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SPARK

Emulation Poetry

Grades 6–12

Type

Poetry

To jumpstart their own poems, students take inspiration from the poetry of the others.

What Your Students Will Learn

Students write poetry that borrows at least one line from another poem and uses the same style and structure.

What You Will Need

- Copies or a projection of “This Is Just To Say by William Carlos Williams” and/or “This Is So You Know” by Daniela
- Copies or a projection of “This Poem” by Vona Groarke
- Copies or a projection of “Liberty Needs Glasses” by Tupac
- Copies or a projection of “Remember” by Joy Harjo
- Copies of the “Free Write” handout
- Copies of the “Poem Template” handout

What You Will Do

As a class, read “This Is Just To Say” by William Carlos Williams. Then, share a previous student’s example of an “emulative” version of Williams’ poem. Alternatively, switch these two out with a favorite poem and an example of a poem that emulates that poem.

“This Is So You Know”

by Daniela

I have not worn

the clothes

that still sit

in my closet

the dresses

I once loved

spent

good money on

I forgive

my changing body

so strong

and so bold

With your students, discuss: how is the poem similar to the first? (Ask students to note the organization, or format, of the words and lines.) How is the second poem different than the first?

Next, as a class, read “This Poem” by Vona Groarke. Ask your students and discuss: What do you notice about the organization (or format) of the poem? (How are the lines organized?) What “pops” (What stands out? What do you enjoy the most?)?

Then read “Liberty Needs Glasses” by Tupac as a class. Briefly introduce personification to your students, explaining that personification is when you give human actions or qualities to a non-human thing. Have students highlight (if using paper copies) or point out at least two things being personified in “Liberty Needs Glasses.” Ask students what they notice about the poem’s style and organization.

Time for one more poem! As a class, read “Remember” by Joy Harjo. Ask your students and discuss: What is repeating? Why do you think the writer repeated certain words? What is the tone or mood of this poem? How does it make you feel? Why?

Here are some additional questions to get students thinking about style and structure in poetry:

- *Are the poet's lines short or long?*
- Do the lines end in complete sentences or are they in phrases that end on the next line?
- Is there repetition?
- Is the word choice very casual or formal?
- What literary devices do you want to use to make your poem come to life and connect with the reader?

Tell students they will be writing poetry that includes ONE line from another poem. This is called a "ghost line." Explain that they will write a poem with similar organization, structure, and style to the poem and line they chose. Have students choose a line or poem to inspire their writing from the examples you reviewed or another available connection.

Using the "Free Write" handout, students should brainstorm some ideas by free writing about what about how their chosen poem or line makes them think, feel, and/or remember. Remind students that free writing means they should write without stopping, and they can write in sentences or not, about whatever comes to mind. If they can't think of anything, tell them to write "I don't know what to write" until another thought comes!

Moving onto the "Poem Template" handout, students should use at least one of the ideas in their brainstorm to draft their poems. To start writing, students can choose one of three options:

- Option #1: Start with your "ghost line."
- Option #2: Start with a clear image the reader can picture.
- Option #3: Start with a strong image.

Remind students to try to use the same organization and format of the poem they chose!

After students draft their poems, they should address the final steps listed on the last page of the Poem Template handout: students should give their poems a title, revise, read their poem aloud and fix unclear parts, and, lastly, share their poem with their tables!

As students share their poems, listeners should respond to their peers with feedback. What "popped" or stood out in the poem? How did students connect with their peers' poem? What did it make them feel or think? Why?