Found Poetry: Poetry created by taking words from existing texts and rearranging them (often by adding to them and subtracting from them) to create a poem.

How to Write a Found Poem

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Can it rhyme?

A: Yes.

Q: Can I add my own words to it?

A: Yes.

Q: Do I have to use all of the words I underlined?

A: No.

Q: Can we change the form of a word?

A: Yes. For example, you can add or subtract –ing or –ed.

1. Read passage
2. Underline interesting words
3. Arrange words on page, adding your own words and subtracting words that aren’t needed
4. Make sure the words are presented as lines, not complete sentences
5. Include at least five words from the passage
6. Use repetition: repeat at least one word or phrase for emphasis

How to select passages for teaching found poetry:

You can use anything for this, but here are some guidelines:

1. Don’t overwhelm your students. Give elementary students articles that are half a page long or less. Middle school and high school students can handle a whole page.

2. Read articles first and make sure there are some interesting words and ideas in them. For younger students, I find articles in magazines like Ladybug, Ranger Rick, and National Geographic Kids.

Time, Newspapers, National Geographic, and Wikipedia, are good sources for older students.

3. Try using a page from a favorite novel. I once wrote a found poem with words pulled from the page where Harry met Hagrid in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*.

4. Write a traveling found poem, collecting words throughout the day and assembling them into a poem at night.

*Expanding the idea: Have a found poetry week, where a different article is presented each day. Once students get in the routine of writing these poems, you can introduce different rules and guidelines for their poems.*

**Some Additional Resources**

[www.poetrysummit.wordpress.com](http://www.poetrysummit.wordpress.com) This site has many student examples of found poetry from a residency I did at Summit Drive Elementary School.

<http://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/lessons/1520/> This site includes a found poetry lesson.

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