Ekphrastic Poems

A 3-D lesson focused on using artwork to inspire poetry creation. Students will be inspired by literature or artwork relevant to their grade level and then craft poems embodying a specific character, location, or other detail. Once they have written their poems, students will create small scale 3-D representations of their poems.
Subjects: Visual Arts, English–Language Arts

Big Idea: How can poetry and art give language to universal experiences?

Learning Objectives: The student will be able to: identify what ekphrastic poetry is, craft a poem that embodies an artwork, identify how literature and art speak to the human condition, create a 3-dimensional space using 2-dimensional materials, understand how art and literature are inter-connected, and understand foreground and background.

Materials: Variety of small boxes (altoids, ring boxes, etc), assortment of paper, glue, scissors, notebook paper, pencils, misc. decorative materials, paint, markers, crayons, artistic inspirations for students to based their poems off of, worksheet from Smithsonian Institute

http://americanart.si.edu/education/pdf/Ekphrastic_Poetry_Lesson.pdf

Lesson Steps: Introduce ekphrastic writing (writing that comments on another art form, for example a poem about a photograph or a novel about a film). Look at an example of an ekphrastic poem, let students pick out their inspiration (grade level specific). Have students study their inspiration and complete the worksheet (for younger students you may want to use one inspiration piece for the whole class). Have students read through their worksheet and pick words or phrases to include in their poem. Have students write poems. Have students use the poem to begin sketching their 3-d space (may want to begin with an introduction to paper artists that create 3-d spaces - tunnel book artists make great examples) 

http://www.andreadezso.com. Introduce foreground and background. Students will create templates for the pieces in their 3-d space. Students should consider how they will layer their images. Students will use their templates to cut out the parts of their 3-d space and the fold edges under to make the paper stand. Using glue the paper can be attached to the small box. Boxes and accompanying poems should be displayed (the library makes a great venue!)
"The Starry Night"
Anne Sexton (1961)

The town does not exist
except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven
stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die: into that rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry
Worth a Thousand Words: *Ekphrastic Poetry*

Have you ever heard the expression *A picture’s worth a thousand words*? Well, sometimes poets think that a picture, or a sculpture, or a piece of pottery is worth just that and maybe more. When poets find a piece of visual artwork that truly captures their imagination, they often engage in a literary practice known as ekphrastic poetry, which is poetry that verbally describes a visual work of art. The term *ekphrasis* is derived from the combination of two Ancient Greek words: *ek*, which can mean ‘for the sake of,’ and *phradzein*, meaning ‘to show, point out, describe.’ The recombined definition then yields *ekphrasis*, or ‘a process carried out for the sake of description.’ Below, examine a few examples of ekphrastic poetry to see how metal artistry, a painting, and pottery have been vividly described through poetry.

*worksheet and definition from Smithsonian Institute*
Found Poetry Collage

A short mini lesson perfect for artist trading cards or for a visual journal assignment. Found poetry encourages students to begin to see text in new ways, giving students a low stakes entry into poetry creation - the collage component encourages students to think critically and create imagery that reflects their poem. Adapted from https://www.flocabulary.com/lesson-found-poetry/
Learning Objectives: Identify the theme of a work of fiction. Select lines from the work of fiction that demonstrate the theme. Create a poem composed of lines from the story to support that theme. Explain how their poem demonstrates the theme. Understand how collage and found poetry are similar (both art forms are a collection of found images/words to create something new).

Materials: Work of fiction, Flocabulary video for a work of fiction of choice, Found Poetry worksheet, collage materials, markers, scissors, glue, crayons, colored pencils, other miscellaneous art materials for collaging, small artist trading cards or visual journal, OR paper for collage to be on.

Lesson Steps: Watch the Flocabulary video "Five Things" and review the definition of theme. Watch the Flocabulary video for your work of literature to review the story. (You can also use this lesson if we don't have a video for your work of literature. Just skip this step! ). On the the Found Poetry worksheet, have students write down a theme of the story you've just completed and the reasons why they think that is the theme. Discuss as a class. Share with students the definition of "Found Poetry." Found poetry takes existing lines or phrases and reorders them in the format of a poem. Typically, found poetry is made from random news headlines, street signs, billboard ads, graffiti, flyers, etc. You can search for "found poetry" online to find images you like that you can share with your class. Watch the Flocabulary video "The Necklace." Read the example of the found poetry and discuss as a class how it addresses a theme of the story. Using the Found Poetry worksheet, ask students to create their own work of Found Poetry for your work of fiction. Have students type up their found poems and print these for inclusion in the collage. Students will then begin to search for imagery related to their theme or big idea behind the found poem. Using collage and art materials students will create a collage background. When the collage is complete they can take their printed found poem and collage the words onto their collage background. Students might be interested in working these cut out words into their poems. (you can also provide photocopies of the source literature for students to cut words from to create their found poems). When finished, students share their poem and collages and explain why they selected the lines they did. These poems look great displayed in the library!
CREATE a WORK of FOUND POETRY

**FOUND POETRY** takes existing lines or phrases and reorders them in the format of a poem. Typically, found poetry is made from random news headlines, street signs, billboard ads, graffiti, flyers, etc.

