

# Mad Lib Poem Lesson Plan

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**Grade level:** Designed for 3rd grade, could be adapted for K-2, 3-6.

**Learning Objectives:** Engage with creativity and imagination; talk about form; give structure and vocabulary as a way of allowing beginning writers to create

**Description:** I came up with this lesson plan after a conversation with other teaching artists. I was having a bit of a hard time getting students to finish work. Although they were a third grade class, many were writing at a second grade level. They were very enthusiastic in a group but, when they sat down to write, students struggled getting words down; they didn't have the vocabulary or got caught up with spelling. One fellow teaching artist told me using forms which provided more language and direction had been helpful for her students. I adapted this lesson and some of the examples from the "Formula" lesson in *Poetry Everywhere*. The handout I created follows the lesson plan.

## Sequence of Activities:

### Introduce Lesson (15 mins)

For this class, students are all gathered in a group on the carpet at first and then later go to their tables. This tends to focus and centralize the energy and helps! I begin by asking students to recall what we've done last class so that I can make connections to what we are learning this time. We talk about a Mad Lib and I ask if anyone know what that is. Then I explain that we are going to write a Mad Lib poem where we are given part of a line and have to finish it.

I write a few examples on the board and we start to fill them in, with students raising their hands to give their suggestions. The class that I was working with was *super* enthusiastic. If the group is a bit more reticent, you could have them brainstorm in groups and share.

*When I had no shine, I used \_\_\_\_\_ for sparkle.*

*When my home disappeared, I made a home out of \_\_\_\_\_.*

These offer a good opportunity to talk about concrete vs. abstract. For example, one could use the *stars* or *diamonds* or *glitter* for sparkle but one could also use *magic* or *dreams* or *hope*. One could make a home out of *bricks* or *stones* or *ice cream* but one could also make a home out of *family* or *memories* or *love*.

*When love was gone, I found love in \_\_\_\_\_.*

*When the forest was gone, I made trees out of \_\_\_\_\_.*

### **Writing Exercise (35 mins)**

After we do the brainstorming of examples for a group, I send the students from their gathering spot on the carpet back to their tables. This is after reminding them that all they are doing is taking what we just did together as a group and writing their ideas down on paper. I tell them they don't have to answer *all* of the lines and that they can skip ones and come back if they want. I also communicate that there are some blank ones on the back if they want to make up their own ones (some of the students were more advanced writers and I wanted to give them the opportunity to do this if they wanted).

The teacher pulled about five students who needed more support to a table with her. As I worked, I circulated, working with students individually, validating and encouraging their ideas and what they had written so far.

This class needed longer to write but you can adjust the timing according to students needs.

### **Share (10 mins)**

Students come up as a group or individually to share what they wrote. I usually go over each time what it is like to be a good listener and a good reader. I ask students what is important when listening (not speaking while someone is reading, having their pencils down and bodies toward the front of the room and eyes on the reader). I ask them what is important when reading (project your voice, hold your paper down so it's not in front of your face and muffles your voice).

Students read and we snap or clap for each person after they read.

*Close of Class.*

NAME HERE: \_\_\_\_\_

### Mad Lib Poems!

For these poems, we'll start with some words and blanks and fill in with our own ideas using our imagination

Example, excerpt from Robert Pinsky's "Samarai Song"

When I had no roof, I made  
Audacity\* my roof. When I had  
No supper, my eyes dined.

When I had no eyes, I listened.  
When I had no ears, I thought.  
When I had no thought, I waited.

When I had no father, I made  
Care my father. When I had  
No mother, I embraced order.

*\*I explain that audacity means "bravery." This is a good time to talk about abstract vs. concrete. Why is bravery a roof? What does a roof do? Provide protection, keeps us safe, etc.*

### MAKE YOUR OWN POEM

When I had no paint, I colored the sky with \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no roof, I made \_\_\_\_\_ my roof.

When the forest disappeared, I made trees out of \_\_\_\_\_.

When I ran out of stars, I used \_\_\_\_\_ to light my way.

When I had no place to go, I used my mind to go to \_\_\_\_\_.

When everything was dark, I made \_\_\_\_\_ my light.

When I had no alphabet, I made \_\_\_\_\_ my language.

When I had no ocean, I swam in \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no blood, \_\_\_\_\_ became my blood.

When I had no hope, \_\_\_\_\_ became my hope.

When I lost my power, \_\_\_\_\_ became my source of energy.

When I had no warmth, I used \_\_\_\_\_ to cover me.

When I had no school, I made \_\_\_\_\_ teach me.

When the music stopped playing, I danced to the sound of \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
became my \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
became my \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
became my \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
became my \_\_\_\_\_.

When I had no \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
became my \_\_\_\_\_.