

Teacher Lesson Plan
Prewriting Activity Using Poetry
To Create
Free writing/Quick writes

Introduction

There are many different prewriting techniques to help writers “get their creative juices” flowing. One such technique can be found on The Owl at Purdue writing lab website under Owl Materials: Invention Presentation where it discusses ideas for prewriting.
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/695/01>.

This activity is a different version of free writing, called quick writes, created by Donald Graves and Penny Kittle as found in the book, *Inside Writing: How to Teach the Details of the Craft*. A summary of the activity is first, then a detailed demonstration of how this prewriting technique might be taught in a classroom using a poem as the writing topic.

Objective: Students will generate writing that can be used to create a rough draft of an academic essay or a poem.

TEKS: 7, 13A, 24A
CRS: I A2

Summary of Donald Graves Writing Technique-Rereading a text-“finding the heartbeat”

- 1) Complete a quick write
- 2) With a color other than the one the original text is written in, circle words that jump out at you or that you like
- 3) With a different color, now underline sentences that sound good to you
- 4) Finally, with yet a different color, circle the one or two sentences that you feel represents you most as a writer
- 5) With that sentence, the one you feel represents you most as a writer, as the lead, begin a new quick write
- 6) If you, the writer, don't feel like you are satisfied with your new “heartbeat”, complete this process after often as needed

Supplies needed:

- A collection of colored pencils for students to use after the quick write has been completed.
- A poem for reading to the class which will serve as the prompt for the students to write a response-the quick write. (For this activity, Billy Collins' poem, “The Lanyard” from *The Trouble with Poetry and other Poems*.)
- Students' writer's notebooks or whatever places their daily writing is stored.
- Computer with speakers for class to hear poetry reading.

Step by step:

1. Students should have his/her writer's notebooks ready to record the quick write and three different colors of colored pencils.
2. Listen to and watch American Poet Laureate, Billy Collins, read his poem, "The Lanyard."

Link to a paper copy of the poem:

http://www.billy-collins.com/2005/06/the_lanyard.html

Link to Billy Collins reading:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/poetryeverywhere/collins.html>

3. Briefly discuss the use of imagery in the poem. (If necessary a brief review of imagery could be done prior to the reading of the poem. The following website could be used for this review. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/617/01/>

Possible responses from students might include: I can see typewriter, piano, a lake, the red and white lanyard, I can hear: a breathing body and breathing heart, entertain as many responses that deal with imagery.

4. Invite students to respond to the poem however they wish writing in sentences as best they can- they might write about the imagery used or you could ask them to recall a treasure they may have made for a parent, or if they haven't what would they have made. Or students can address anything this poem brings to mind and pen. The purpose of the quick writes and free writing is to invite students to write about a topic that is presented to them and just watch where the topic goes as it flows from their pens to the paper. As time permits, quick writes can be as short as 2 minutes or be as long as 10 minutes.

5. After students have written for a specified time, you might say: "Now read what you have written, and as you read circle words that jump out at you or that you like."
Allow time for this to occur.

6. Next you might say: "Re-read your piece, and this time with a different color, underline sentences that sound good to you."

7. After students have identified favorite sentences, you might say: "From the sentences you have underlined, with yet a different color, circle the one or two sentences that you feel represents you most as a writer."

8. When students have completed this step you might say: "With that sentence, the one you feel represents you most as a writer, as the lead, begin a new quick write."

Allow students the same amount of time as before to write the new quick write with the "heartbeat" sentence. Now you might say: "If you, the writer, don't feel like you are satisfied with your new "heartbeat", complete this process as often as needed.

9. Students could use this quick write as a starting point in drafting many different genres of writing ranging from interpretive literary analysis to poetry.

Works Cited

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