

Writing as a Gift

Which part of gift-giving do you like best? Sometimes giving the perfect gift can be just as nice as receiving one! Gifts can take many forms, but the best presents are usually the kind that come from the heart. Whether you're baking a cake, performing a song, or painting a picture, sharing your talents with a loved one is just about the best gift you can give! And whether you know it or not, you've got another gift, too--your words and your bright imagination!!

In this handout, you'll find a whole bunch of creative ways to turn your writing into a gift to share with somebody you love. You can pick your favorite activity below, try them all, or even design your very own activity! You can write a story, an essay, or a poem--the possibilities are endless. The goal is simply to get you excited about writing and to start thinking about how very valuable your own words are!!



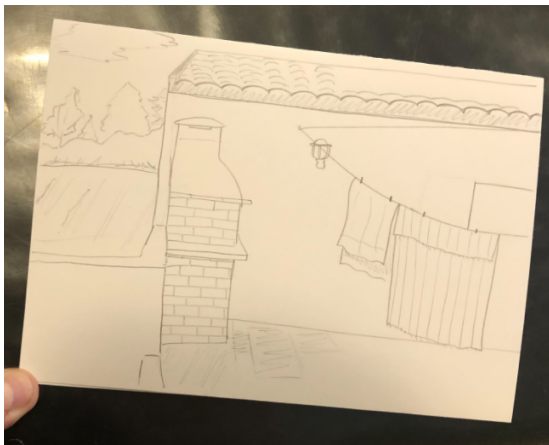
Writing as a Gift: Postcard to a Loved One

Is there a person or a place that you're missing right now? A postcard is the perfect way to say "I wish you were here!" or even "I wish I was there!" In this activity, you will create and write your own postcard poem for a loved one. You can deliver this postcard by-hand or in the mail!

Supplies you will need:

- A piece of cardstock (supplied by the library) or a piece of paper, folded to make a postcard-sized rectangle
- Pencils and crayons or markers

Step 1:



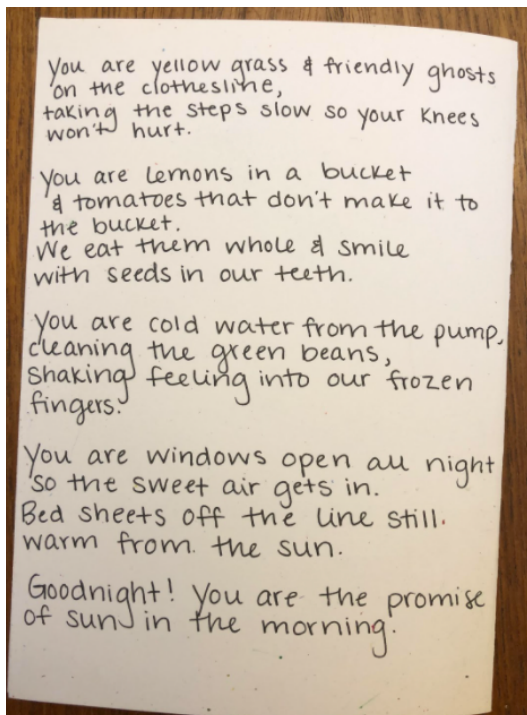
On the front of your postcard, draw a picture of a place that you would like to visit. This can be a place you've already visited, a place you'd like to visit one day, or a place where somebody you love lives. You can use a picture as reference or you can use your imagination!

Step 2:



Color in your drawing! You can use crayons, markers, even paints if you're feeling fancy! Don't worry about making it perfect. Focus on making your postcard bright and full of color! Here's how one of ours turned out!

Step 3:



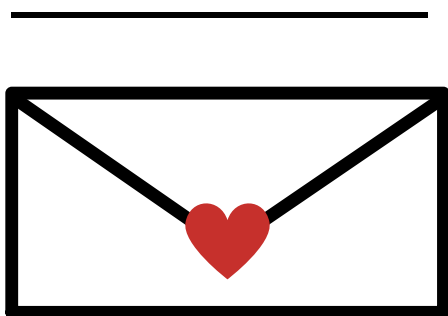
Now on the back of your postcard, write a message to your loved one. This message could be a poem or a story comparing your loved one to the place you drew. How are they alike? What memories do the two of you share in that place? You can get creative here! Think about comparing things that don't seem to be alike. I compared my grandma with a bucket of lemons!!