**Directions:**
Using details from a story, create a found poem. Select particular words, phrases or complete sentences from the story and arrange them in any order as a poem. Be prepared to explain how your poem relates to one or more of the story’s themes.

**Example from**
The *Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant

- Born by a blunder of destiny
- Unhappy
- No dresses
- No jewelry
- She drew near
- “Can you lend me this, only things?”
- She was the prettiest of them all
- “Are you not making a mistake?”

At last, it is done.

**Your Poem:**

| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________

**Follow-Up Questions:**
Why did you choose the lines you chose? What theme does your poem address?

| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
| ___________

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| ___________
| ___________
| ___________
Where I’m From Identity Poem

This lesson is a great project for the beginning of the semester. By asking students to critically examine their identities and craft a poem inspired by George Ella Lyon, students are encouraged to consider how context and history shape the formation of identities. Lesson adapted from http://bit.ly/1Q4Zkln
Subjects: Visual Arts, English–Language Arts

Big Idea: How can poetry be an individual expression of identity?

Learning Objectives: The student will be able to: compose an original poem about themselves using an extensive brainstorming exercise and poetry template, explore basic watercolor techniques, express key features of their identity through poetic inquiry, explore typography, create connections between poetry and art making

Materials: Black stamp pad, copy paper, black and colored sharpies, colored pencils, photocopier (or copies of generic fingerprint), watercolor paper (9x12), watercolor, markers, crayons and other colorful materials to prep your paper

Lesson Steps: Prep your watercolor paper by watercoloring abstract designs using a variety of colors, be careful to not create MUD when mixing colors. While those dry, have students follow the George Ella Lyon poem worksheet to write a “where I’m from” poem. Collect a thumbprint from each student. Discuss with students how fingerprints are all different, just like people - that fingerprints are like personal portraits. You need thumbprints that are clean and crisp... if they’re blurry at all, they only get worse when you enlarge them. Next, you need to enlarge your thumbprints. First, cut them out and write students’ names in pencil, then enlarge them one at a time. Make the first enlargement at 400%, then enlarge that one 250%, and you should end up with the desired result... a thumbnail roughly the size of your face! (Or you can save time by using your phone to take a photo of each thumbprint, upload to your computer, and enlarge the image that way.) Take a pencil and trace over the lines of your thumbnail onto a clean sheet of paper. Don’t worry if some lines start and stop, or run into each other. Just do your best to smooth them out. Now, use your pencil and start writing your where I’m from poem along your thumbnail lines! Begin at the top and use the lines of your thumbnail as guide lines for your writing. You don’t need to retrace the lines — you want your writing to create the ‘illusion’ of lines in your drawing. And don’t worry about following every line exactly — this won’t be used for I.D., you just want to get the general idea of the thumbnail! Finally, have students do a graphite transfer to transfer their fingerprint shaped poem onto the watercolored/prepped paper. Using sharpie, markers, colored pencils, crayons to enhance the text and create some variety. Optional... for older students it might be fun for them to cut out their poetry fingerprint and then mount them on a larger sheet of dark paper (see example on reverse of the card)
List four things you were told as a child:
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________

List the members of your family
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

Family habits: (things that individual members of your family always do - name the person and the habit. At least 3)
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

List two songs or sayings you learned as a child:
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________

Where were you born?
___________________________________________________________________________________

What is your family nationality?
____________________________________________________________________________________

List two songs or sayings you learned as a child:
1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________

List a food that reminds you of your family:
____________________________________________________________________________________

Describe where in your house you keep the special mementos or treasures.
____________________________________________________________________________________

Describe the person who you wrote the short story about:
____________________________________________________________________________________

Describe some family mementos (special keepsakes, treasures or pictures).
____________________________________________________________________________________

Describe where in your house you keep the special mementos or treasures.
____________________________________________________________________________________

Describe the person who you wrote the short story about:
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Describe some family mementos (special keepsakes, treasures or pictures).
____________________________________________________________________________________
“I Am From” Poem Template

I am from . . .

