



Purpose for reading: To identify important words in an article and write a creative summary of it

Introduction: This activity is going to show you the power of words. You will also see the interaction between reading and writing. You will learn:

- ▶ To focus on key words and concepts.
- ▶ To summarize in a creative way.
- ▶ To produce a “found poem.”

1. Preview the headlines of today’s USA TODAY articles. Flag the titles that seem to be about a topic that interests you.
2. **In pairs**, find an article that you both want to read.
3. Read the article aloud together and look for key words and concepts. Discuss and mark the words that you think are important. Try to find between 8-15 words, phrases or concepts.
4. Now you are going to create a “found poem” by choosing key words and/or phrases from the article and copying them onto a piece of paper or an overhead transparency. Keep the words and phrases in order. Proofread your poem.
5. **As a class**, share your found poems. Discuss each poem. Which words and/or phrases carry important meaning? How does each poem express the voice of the poet/s? Are there any articles that you would like to read after hearing found poems about them?
6. Answer the following questions in a quick write: Which part of this assignment was easy? Which was difficult? Do you feel your found poem reflected your understanding of the article? Which part of this assignment would you change? How can this strategy help you when you read for other classes?

Lesson 4 - Found poems

Time Requirement:
45 minutes

Teacher edition

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Lesson 4: This is a one-period lesson that will guide students through the comprehension of an article and the analysis of important words and concepts within it. Students will then create a “found poem” by choosing key words and concepts from the article.

Standards:

- ▶ Identifying details/facts
- ▶ Identifying main idea/essential message
- ▶ Recognizing and/or using descriptive language

1. Model: Fisher and Frey (2003) present this strategy as an example of “Writing to Learn” (Chapter 8) as well as a strategy to engage reluctant readers and writers. Model this strategy quickly and simply. Select a short, intriguing article from today’s newspaper. Read it aloud. Then, analyze it aloud in preparation for creating a “found poem.” For example, as you read, say aloud, “Ah! This word, XXX, is a powerful word!” or “This phrase says it all!” Let the students see you mark the words or phrases directly on the article. After having read and marked the article, choose which words and/or phrases to pull out and copy on the board or an overhead transparency. Explain that you are keeping words in the same sequence as the writer. Talk aloud as you erase or add to your poem. You may even want to ask for suggestions from the class. When you are satisfied, read it aloud to the class. Discuss the process and answer questions. Allow 10 minutes.

3. Pairs: Vygotsky (1978) submits that learning occurs in social interactions. However, some students may want to work on their own to express their “voice” through the words of

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the writer of the article. Whether as pairs or individuals, have students find an article and discuss or consider its powerful words and phrases.

3-5. Monitor: Walk around the room, reminding students that they have the freedom to choose the words to reflect their reactions to the article and show their understanding of it. An

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article of 350 words could be honed to a poem of 15 lines or phrases. The idea is to have students use critical thinking skills to choose words carefully and economically. Allow 20 minutes.

6-7. Reflect and apply: Sometimes, students need to be guided to see the connections between reading for fun and reading to learn. They may need to articulate the benefits of focusing on main ideas and “powerful” words and phrases to understand meaning. If time does not allow, these questions can be assigned as homework. Remind students that the ideas — not the grammar and mechanics — are most important in a quick write. Allow 5 minutes.

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Vygotsky, L.S. (1978), *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*, Harvard University Press.

“Found Poem” reading strategy adapted from: Fisher, D. & Frey, N. (2003), *Improving adolescent literacy: Strategies at work*, Prentice Hall.