If you're feeling stuck, here are some starting lines:

- You are like...
- You are...
- You remind me of...

Step 4:

Love,



Make sure to sign your postcard and address it to somebody you love. Now it's time to deliver your letter! You can put your postcard into an envelope and send it in the mail. Or you can make a "special delivery" and deliver the postcard yourself!

Writing as a Gift: Collage

Do you ever feel like you can't find the right word to express what you mean? Try borrowing somebody else's words for a little bit! In this activity, you will make a collage by cutting out words and pictures, and pasting them together to make something new!

Supplies you will need:

- Newspapers or magazines that you can cut up
- Scissors
- Gluestick
- A piece of paper to glue your collage onto
- Pens, markers, crayons -- However you want to decorate your collage!

Step 1:



Gather up your collage materials. You can use magazines, newspapers, catalogues or ads that come in the mail. Ask your family members for papers that they would otherwise throw out or recycle.

Step 2:



Have fun exploring with your scissors! Cut out any words or pictures or even letters that inspire you. You can rearrange the words (and even break them apart into smaller words) to create a poem or a message later for a loved one. For now, pick any words that stand out to you. Or, if you're thinking about someone you love, you can pick words that remind you of that person.

– As a bonus, you can even try some “black-out poetry.” This is when you cut out a whole paragraph and scribble over the words you don't want until only the words you want remain. You can find examples of this in the sample pictures!

Step 3:

Don't open your glue yet. Instead, move your cut-out words and pictures around on the page. See how they fit together and overlap like a puzzle. Once you're happy with your layout, start gluing things down. Start with the bigger scraps of paper, then layer the smaller pieces on top.

Step 4:

Don't forget to sign and title your work! This is a perfect gift for a friend or a loved one. You can put it in a picture frame, hang it on the fridge, or even fold it up to send in the mail!



Here's a collage that Jennifer made for her mom: what do you notice about the kinds of words and pictures Jennifer selected? What kinds of feelings do you have as a reader when you see all the words and pictures together? What do you notice about the words she did not black out? Which words will you choose to give someone as a gift?

Writing as a Gift: Word Association Globe

Have you ever played a word association game? It's easy: think of a word to start. For example, let's pick the topic of holidays. Are any words or images (pictures, sounds, smells, feelings) popping into your head? If so, you can write down these words, draw the images, and create a globe of your ideas!

Supplies you will need:

- Paper
- Writing utensils (markers, crayons, pencils, etc)
- Scissors
- Container (old jar, plastic bottle, tupperware container, ziploc bag, etc)
- Rubber balloon or tin foil/Saran wrap
- Extra goodies (such as glitter, beads, shiny string)

Step 1: 🎈 🕯️ 🎄 💌 ⚽ 👯 FORTNITE

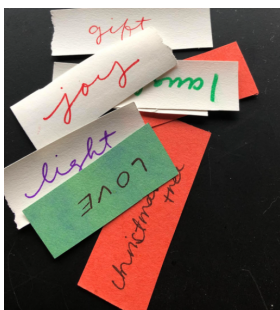
After gathering your materials, pick a topic you want to make your word-association globe around. Some topics you can choose are: the holidays, birthdays, Hanukkah, Christmas, wintertime, Valentine's Day, family, friendship, Pokémon, soccer, Fortnite...you get to decide what your friend or loved one might enjoy! You can make this craft with a loved one, and brainstorm words together. What words or images pop into your head when you think of your topic?

Step 2:



Grab a piece of paper and start writing the words you're thinking of. You can even draw pictures too. Let your brain wander! You can write words that are closely related, or words that are abstract. Write and draw on pieces of paper that are about the size of your finger. Write and draw on both sides of the pieces of paper. You can use many different color markers and pieces of paper to make your jar colorful!

