Arts Integration Lesson
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Grades 9-10 Lesson: *You Got to Let Me Know, Should We Stay or Should We Go?*

Based on Michigan history standard 7.2.3: *World War II – analyze the causes, **course,** characteristics, and consequences of World War II, including the emergence of the United States and Soviet Union as global superpowers.*

This lesson will be focused on an element of the "course" aspect, namely the United States' grappling with the decision to enter the war.

Subjects: American History, Creative Writing (Poetry)

Duration: Three 60-minute periods.

SUMMARY
In this grade 9-10 lesson, students will analyze and create erasure (blackout) poetry, utilizing the tools of poetry and considering the possibilities and limitations of erasure poetry as a poetic artform and an approach to engaging with source material.

The erasure poem will be created based on an analysis of primary documents (texts from speeches, editorials, letters to the editor, essays) from U.S. citizens representing arguments for joining WWII, or for isolationism or pacifism.

Students will be assessed on their reflection. *What poetic elements are present in your poem? How did the limitations of erasure poetry (the source material) work for or against the effectiveness of the poem, and the message/argument your poem was attempting to make?*

PREPARATION
Learning objectives
In previous WWII lessons leading up to this one students will have:

-Demonstrated an understanding of the dynamics of Wars in Europe and Asia prior to U.S. involvement, including the build up to, and escalation of the war.

-Demonstrated an understanding of U.S. political, cultural and social life coming out of the Great Depression.

-Practiced small group discussions: how to process a new text, ask and respond to respectfully-worded, on topic questions, and remain on task.

In this lesson, Students will:

-Analyze and create erasure to poetry in order to:

    -demonstrate the use of *Poet's Tools*
    -demonstrate a thoughtful attempt to utilize their poem to engage in conversation with the source material, and in so doing…
    -demonstrate an understanding of their source material (a pre-war primary source argument for or against U.S. involvement in WWII.)

-Reflect on the process of creating their poem in order to:

    -demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and limitations of erasure poetry
    -consider what may have been left out of their response/argument due to the words/form of their source material
    -consider which tools of poetry they were able to utilize, and which tools were limited by the source text

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

POETRY:

1. Students will utilize and explain their use of <u>poetic tools:</u>
    <u>Sensory language:</u>
        -to stimulate the senses of the reader.
    <u>Comparison:</u>
        <u>-</u>metaphor and simile
    <u>Music (tools to create meter and rhythm):</u>
        -rhyme
        -alliteration
        -open vs. closed syllables
        -word length/line length

    <u>Enjambment</u>
        -where poet chooses to place line breaks

2. Students will use poetry to express emotion.

3. Students will use poetry to relate and explain cultural, historical contexts.

4. Students will explain revision process by utilizing *tools of poetry* language.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

Social Studies Standards – High School

7.2.3 World War II – analyze the causes, course, characteristics, and consequences of World War II, including the emergence the United States and Soviet Union as global superpowers.

Social Studies Process Skills and Standards – High School

P1 READING AND COMMUNICATION – READ AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
P1.2 Interpret primary and secondary source documents for point of view, context, bias, and frame of reference or perspective.

P2 INQUIRY, RESEARCH, AND ANALYSIS
P2.1 Apply methods of inquiry, including asking and answering compelling and supporting questions, to investigate social science problems.

P2.4 Use relevant information from multiple credible sources representing a wide range of views considering the origin, authority, structure, and context to answer a compelling or supporting question.

NECESSARY STUDENT MATERIALS:

Documents:

> Copies of text of FDR's December 29, Fireside Chat.
> Copies of text of Charles Lindbergh's 1941 *Address at a Rally of the America First Committee*
> Copies of Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker* Newspaper from January 1941, *Letters from Conscientious Objectors.*

> Copies of erasure poems and their source material.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Teachers should be familiar with each of the *4 Poet's Tools* (just one easy way to think about what makes poetry, poetry). They should be familiar with erasure poetry, especially it's strengths (direct response to text), and its weakness (We're limited by word choice and order of source text…of course this limitation could also be viewed as a strength.)

Teachers should be familiar with U.S. economic and cultural history prior to WWII as well as the history of war WWII in Europe and Asia, prior to U.S. involvement. They should be familiar with pro-war, pacifist and isolationist (including America First movement and its relationship to Germany and the Nazi Party) viewpoints prior to U.S. entering the war.