Inspired by “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon

I am from ______________________________________ (an everyday item in your home)
From ______________________________________ and ____________________________________ (products or everyday items in your home)
I am from the ___________________________________ (description of your home)
__________________________________________ a detail about your home—a smell, taste, or feeling
I am from the ___________________________________ (plant, flower, natural item)
The ______________________________________ (plant or tree near your home)

I’m from ______________________________________ and ____________________________________ (a family tradition and family trait)
From ______________________________________ and ____________________________________ (family members)
I’m from ______________________________________ (family habits)
And from ______________________________________ (family habit)

I’m from ______________________________________ and ____________________________________ (things you were told as a child)
And ______________________________________ (a song or saying you learned as a child)
I’m from ______________________________________ (a family tradition)
I’m from ______________________________________ (place of birth)
and _______________________________________ (nationality)
___________________________________________ and ____________________________________ (family foods)
From ______________________________________ (a story about a family member)
___________________________________________ (detail about the story or person)
___________________________________________ (description of family momentos, pictures or treasures)

“Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon

I am from . . .

Inspired by “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon

I am from ______________________________________ (an everyday item in your home)
From ______________________________________ and ____________________________________ (products or everyday items in your home)
I am from the ___________________________________ (description of your home)
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From ______________________________________ (a story about a family member)
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___________________________________________ (description of family momentos, pictures or treasures)
Ode to an Object Poem

This lesson is a great companion activity for a museum visit OR a fun activity to engage students in creating poetry about their favorite object. This lesson has been borrowed and adapted from Palm Beach County Schools http://www.palmbeachschools.org/multicultural/documents/pabloneruda.pdf
Subjects: Visual Arts, English–Language Arts

Big Idea: How can poetry convey important information about individuals history and context?

Learning Objectives: The student will be able to: recall information about Pablo Neruda’s life and works. understand the concept of ode. write an ode to a common object around their house. use drawing to record a realistic object. use art materials to complete a painting of a realistic object. understand simile and metaphor. locate important contextual information about Pablo Neruda’s ode poems.

Materials: Cardstock (backs of cereal boxes works well), paint, photograph or sketch of common object from home, examples of Paulo Neruda’s life and works, internet access, worksheet for internet research, misc. art materials for students to create their final art pieces with.

Lesson Steps: Begin by introducing Pablo Neruda and the concept of an ode. Remind students of the definition of an ode by asking them what the three qualities of an ode are: focus on one object, elaborate description, celebration/glorifying tone. Chart responses on the board. Explain about Pablo Neruda’s life by taking students to: http://www.nobel.se/literature/laureates/1971/index.html and showing them Neruda’s biography and acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Read the “Ode to Enchanted Light” and discuss as group. Ask students: What is being celebrated in this poem? Is the subject something that may be overlooked on a day-to-day basis? What are the words to describe the light? What are the metaphors/similes used to describe the light? (Review definitions of metaphor and simile) Have students complete Internet Scavenger Hunt for more informational on Neruda and for analysis on another one of his poems, “Ode to the Artichoke.” Have students come together as a group to discuss their Internet findings. In small groups or as individuals, students will write an ode to any common object around their house or school. Once the poems are written, students will begin to work on their artwork representation. Students should begin by sketching and practicing drawing the object from their ode. Once students have a nice scale drawing, they can prep their cardstock with paint. Once painted, students can transfer their ode and object drawing to the painted cardstock. Students may approach this art making activity in any way you see fit (adjustments may be made to accommodate different age groups).
“Ode to Broken Things”

Things get broken
at home
like they were pushed
by an invisible, deliberate smasher.
It's not my hands
or yours
It wasn't the girls
with their hard fingernails
or the motion of the planet.
It wasn't anything or anybody
It wasn't the wind
It wasn't the orange-colored noontime
Or night over the earth
It wasn't even the nose or the elbow
Or the hips getting bigger
or the ankle
or the air.
The plate broke, the lamp fell
All the flower pots tumbled over
one by one. That pot
which overflowed with scarlet
in the middle of October,
it got tired from all the violets
and another empty one
rolled round and round and round
all through winter
until it was only the powder
of a flowerpot,
a broken memory, shining dust.
And that clock
whose sound
was
the voice of our lives,
the secret
thread of our weeks,
which released
one by one, so many hours
for honey and silence
for so many births and jobs,
that clock also
fell
and its delicate blue guts
vibrated
among the broken glass
its wide heart
unsprung.
Life goes on grinding up
glass, wearing out clothes
making fragments
breaking down
forms
and what lasts through time
is like an island on a ship in the sea,
perishable
surrounded by dangerous fragility
by merciless waters and threats.
Let's put all our treasures together
-- the clocks, plates, cups cracked by the
cold --
into a sack and carry them
to the sea
and let our possessions sink
into one alarming breaker
that sounds like a river.
May whatever breaks
be reconstructed by the sea
with the long labor of its tides.
So many useless things
which nobody broke
but which got broken anyway.
INTERNET SCAVENGER HUNT ON PABLO NERUDA
Go to: www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Pablo_Neruda and read the pages in order to answer the questions below:

