

# Found Poetry

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A found poem uses language discovered in a non-poetic context and turns it into poetry. Writing found poetry is like creating a collage of language, the way a visual artist might use scraps of paper, cloth, feathers, or other objects to produce something new and beautiful.

Writing this type of poetry is a kind of treasure hunt. Search for interesting scraps of language, then put them together in different ways and see what comes out. Putting seemingly unrelated things together can create a kind of chemical spark, leading to surprising results.

Procedure:

## **Step one: Create a List of Words, Phrases, and Quotations.**

As you read the text, record words, phrases, or quotations that are particularly interesting or meaningful. Identify between 15-20 different words or phrases so that you have plenty of ideas from which to choose when composing their poem.

## **Step two: Determine a Theme and Message.**

Identify a theme and message that represents some or all of the language you have selected. A theme is a broad concept such as *obedience* or *loyalty*. A message is a specific idea they would like to express about this theme.

## **Step three: Select Additional Language.**

Found poems only use words that have been collected from other sources. So, once you have selected a theme and a message, you may need to review their materials again to collect additional language.

## **Step four: Compose your Poem.**

You are now ready to arrange the language you have selected to create their poems. One approach to this task is write all of the words and phrases on slips of paper, so that you can move the slips around until you are satisfied with their poem. You cannot add your own words when creating a found poem (not even articles or prepositions), but you can repeat words or phrases as often as you like. (14 lines of poetry)

## **Step five: Share**

We will read our poems to the class.