Word Inventors
Literacy Skills / Writing

Materials

1. Suggested picture books:
   - Jamberry by Bruce Deegan,
   - Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak, and
   - One Fish, Two Fish, Read Fish, Blue Fish by Dr. Seuss

2. Transparency of Jabberwocky excerpt

3. Overhead projector

Virginia SOLs

1.11, 1.12, 2.11, 2.12, 3.9

Procedure

1. Tell children that authors sometimes make up silly words to create fun stories. Although the words are made up, they still have meaning. Share the first two stanzas of "Jabberwocky," by Lewis Carroll, to demonstrate that although the words are silly, they still have meaning. We can imagine a Jabberwock despite it not being real. You may wish to share the poem on the overhead, highlighting which words were indeed invented.

   "Twas brilling, and the silthy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe. All mimsy were the borogroves, and the mome raths outgrabe. Beware the Jabberwock, my son! The jaws that bite, the claws that catch! Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun the fruminous Bandersnatch!"

2. Encourage children to share their responses to the poem. How did the poem make them feel? What words did the writer make up? What do children think the word brilling might mean?

3. Share other picture books in which the authors invented words.

4. Tell the students that they too can be word inventors. You may wish to scaffold their first efforts by starting a poem. You may also leave only the invented word for student creation. Your more advanced writers may want to attempt writing their own story or poem using invented words. Examples for your scaffolding efforts follow:

   The children went outside to run, sun, and willy-wum.

   The day was warm, so the kooky-lorm
   Brewed and stewed a mookey-mark storm.