DAY 1 INSTRUCTION

*(Possible teacher language noted throughout with * and italics.)*

Teacher Framing of lesson:

*Welcome poets and historians of Room ____. In previous lessons, we've defined and worked with the Poet's Tools, explored different forms of poetry, and utilized those poetic forms to responded to historical events. Today we're beginning a three day unit in which we'll utilize Erasure Poetry to engage primary texts written by Americans in 1940-41, in which they make arguments for and against joining the allied forces overseas in World War II. We'll engage those primary sources tomorrow. Today, we'll experience reading and creating erasure poems, works in which the poet makes poetry by blacking out, or erasing the words on previously written texts.

A question to consider as we engage in this important work as poets and artists: What is the role of art and artists in exploring the challenges of history—what's happened in the past, as well as the history being created in this very moment.

Back to erasure poetry:

1. Whole class. Show students examples of an erasure poem. (Great if teacher can show them side-by-side with source text. Not essential.)

*You will be getting into small study groups to experience erasure poetry side-by-side with its source text. Here are some questions to consider: (No discussion necessary here. Just planting seeds. Read and post questions for groups to refer to as needed):

-*How does the erasure poem interact with its source text? How are they in conversation?*

-How is the experience of reading the erasure poem different than the source text? Does it feel different? How?

-Compare the style of language and tone in the poem to its the source material.

2. Small groups (3 students). Give each student a copy of the source text side by side with an erasure poem. All prose source texts will be the same, but the erasure poems created will be

different. Micro fiction works great here. Or very short (half page?) of a longer text. Choose the same source text for the entire class and create three different erasure poems, a different poem for each poet in the small group. (I'm suggesting the teacher select the piece of prose and create these different erasure poems in order get inside the process and better understand the possibilities and frustrations of the form.)

-Provide the students with a short time to individually, silently, engage with the erasure poem and its source text.

-One student will read the shared source text to the group.

-Students will take turns reading their given erasure poems to the group.

 -The groups respond to and discuss the experience. The students might be compelled to respond in their own authentic way when they hear the different ways in which the erasure poems respond to the source text. Refer them back to the posted questions as needed.

3. Whole class discussion: Teacher asks about the experience of engaging with erasure poem.

-Ask open ended question first. Example: *Any thoughts on that experience?* Again, use the posted questions to spur more thinking/conversation.

The source material is prose. The poet is telling us that by blacking out words, we now have poems? What makes them poems? Remember the Poet's Tools? **Or,** *let's discuss the Poet's Tools.*

-Post the 4 tools headings (bold below) without details/bullet points. Ask poets what they mean. Add details below the headings based on student responses. These tools will be referred again later, so no need to get bogged down in a major poetry lesson. We'll get more and more details filled in as we go. Keep posted and add details as they come up for rest of three day lesson/unit.

1) <u>Sensory language:</u>
      -to stimulate the senses of the reader.
      (sight, touch, smell, taste, sounds)

2) <u>Comparison:</u>
      -metaphor
      -simile
      -juxtaposition

3) <u>Music (tools to create feeling of rhythm/melody):</u>
      -rhyme
      -alliteration
      -open vs. closed syllables

4) Enjambment
-the poet's choice of where/when to place line breaks

Which of the Poet's Tools were utilized in the erasure poems you just read? As you create your own poem later, it's more about the <u>attempt to experiment</u> with these tools, than it is about utilizing all of them. When attempting to write your erasure poem, you will be challenged by the words and order of the words in your source text.

Let's take on that challenge now!

4. Full class erasure poem.

We're going to attempt to create an erasure poem together.

-Move chairs to the side.

-Lay previously printed copy of selection on the floor. (One big word per page. One way to do this is to have each word displayed on one side of a manila folder. To black a word out, just close the folder.) One possible text choice is this fragment of Barack Obama's inauguration speech. (You may want to pick a text with more sensory language, or a text more directly related to the concepts in tomorrow's WWII lesson.)

-Have volunteer read the prose fragment:

America's possibilities are limitless, for we possess all the qualities that this world without boundaries demands: youth and drive; diversity and openness; an endless capacity for risk and a gift for reinvention. My fellow Americans, we are made for this moment, and we will seize it — so long as we seize it together.

Can someone tell us what the fragment means, or how it felt to hear?

We're going to see if we can respond to the prose fragment, by blacking out words to create our poem.

Before we start, take a moment to consider the Poet's Tools. Are their sensory words we want to keep? Are there words we want to keep that could heighten the music? Does anyone have a strategy for which words we might quickly black out first?

-Have students take turns blacking out words one or two words at a time. Everyone should participate here. Remind them to not think *too* much and to just *go for it.*

This is an experiment. We are going to support and respect each other's choices, and respect our attempt at a quick and imperfect rough draft.

