**Creative Activities – Haiku and Diamante Poems**

1. **Haiku:**

**Description:**

Try your hand at poetry. A haiku poem is fun to read and even more fun to compose. Students can work on the poems together, individually or as a class effort.

Haiku are short poems that use sensory language to capture a feeling or image. They are often inspired by an element of nature, a moment of beauty or a poignant experience. Haiku poetry was originally developed by Japanese poets, and the form was adapted to English and other languages by poets in other countries.

**Instructions:**

1. Follow the beat of the poem (5 syllables on the first line, 7 syllables on the second line, 5 syllables on the third line). Have students write lines of the poem having to do with the topic the teacher (or student) chooses.
2. Have students read their poems to the class.

**Variations:**

* Have a poetry reading of the poems at a class party.
* Have the students set the words of the poem into song for added fun.
* Have students write their poem on a paper and then illustrate it. Compile all the poems from the class into a Poetry Book which can be sent home with the students.

Example:

The warmth in my heart.  
Carrying big packages.  
The old woman smiled.

1. **Diamante Poems:**

**WHAT IS A DIAMANTE?**

A diamante – pronounced dee-uh-MAHN-tay – is an unrhymed seven-line poem. The beginning and ending lines are the shortest, while the lines in the middle are longer, giving diamante poems a diamond shape. “Diamante” is the Italian word for diamond, so this poetic form is named for this diamond shape.

Believe it or not, the diamante was invented just 40 years ago. It was created by an American poet named Iris McClellan Tiedt in 1969, and has become very popular in schools.

Also known as a “diamond poem” because of its shape, there are two different types of diamantes; *synonym* diamantes and *antonym* diamantes.

**THE RULES OF A DIAMANTE**

There are just a few rules to writing a diamante:

1. Diamantes are seven lines long.
2. The first and last lines have just one word.  
   The second and sixth lines have two words.  
   The third and fifth lines have three words.  
   And the fourth line has four words.
3. Lines 1, 4, and 7 have nouns.  
   Lines 2 and 6 have adjectives.  
   Lines 3 and 5 have verbs.

Here’s an easy way to visualize all three rules:

Noun  
Adjective, Adjective  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Adjective, Adjective  
Noun

In a synonym diamante, the nouns at the beginning and end are two words that mean basically the same thing. In an antonym diamante, the two nouns are opposites. Here are a couple of examples:

**SYNONYM DIAMANTE**

In this diamante, the words “Pesach” and “Passover” mean the same thing, so they are synonyms.

Pesach  
Busy, exciting  
Cleaning, cooking, preparing  
Matzah, wine, eggs, afikoman  
Eating, visiting, learning  
Beautiful, special  
Passover

**ANTONYM DIAMANTE**

In this diamante, you might say that the words “Vashti” and “Esther” are opposites, or “antonyms,” so this is an antonym diamante.

Vashti

Wicked, mean

Laughing, hurting, gloating

Crown, wine, nuts, crown

Praying, hoping, crying

Good, caring

Esther

**GETTING STARTED**

To start writing a diamante, you first need to decide what *thing* you want to write about. The reason you want to pick a *thing* is that your first and last lines need to be *nouns*. In other words, your diamante will be about a noun, such as a “pencil” or a “pizza,” rather than about a verb, such as “jump” or an adjective like “smelly.” An easy thing to write about is something you like or something you see around you.

Next, you’ll want to decide whether you want to write a synonym diamante or an antonym diamante. If you want to write a synonym diamante, you’ll want to select another word that means the *same* thing as your subject. If you are going to write an antonym diamante, choose a word that is its opposite.

Once you’ve chosen your two nouns, take a piece of paper and brainstorm as many words as you can that have to do with each of them. For example, make one column for each word and write down everything you can think of. You’ll want adjectives (descriptive words), verbs (action words), and even more nouns. For an advanced class, your lists should look something like this:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sun** | **Moon** |
| Hot | Cold |
| Yellow | Silver |
| Fiery | Night |
| Day | Still |
| Light | Orbiting |
| Blinding | Shining |
| Exploding | Beautiful |
| Distant | Crescent |
|  |  |

Finally, you’ll want to arrange your diamante, putting the synonyms or antonyms at the top and bottom, the adjectives next, on lines 2 and 6, the verbs after that on lines 3 and 5, and lastly your additional nouns on the middle line.

In the *top* half of the poem – lines 2 and 3 – your adjectives and verbs should be ones from your first brainstorming column – words that have to do with line 1, like this:

Sun  
Fiery, Yellow  
Burning, Blinding, Exploding

In the *bottom* half of the poem – lines 5 and 6 – your adjectives and verbs should be related to the noun on line 7, like this:

Shining, Orbiting, Reflecting  
Cold, Silver  
Moon

On line 4, the line in the middle of the poem, the first two nouns should be related to the noun on line 1, and the last two nouns should be related to the noun on line 7, like this:

Flame, Light, Night, Crescent

When you put everything together, you’ll end up with something like this:

Sun  
Fiery, Yellow  
Burning, Blinding, Exploding  
Flame, Light, Night, Crescent  
Shining, Orbiting, Reflecting  
Cold, Silver  
Moon

For a lower level, it could look like this:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sun** | **Moon** |
| Hot | Cold |
| Yellow | White |
| Day | Night |
| Light | light |
| Baking | Smiling |
| Glowing | Shining |
| Burning | Reflecting |

Don’t worry if you have more words than you need. It’s better to have too many words to choose from than not enough.

Again, you’ll want to arrange your diamante, putting the synonyms or antonyms at the top and bottom, the adjectives next, on lines 2 and 6, the verbs after that on lines 3 and 5, and lastly your additional nouns on the middle line.

In the *top* half of the poem – lines 2 and 3 – your adjectives and verbs should be ones from your first brainstorming column – words that have to do with line 1, like this:

Sun  
Hot, Yellow  
Burning, Baking, Glowing

In the *bottom* half of the poem – lines 5 and 6 – your adjectives and verbs should be related to the noun on line 7, like this:

Shining, Smiling, Reflecting  
Cold, White   
Moon

On line 4, the line in the middle of the poem, the first two nouns should be related to the noun on line 1, and the last two nouns should be related to the noun on line 7, like this:

Day, Light, Night, Light

When you put everything together, you’ll end up with something like this:

Sun  
Hot, Yellow  
Burning, Baking, Glowing  
Day, Light, Night, Light  
Shining, Smiling, Reflecting  
Cold, White  
Moon

**THINGS TO REMEMBER**

As you begin writing your own diamantes, here are the important things to remember:

* Diamantes can be about *anything*.
* They are 7 lines long.
* The word count is simple: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1
* Your lines should have: noun, adjectives, verbs, nouns, verbs, adjectives, noun.
* Try to “center” your poem on the page to give it a diamond shape
* Most importantly, *have fun!*