

Art and Poetry Writing

Begin with a Thinking Routine

First, spend time looking and thinking about a work of art. Document students' responses on a board or notepad. Record students' observations, descriptions, ideas and/or questions from the See/Think/Wonder or other thinking routine you are using, so students may refer to these words when writing.

Acrostic Poems:

- Have students write an acrostic poem in response to the painting or sculpture, based on a word of their choice, the title of the work, or a word linked to a curricular topic, using the ideas/words from the group conversation.
- Read a sample poem to students, and then have students write their poems in their Artist Journals.
- If needed, spend a few minutes together brainstorming words for the first few letters to get the students warmed up. Then, tell students they will have about 10-15 minutes to write their own acrostic poem. Offer to help any students who need extra assistance thinking of phrases or writing down their ideas.

Inspired by Miró's *The Farm*:

In the blazing sky
No stars--just one pale disk,
Spreading waves of heat
Parching the land, drying the crops
In need of a long, cool drink.
Rabbits root, chicks peck, horses neigh
Everyone, everything is thirsty.

Diamante Poem:

Building on your observations, write a poem using the format below.

one word title

two action words
(What are they doing?)

three descriptive words
(How does it look, taste, feel, smell, sound?)

a question you have about the work of art

three descriptive words

two feeling words
(How do I feel when I look at it? How does the subject feel?)

One word that completes the statement,
“When I think of this painting, I think of...”

I Am Poem:

After discussing a work, use this poem to encourage students to empathize more deeply with a character (or object) in a work of art. Customize the length of the poem to your group's needs.

"I Am" Poem

By _____
(your name)

About _____
(a key moment in the character's life)

I am _____
(two special characteristics you have)

I hear _____
(sounds, voices, or words)

I wonder _____
(something of curiosity)

I worry _____
(something that concerns you)

I understand _____
(something that you know to be true)

I feel _____
(an emotion)

I dream _____
(something you hope for in the future)

I am _____
(the first line of the poem repeated)

Word Pile Poem:

First model the poem before dividing students into groups, as follows:

- Divide the group into small groups of three or four students to write a Word Pile Poem about the work of art. Each student will use three Post-It Notes to write a word or short phrase (only one to three words per card) describing their thoughts and observations about the work of art. Once everyone in the small group has finished writing their words and phrases on their own Post-Its, each person will read their post-it to their small group. The group then arranges the small group's Post-Its into a poem of any length, creating each line with either a single Post-It or several Post-Its together.
- Give time for small group work: Allow about ten minutes for small groups to work, checking in with each group.
 - *Optional:* Provide a piece of blank paper and double-stick tape for each group to secure their Post-It Notes in the selected order.
- Share: Ask groups to share their poems with the whole group.

Poetry Slam:

- After a poetry stop, find a quiet place to give each student or student pair the opportunity to share their poem with the group. Encourage the audience to listen carefully, emphasizing that even though everyone was responding to the same work of art, each poem's ideas, imagery, and wording is very different from the others. Show students how to respond in true beatnik style, with finger snaps, after each reading.