



Lesson Plan:  
**Enjambment in**

**"Things I Carry Into the World"**

Poem by Cynthia Manick / motionpoem by Jamil McGinnis and Pat Heywood  
Lesson plan by Eric Doise

**Time: at least 50 minutes**

**OBJECTIVES**

In this lesson, students will:

1. define and identify enjambment
2. discuss how enjambment can reinforce the central focus of a poem
3. write a poem utilizing enjambment that shows how the speaker connects to something bigger than the speaker

**MATERIALS**

- "Things I Carry Into the World," the poem & the motionpoem: [motionpoems.org/episode/things-i-carry-into-the-world/](http://motionpoems.org/episode/things-i-carry-into-the-world/)
- Interview with filmmakers Jamil McGinnis, Pat Heywood, and Claire McGirr; and poet Cynthia Manick
- Pen/paper or other writing implements

**ACTIVITIES**

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**1. The Poem** (20-25 mins): Have students read "Things I Carry Into the World."

a. Convey the following: "Enjambment occurs when a line of poetry carries over to the next line without a punctuation mark at the end of the former. As Edward Hirsch notes in *A Poet's Glossary*, it "creates a dialectical motion of hesitation and flow. The lineation bids the reader to pause at the end of each line even as the syntax pulls the reader forward" (204). This pause-and-pull can create ambiguity, and it blurs the division between lines." The word literally means to stride or run over.

b. Note that because Manick's poem has no punctuation, all lines use enjambment.

**2.** In small groups, complete the following tasks:

- a. Identify 3 uses of enjambment in the poem that you find particularly interesting.
- b. Explain how the enjambment leads to multiple readings of the line.
- c. Note how each reading of the line shifts the emphasis to a different word, concept, or object.
- d. Discuss how the running over and the consequent blurring of each line as a unit fits in particularly well with the larger theme(s) of the poem.

**3. The Film** (20-25 mins): Watch the film adaptation of "Things I Carry Into the World."

- a. What readings of the uses of enjambment does the narrator of the film favor? Do those choices tend to favor the pause or the pull of enjambment? Or a combination?
- b. How might other choices in reading the enjambments change the rhythm, pace, tone, etc. of the voice over?
- c. In what other ways does the film communicate the idea of carrying or spilling over? Are there any normally accepted divisions that the film challenges? How so?

**4.** Depending on class time, have students complete this exercise in class or at home:

**WRITING PROMPT**

Think about ways in which you, a character you have read, or a character you (have) invent(ed) carry over into other people, concepts, or objects. Write a poem about this spilling over, with all lines using enjambment.