down  
our throats  
in cold evenings with no heaters  
you sacrifice to  
fill our stomachs  
so we can stick to each other  
and swallow  
our love whole

Don’t worry if you didn’t get it the first time. Poems are rarely understood after one reading. Let’s go back and look at some things.

Did you notice that the poet now uses the pronoun “our” and “we”. We already decided that when we saw the word “I” it means the speaker. And the word “you” is the grain of sticky rice. Look back at this stanza and try to figure out who the poet is talking about when he says “our” and “we”. [Pause.]

Do you think you know? Let’s write it on our chart. On the left side write: “our”/“we”. And on the right side write what you think it means. [Pause and show slide L20-U.] All right, let me reveal the answer. “We” and “our” refers to the speaker’s

Students follow as the teacher reads the final stanza.

Students add the example on their chart under “text”.

Students add the example on their chart under “analysis”.

**family. Make sure you write that down: *speaker's family*.**

[Pause and show slide L20-V.]

**I like this stanza because there are even more joyful and loving words and phrases, like: “cuddle inside our bellies”, “warm our lips”, and “swallow our love whole”. What effect do you think these lines have on the tone of the poem?**

[Pause.] **I think you're right, just like in the article we read the poet is trying to express the idea that eating sticky rice can be a joyful experience. The way we describe things and the words we choose have a powerful effect on the tone of our writing.**

**Let me read part of the last stanza once more. Think about the theme. Think about the speaker and his family and the effect that sticky rice has on them.** [Show slide L20-W.]

my family sits together  
on the floor legs folded  
or on a dinner table  
you cuddle inside our bellies  
warm our lips  
all  
the way  
down  
our throats  
in cold evenings with no heaters  
you sacrifice to  
fill our stomachs  
so we can stick to each other  
and swallow  
our love whole

**In these last few lines, we see how the speaker's love of sticky rice is similar to the love he has for his family. I especially like the line “so we can stick to each other”. Notice the word “we”. The poet isn't talking about grains of rice sticking together, he's talking about family.**

**In the final few lines of this poem, why do you think the poet describes the family sticking together, similar to the way that sticky rice sticks together? What does that say about his family?** [Pause.]

**I'm going to let you sit and think about that one on your own. I hope you enjoyed this poem. I know I did. And it was great to be able to use our background knowledge from the article to visualize what was happening in this poem.**

Students listen as the teacher rereads the final stanza.

Students answer the teacher's question.

<p>Poetry is not meant to be read in chunks like I read today, so I highly recommend that you read this poem on your own in full, that way you can hear the flow of the poem better. Maybe on your second reading you'll be able to visualize the poem better and get a better understanding of it as a whole.</p>	
<p><b>Guided Practice</b> (5 mins.)  <b>Let's take a look at our final T-Chart:</b> [Show slide L20-X.] I went ahead and added the last one, so go ahead and add that to your chart now. [Pause.]</p> <p>For your independent practice, you will be writing your own ode poem. Before you do, let's take a closer look at the characteristics of an ode.</p> <p>We'll take a few more notes as we go. On your paper write: <b>CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ODE</b> [Pause.] Below that I would like you to make a list of the characteristics of an ode that you already know. Look back at your notes and think about what you learned today. [Pause.]</p> <p>Here are some of the characteristics of an ode that I found. Please add to your list if there is anything that you missed. [Show slide L20-Y.]</p> <p><b>Characteristics of an Ode</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purpose is to show love for something</li> <li>• pays tribute to or praises something</li> <li>• includes figurative language, like personification and simile</li> <li>• uses descriptive language to explain everyday actions, events, or things</li> <li>• uses specific word choice to create a positive tone</li> <li>• may include multiple layers of meaning</li> </ul> <p>It's clear that an ode is meant to show a person's love for something. In our poem, the poet clearly loves eating sticky rice with his family.</p> <p>We know that an ode pays tribute to or praises something as well. You'll pay tribute to your favorite food in your independent task.</p> <p>The poem also has figurative language such as personification and simile. Remember the line "holds breaths underwater" or the line "like a child who spends all day with the wind." Remember we use figurative language such as personification</p>	<p>Students review their final t-chart with the teacher.</p> <p>Students add the last two responses to their chart.</p> <p>Students listen to the teachers instructions.</p> <p>Students write on their paper CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ODE and list characteristics of an ode.</p> <p>Students add any additional information to their list.</p>

<p>and simile to help us describe something in a new and creative way.</p> <p>The poet also used very descriptive language to describe certain things. Remember how he used the line “infant bodies” to describe the rice seeds and the line “now fully grown” to explain that the rice was ready to eat. This is an example of metaphor which is similar to a simile. Just remember that you want your descriptions to help the reader visualize what is going on. Maybe include descriptions that relate to the senses as well.</p> <p>Also choose your words wisely. In the poem the author used words like “cradle”, “nourish”, “tickle”, “cuddle”, “warm”, and “love”. Those words weren’t put there by accident. The poet wanted to create a calming and joyful tone. You can do the same when you write.</p> <p>And finally, if you want a challenge. Try to make your ode have a deeper meaning like the ode we read today. It wasn’t just about sticky rice. It was about the love of a family too. The best poems have layers of meaning. See if you can create different layers of meaning in your writing today.</p>	<p>Students listen to the teacher explain the characteristics of an ode.</p>
<p><b>Independent Work</b> (1 min)</p> <p>Listen carefully as I tell you what your independent practice is. You can write the prompt down quickly or take a picture. For your independent practice, you will: [Show slide L20-Z.] Write an ode about a food that is significant to you. You may write about the same food that you wrote about in lesson 17 or you can choose a new type of food. Make sure that your writing uses the various characteristics of odes that we discussed. Also, feel free to use the poem as an example. Your ode should be at least 20 lines. It may rhyme or be in free verse.</p> <p>Let me repeat the independent practice again. Write an ode about a food that is significant to you. [Repeat directions 2x.]</p>	<p>Students listen to the instructions.</p> <p>Students will write their ode.</p>
<p><b>Closing</b> (1 min)</p> <p>I enjoyed reading a poem and building more knowledge about Laos with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series! Bye!</p>	