- Where did Neruda get his pen name?
- At what age did Neruda begin to publish his first works?
- What was a result of his government consulship?
- Which war affected the writings of Neruda?
- Why was Neruda forced to live underground in his own country?

Find a copy of “Ode to an Artichoke” on www.poetryconnection.net and answer the questions below:

- Why is the comparison between an “artichoke” and “armor” appropriate?
- In the poem, what are the three stages of this artichoke’s life?
- Point out three phrases Neruda uses to create a glorified tone while describing the artichoke.
- Point out three similes or metaphors in which Neruda describes the artichoke.
- Why is the comparison between an “artichoke” and “armor” appropriate?

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Songs as Poems

A printmaking example exploring how songs are really just poems. Students will identify and select a favorite song lyric and explore how their song lyrics speak to a larger issue relevant to many people. Once students identify their songs message they will create and mount a styrofoam print reflecting the message of their song lyric. Adapted from http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/sounds-change - for extended lesson planning visit the website for GREAT ideas!
Subjects: Visual Arts, English–Language Arts

Big Idea: How can poetry give words to universal experiences?

Learning Objectives: The student will be able to: identify songwriting as a form of poetry, identify how song lyrics often speak to issues relevant to the human condition. Explain how music evokes feelings and emotion. Understand relationships between music and culture. Analyze song lyrics to critically examine themes and messages. Consider the effectiveness of music to communicate ideas. Use music to express a personal viewpoint or message about a tolerance-related issue that's important to them. complete a basic relief print, collage paper to convey the message from their poem/song.

Materials: Variety of song lyrics, copy of song lyric worksheet (http://bit.ly/1MaPcZc 3-7; http://bit.ly/1OjueJj 8-12) assortment of paper, glue, scissors, notebook paper, pencils, misc. decorative materials, paint, markers, crayons, styrofoam plates (with the curved edges cut off), waterbased printmaking ink, brayers, scrap paper to cover tables, old mat board frames (or large papers to mount circular prints on)

Lesson Steps: Introduce song writing as a form of poetry, teacher may want to read some song lyrics as poems to inspire discussion. Have students brainstorm their favorite songs or look for a song from provided example. Think about the message behind the song, asking students to complete a worksheet exploring their songs message. Identify one song lyric that embodies the message behind the song. Begin brainstorming how to best represent that song lyric through a small circular print (using styrofoam plate), sketch the simple print, flip the sketch over and trace onto the circular plate (so the text is backwards), do a series of prints and pick the best one. Cut out the print and mount it on the larger paper. Collage the larger paper to represent the overall message of the song lyric. Display these song lyrics somewhere in the school - these make a great display for an arts night at school!
**Song Analysis**

1. Choose two songs
2. Read the lyrics of both songs and, if possible, listen to them.
3. Complete the chart and answer the questions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONG ONE</th>
<th>SONG TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think this is the song's message because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of a metaphor in the song</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the song relates to my life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The messages of the two songs are similar because:

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________

The messages of the two songs are different because:

__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
Song Lyrics Analysis Worksheet

Directions: Choose one of your favorite songs and look up the lyrics and print them. Using this sheet as your guide, analyze the lyrics for its deeper meaning.

Title of Song: __________________________
Artist: ________________________________

Speaker:
- From whose point of view in the song being sung?

Setting:
- Where does your song take place?
- When (if applicable)?

Subject/Topic:
- What is the song mainly about?

Mood:
- What is the mood of the song? How does it make you feel? Does it change?

Maturity:
- Does the music match the mood? How/Explain.

Conflict:
- What's the problem in your song?
- Can you relate to the problem in your own life?

Symbols/Metaphors:
- Are there any symbols or metaphors in your song?
- What do they represent?

Theme: (i.e. friendship, hope, love, loss, growing up, family, overcoming challenges etc.)
- What do you think this song is saying about life?
- Is there something to be learned?

Evidence of Theme:
- HIGHLIGHT words/phrases that support the theme and list these below:

Now in a sentence or two explain what its meaning is now:

Name: ________________________________

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