

Picture Perfect Poetry

Subject: English Language Arts

Grade level: 6th through 12th

Rationale or Purpose:

Students can write poetry without the restraint of rhyme, lines, and format. Students are more willing to write if they have more freedom. Self-expression through creativity is the main focus.

Materials:

- Internet access
- Notebook paper/construction paper for drawing and final product
- Markers/pen/pencil

Lesson Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

Objectives: Language Arts - 110

- (1.A-B) write in a variety of forms using voice and style
- (2.A-E) use prewriting strategies, develop drafts, proofread, refine selected pieces frequently to publish
- (7.A-C) establish a purpose for reading
- (8.A-D) read to be entertained; interpret the influences
- (9.A-B) recognize distinctive and shared characteristics of cultures
- (11.H) understand literary forms and terms
- (19.A) elements of design, including shape, line, color, and texture

Activity:

Step 1: “If you could draw a poem with no words, only lines and shapes, what would it look like?” Have students draw what they think a poem would look like with no words.

Step 2: Give students a brief background of the invention of printing and the Gutenberg Bible. Review **A Familiar Format** at:

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg/invention/familiar>

Show students the picture of the Gutenberg Bible. Discuss the structure and what is nice about having such straight, formatted text. Discuss why this format would be necessary and beneficial for printing purposes.

Step 3: Show students the pictures of Hypnerotamachia Poliphili from the Ransom Center’s collection. Discuss potential problems you might encounter as the printer of such material. Why are people so uncomfortable with nontraditional formatting?

Step 4: Separate the students into groups of about four. Give each student a copy of each poem listed below (ee cummings, Langston Hughes, Cesar Vallejo, Pablo Neruda). Each

group will read the poems and decide on an overall interpretation for each poem. Discuss what is so unique about these poems. Was there rhyme? Formatting? Weren't all of these extremely personal stories?

Step 5: Using the calligramme theory, students will write and create a personal poem using any format.

Step 6: Students will turn in a final product either illuminated like the Gutenberg Bible on printer paper or on a colorful sheet of paper. Each student needs to turn in a final product.

Modification:

- Special Education modification: peer tutoring/teacher assistance with interpretation of poems
- ESL modification: peer tutoring/teacher assistance with interpretation of poems
- Gifted/Talented modification: Compare the structural forms of poetry. Why were the poems written in this format? What was the poet hoping to accomplish? Why did format matter?

Student Product:

- Students will write calligrammes. Suggested topics may include “a lasting memory from my childhood,” “personal goals,” “something I want the world to know about me,” or anything that the student would like to write about.

Closure:

- Students who wish to present their poems can read them to the class.
- Explain to the students how poetry is a means of expression. How you choose to express yourself is personal and does not always follow a format.

Assessment or evaluation:

- Students will write about why they did or didn't like this form of poetry. The students need to discuss why structure in writing is good and how it can stifle the imagination.

Activity By:

Kristi Schonefeld
North Garland High School
Garland, Texas



(Hypnerotomachia Poliphili-year 1499)

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg>



(Ransom Center Gutenberg Bible -year 1455)

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/education/modules/gutenberg>

.....
<http://www.shakespeare-online.com/sonnets/78.html>

Sonnet 78 by William Shakespeare

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse, (A)
And found such faire assistance in my verse, (B)
As every Alien pen hath got my use, (A)
And under thee their poesy disperse. (B)
Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing, (C)
And heavy ignorance aloft to flie, (D)
Have added feathers to the learned's wing, (C)
And given grace a double majestie. (D)
Yet be most proud of that which I compile, (E)
Whose influence is thine and born of thee, (F)
In others'works thou dost but mend the style (E)
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be. (F)
But thou art all my art, and dost advance (G)
As high as learning my rude ignorance. (G)

.....
<http://www-scf.usc.edu/~thier/ee>

ee cummings

l(a
le
af
fa
ll
s)
one
l
iness

.....
i have found what you are like

ee cummings

i have found what you are like
the rain,

(Who feathers frightened fields
with the superior dust-of-sleep. wields

easily the pale club of the wind
and swirled justly souls of flower strike

the air in utterable coolness

deeds of green thrilling light
with thinned

newfragile yellows

lurch and.press

-in the woods
which
stutter
and

sing

And the coolness of your smile is
stirringofbirds between my arms;but
i should rather than anything
have (almost when hugeness will shut
quietly) almost,
your kiss

.....
<http://www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/hughes.html>

Langston Hughes

Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

.....
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16006>

from *The Book of Questions*

by [Pablo Neruda](#)

Translated by William O'Daly

III.

Tell me, is the rose naked
or is that her only dress?

Why do trees conceal
the splendor of their roots?

Who hears the regrets
of the thieving automobile?

Is there anything in the world sadder
than a train standing in the rain?

Reprinted from *The Book of Questions* by permission of [Copper Canyon Press](#), written by Pablo Neruda, and translated by William O'Daly. Copyright © 2001 by William O'Daly. All rights reserved.

.....
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15272>

To My Brother Miguel *in memoriam*

by [César Vallejo](#)

Translated by [Robert Bly](#)

Brother, today I sit on the brick bench outside the house,
where you make a bottomless emptiness.

I remember we used to play at this hour of the day, and mama

would calm us: "There now, boys..."

Now I go hide

as before, from all these evening

prayers, and I hope that you will not find me.

In the parlor, the entrance hall, the corridors.

Later, you hide, and I do not find you.

I remember we made each other cry,

brother, in that game.

Miguel, you hid yourself

one night in August, nearly at daybreak,

but instead of laughing when you hid, you were sad.

And your other heart of those dead afternoons

is tired of looking and not finding you. And now

shadows fall on the soul.

Listen, brother, don't be too late

coming out. All right? Mama might worry.

From *Neruda and Vallejo: Selected Poems*. Edited by Robert Bly, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, 1990. Copyright © 1993 by Robert Bly. Used with his permission.

.....
<http://www.ubu.com/historical/app/app.html>

Je n'oublierai jamais ce voyage nocturne où nul de nous ne dit un mot

O
de part sombre où mouraient nos 3 phares
o nuit tendre d'avant la guerre
o vil lages où

MARECHAUX-FERRANTS RAPPELES

ENTRE MINUIT ET UNE HEURE DU MATIN

v
c r a
L I S I E U X
l a t r è s
b l e u
c

ou bien

v
c r a
a l l i c
b d o
r

et 3 fois nous nous arrêta mes pour changer un pneu qui avait éclaté