Step 3:



Keep writing words of slips of paper and putting them in your container. Keep adding words until you are happy with the fullness of your container, or at least halfway full.

Writing as a Gift: Poem Popper

Learn how to make a mini-cannon to launch your poems out of!

Supplies you will need:

- Paper towel tube or toilet paper tube
- Paper
- Makers
- Balloon
- String

Step 1:

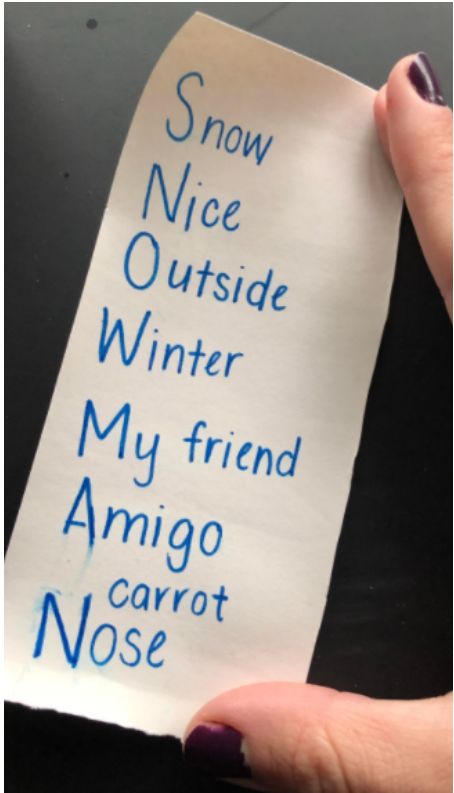
While you gather your materials, think about what you want to write your poem about. We will explain acrostic poems here, but you can use any kind of poem when you make your gift! With this type of poem, we will choose a word and write a word for each letter. You can see our example below with the word snowman.

Step 2:



Cut a piece of paper that will fit inside your tube. You will write your acrostic poem on this piece of paper.

Step 3:



Choose a word you want to write your acrostic poem for. Now, write that word vertically (from top to bottom, with one letter on each line) on the left side of the paper. Look at each letter of your word. Can you think of other words that start with the letters of your word that remind you of the first word? Try to make a sentence with each of your letters, or just write one two words per letter -- you get to decide! You can see that we came up with words that describe a snowman.

Step 4:



Set your poem aside for now, we will come back to it later. Now, we will build your poem popper! Grab your balloon. Cut the top of the balloon off, like in this picture to the left

Step 5:



Now we will attach the balloon to your cardboard tube. Stretch the cut side of the balloon around the open end of the cardboard tube. Pull it on about an inch or so. You still want the tail of the balloon hanging off the edge. Tape your balloon to the tube. Once it's secure, tie the end of your balloon.

Step 6:

Now, we will decorate the outside of your tube! Cut a piece of paper the same size as the outside of your tube. As you can see in the picture above, you will wrap a piece of paper around the outside of your tube, covering the balloon too. Before attaching the paper though, draw on it! Think of what word you chose for your acrostic poem. You can draw pictures that represent your poem, or you can draw whatever you'd like!

Step 7:



Once you have finished decorating the piece of paper, you will attach it to your tube! Wrap your paper around your tube and secure it with tape. Give your taping a test! Firmly hold the tube and tug on the balloon a little to make sure it is all secure! Add more tape if needed.

Step 8:



Now, let's attach your poem! Cut a piece of string that is about 1 or 2 feet in length. Roll your poem up like a scroll. Tie one end of the string around your poem in a bow. Ask an adult for assistance with this part, if you need. Then, tape the other side of the string inside your cardboard tube. This string will act as a tether, keeping your poem with the launcher.

Step 9:



Put your poem in your tube. Pull the balloon and release! Watch as your poem launches out of your tube!

We hope you enjoyed learning about all the ways you can give your own writing as a gift to someone who you love!

For more information about free creative writing and schoolwork support programs for young people, visit 826michigan.org

