

Painless Poetry Ideas

By Deb Lund

Similes

A simile compares two dissimilar objects using like or as. “My sister is as skinny as a toothpick.” (But avoid clichés like that!)

Read “Ode to my Socks” by Pablo Neruda.

Metaphors

A metaphor says something IS something else. It compares dissimilar objects, but does not use “like” or “as” in the comparison.

My (Our) ___ is a ___: Fill in the blanks with words that have “parts.”

Explain why you made the comparison. First line Examples: My family is a box of crayons. (Assign colors to people, and say why) My school is a zoo. My teacher is a sandwich. My neighborhood is a pizza.

Personification

Giving qualities of a person to an inanimate object.

Examples: The wind’s icy fingers... The leaves whispered...

Color Poetry:

Have students select a sheet of colored construction paper. Describe the color, list what it makes you think of, and write similes or metaphors about it.

Form Poetry:

Many teachers use the Haiku. Here are others to try...

Cinquain:

Cinquains are poems with five lines, each line containing a specific amount of syllables. The pattern is 2,4,6,8,2. Cinquains can also be made using numbers of words. In that case, the pattern is 1,2,3,4,1.

Pantoum:

The pantoum is made up of stanzas that have four lines. It can have as many stanzas as you like. Lines 2 and 4 of each stanza are repeated as lines 1 and 3 of the following stanza:

Tanka:

A tanka has 5 lines. Three are together, followed by a couplet.

Line Syllables

1. 5
2. 7
3. 5
4. 7
5. 7

A tanka written with another poet (every other stanza) is a renga.

Diamonte:

Diamonte is French for “diamond.” The diamonte is a 7-line poem that gradually changes one idea into another.

Formula:

1. Line 1 = Noun Line 1 = Opposite of line 7
2. Line 2 = Adjective, Adjective Line 2 = Describe line 1
3. Line 3 - Verb, Verb, Verb Line 3 = Action about line 1
4. Line 4 = Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun Line 4 = 2 nouns about line 1
 - i. 2 nouns about line 7
5. Line 5 = Verb, Verb, Verb Line 5 = Action about line 7
6. Line 6 = Adjective, Adjective Line 6 = Describe line 7
7. Line 7 = Noun Line 7 = Opposite of line 1

Invented Poetry Forms:

Plan a new form for poetry and write your own poems based on your new form. Decide if you want to put restrictions on the number of stanzas, syllables, lines, or if you want to specify the types of words or phrases or if and where it should rhyme, etc.

“I Am: Writing About Yourself”

Have students write about themselves starting with the following prompt. Whenever they get stuck, they can start a new line with the same prompt. The writing tends to get more creative the longer they keep writing. Then let them edit, keeping the most interesting lines.

I am... I am... I am... I am...

Try similar prompts: I wish... I hope... I love... When will... Someday... All I need... What I want...

Class Poetry:

Pick a theme. Write words suggested by the students that relate to your theme. Create an opening line. Continue with their suggestions, or let them write their own incorporating the words given.

Piggyback Poetry:

Select a poem you like. Read it several times. "Borrow" something from the poem to create your own poetry. It could be an idea, a line, a phrase, a pattern, your response to the poem, adopting the mood of the poem, etc.

Memory poems:

Relive a memory. Daydream about it, write it down. Add details using your senses. Add a question or comment. **Banana Grams Poetry:**

Banana Grams dies have letters on them. Create a crossword with the dies, as you do in the game (or use die from old Scrabble games), then use those words for a poem you create.

Word Purse:

Find a purse or other container for collecting words. Let students add words to the collection. Students draw out 3-5 words to use in a poem.

Found Poetry:

Old magazines are great for finding fun phrases and words. Let kids cut out ones they like, then arrange them into a poem. They can add or delete words as necessary.

Poems about Poetry: A Poem is Like...

Great simile practice! You can find many poems about poetry.

Object and Photo Poetry:

Using the process in the color poetry, describe, list memories, and make associations for any object or photo.

The best poetry comes from both inside and outside of you. Whenever possible, follow your ideas instead of using someone else's. Please consider sharing your poetry with me at deb@deblund.com.

Enjoy!

Deb