

Found Poetry

Discovering mood, theme, character, and imagery is the potential outcome of this activity called *found poetry*—a lesson that promotes close reading and interpretation of densely packed text. Found poetry allows students to develop their own poetry. Students read the text as a class and find the images they like the best. Separate the students into groups of five. Have each group write two sentences with imagery that they like on sentence strips and arrange strip on a board to make their own poem. This teaches students to appreciate creative writing and understand the concept of creative teaching. Exhibits 3.11 and 3.12 each present a different found poetry lesson.

Exhibit 3.11 Found Poetry Lesson Plan 1: Kinesthetic

During-Reading Lesson	Found Poetry
Educational benefit	Active exploration and manipulation of text
Example	Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be" speech from William Shakespeare's play, <i>Hamlet</i>
Materials	Strips of paper, each one with a line from a monologue in the play.
Time	15–20 minutes
Preparation	
Step 1	Identify the purpose for the during-reading activity: What information do you want the students to learn from the activity? What issues do you want to clarify in the activity? Character motivation? Character conflict? Theme? Choose a monologue that conveys the information that students need to learn.
Step 2	Write each line of this monologue on a separate strip of paper.

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Exhibit 3.11 (continued)

During-Reading Lesson	Found Poetry
Procedure	
Step 1	Arrange the students in a circle.
Step 2	Hand each student a card with a line from the text, keeping the lines in sequence as you distribute the cards.
Step 3	As they sit in a circle, each student will act the line of the text.
Step 4	Have the group of students practice their lines of the monologues as a group a couple of times. These practice sessions can provide students with additional time to reflect on the text being read.
Step 5	The ultimate goal is to make it sound like one person is speaking.
IRA/NCTE Standards	<p>2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.</p> <p>3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).</p>

Exhibit 3.12 Found Poetry Lesson Plan 2: Written

During-Reading Lesson	Found Poetry
Objective	Develops student skills in reading comprehension for linguistically rich text. Nurtures student ability to identify and apply knowledge of the following literary elements: mood, theme, character, and imagery.
Materials	Copies of selected text. For our example, we are using Edgar Allen Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" and sentence strips.
Time	20 minutes

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Exhibit 3.12 (continued)

During-Reading Lesson	Found Poetry
Procedure	
Step 1	Text for this lesson can be selected in a variety of ways. For longer texts like novels, select a chapter or key section. For longer short stories like "The Fall of the House of Usher," choose specific pages; this may help the students better focus on the text.
Step 2	Place the students in cooperative-learning groups of three.
Step 3	In their cooperative groups, the students will examine the selected texts for images and brief passages (about eight words or less) and write them on a sentence strip.
Step 4	Ask the students to arrange their sentence strips into a poem that makes sense.
Step 5	Instruct the students to display their poems in the class and invite the students to read aloud.
Step 6	Have a large-group discussion with the students about the construction of their "found poem."
IRA/NCTE Standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic, and contemporary works. 2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience. 3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

This chapter addressed the needs of adolescent readers as they approach a linguistically complex text like those commonly found among the classics. It is in the "during reading" stage that readers begin to unlock the text and make inferences that personalize the text. This reflective process does not end when a reader completes a text. Rather, it is the beginning of this reflective process. In the next chapter we will examine after-reading activities and their usefulness in addressing larger thematic and

global questions. Through this reflective process readers continue to discover personal and emotional connections with the text they read.