

Poem Sketching

Focus Questions:

- What are characteristics of a poem?
- How can we use poetry writing to express our experiences and use our imaginations?

Poem Sketching is a technique for collecting and combining words into sentences that “feel” like poems. In a poem sketch, the writer takes four words in a word-group and puts them into several sentences that flow and make sense.

Guidelines to Poem Sketching:

- Select a word group or two (see next page).
- Get the words into **three or more** sentences.
- Do **not** rhyme.
- Re-combine the word-groups if you like.
- Change the forms of the words if you need to.

Suggestions for Revising and Completing Poems:

- Condense a line by taking away words unnecessary to the thought, making the line more compact.
- Add words using the wild card list to put forth an idea.
- Make sure the verbs and nouns are specific, vivid words that give the reader a mental vision of the scene.
- Include similes and metaphors.
- Give your poem a title that embodies its feeling.

Now you try!

Using word-groups on the reverse side and wild card words for revision, sketch one or more poems. Write each poem on 2 index cards, one for you and one for the village. Print your name on the cards as well.

Word-Groups

Poem Sketching

Student Example 1:

pond mirror shadows copy

The water of the village *pond*
lies still, smooth as glass.
It *mirrors* cypress and cattails
along its rim.
I wonder, will it *copy* also
shadows of my memories?

Student Example 2:

trees girl death rain

The *trees* are crying
So is the *girl* under them
The roots of both have been torn
A *death* in her family
And another *rainforest* gone

Student Example 3:

courage lion butterflies father

Like a *lion*
My father dozes on the porch.
I was in my room
When he came home.
Has he seen the broken window?
Has my mother told him yet?
My stomach's full of *butterflies*
Courage, a *lion's courage*—
Do I have it?

ducks	path	childhood	messages	weaver
gold	mirage	trails	grass	folds
sunlight	sparrow	firefly	father	noon
strings	dust	lost	dew	hands
dragonfly	clouds	cypress	locked	dawn
pond	walk	owl	roux	breath
face	rainbow	imagine	garden	fingers
silence	guest	star	fence	dream
river	dance	mint	candle	supper
barge	girls	steps	biscuits	syrup
treasures	restless	neighbors	house	breeze
iris	fiddle	share	moon	kiss
sun	grandfather	early	leaf	roots
Tabasco	silver	thunder	unfold	whisper
horizon	village	webs	lace	cycle
cypress	rain	porch	near	leaf
control	south	change	culture	Creole
segregation	challenge	bayou	poverty	historic
discrimination	depression	swamp	growth	legacy
progress	wealth	hurricane	Cajuns	life
politics	rights	governor	latitude	power
war	preamble	scandal	longitude	supply
veto	constitution	social	travel	desire
law	transitions	history	society	truth
laugh	caricature	satire	performance	reading
humor	juxtaposition	challenge	hyperbole	library
fun	derision	comedy	dialect	play
irony	denounce	rehearsal	theater	tonight

Some Wild Card Words: *window distance surrender invisible bridge prove linger stair gift prize open disturb silence sing liberty answer anchor fade*