- When the class thinks they're finished, have a couple students read the poem out loud.

Any thoughts?

What did the erasure poem accomplish?

Did we create something that interacts or is in conversation with the original text? How?

Would anyone like to make a change in the poem, subtract more words, add some back? Can we use the same text to create a poem that questions the text's argument?

- Have students restore the prose and repeat the exercise. (The teacher might begin by removing a couple of words that weren't removed the first time.)

- Repeat previous questions. And add this one.

We are limited by our source text. How? Is there anything you wish was in the source text that could have helped us to create a more compelling poem?
        (If students struggle with this questions, refer them back to the Poet's Tools for ideas.)

5. Day 1 Closure-Exit pass
Hand out sheet with printed Obama source text (same as above).

Attempt your own erasure poem.

DAY 2 INSTRUCTION

Teacher Framing of lesson:

Yesterday we interacted with erasure poetry, and we considered the Poet's Tools. We thought about how an erasure poem interacts with its source text. We also worked with a quote from President Obama's inaugural speech. Today we're going to continue working our way toward your erasure poem response to 1940-41 arguments for and against The U.S.A. joining the allies in combat in WWII.

1. Whole Class:

Show students political posters, editorial cartoons, examples of propaganda that make the argument for or against U.S. involvement in WWII.

Questions for whole class discussion:

Which category does each seem to fit in: Pro-join/Isolationist/Pacifist. (Have these terms posted, but try this without frontloading vocabulary meaning. If anyone is confused in the beginning, experiencing the images/text, and the class discussion/answers should clarify.)

What arguments are being made?

What factors does each propaganda example ask the reader to consider?

(Post above questions for small following small group interaction.)

2. Small Groups

The members of each small group will be given the same copies of a primary source text. Either Roosevelt's fireside chat, Charles Lindbergh's 1940 speech, or a column from *Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker* newspaper.

> -NOTE: Members of the group will read their text. (Lindbergh was the most famous isolationist. Therefore his text is important. It will be a good idea to prep the Lindbergh groups with the fact that there is racist/antisemitic language in Lindbergh's speech.
>
> -Ask students to respond to their text, referring to posted questions as needed.

3. Whole class discussion questions based on Small Group text reading:

What arguments were made in favor of joining the war against Axis powers? (make sure the class hears from each group)
What are arguments for isolationism?
What are the pacifist arguments for staying out of the war?
Some of the cartoons and posters we looked at earlier included the words, "America First." Did that term get clarified in any of the primary sources? What are your thoughts on the term, "America First after reading Lindbergh's text?
What is the difference between pacifist and isolationist?

4. Assignment:

You will each create an erasure poem based on the text (or a portion/chunk of the text) you read in your small group. This will be your "source text."

(This will be homework if there's not enough time to finish. *Also give students the option to choose to switch to one of the other source texts if they'd prefer to respond to one they weren't given.)

Consider once again, the Poet's Tools, as you create your erasure poem. *Think about the impact of Sensory Language, Musicality, and Comparison.*

*Use your erasure poem to respond to your source text by:
    -distilling your source text's argument into the fewest words possible
    -arguing against the ideas in your given source text
    -showing ambivalence, confusion, moral ambiguity regarding decision to go to war
    -making a possible argument from some very personal perspective of a citizen at the time.

*In regard to P.O.V: In the act of writing the poem, you may endow yourself as a character, or as coming from a certain demographic or constituency. Who had a stake in U.S. joining or staying out of the war? Who would be affected by the war? Who are the actual people that Roosevelt, Lindbergh and Dorothy Day were trying to convince?

    (Room for a short class discussion here. Post short answers to possible POVs. Examples: A draft eligible teen, their parents, someone with relatives in Western Europe, someone with relatives who have been detained in German concentration camps, a veteran of WWI or members of their family, a business owner, a town mayor, a child, a rich or poor person, etc.)

*Based on your chosen POV it's possible that you will be drawn to certain words in your source text, words that you'd like to keep or black out based on the perspective of the character through whom you are experiencing this history, and writing this poetic response.

*Know that when you choose to truly **dig deep** into a POV, or character, and you consider their possible hopes/desires/dreams/fears/confusion as they face the possibility and uncertainty of war, you will be fully stepping into the role of poet/artist—doing the artist's job—not only creating art to consider the past, but creating art to pave a path for you and your community—this community—to consider and process the similar and universal complexities that we currently face, and will always face as we move forward in an uncertain world. If you choose to fully engage in history as an artist would/should, then this isn't just an assignment, it's important and vital work.*

****DAY 3 INSTRUCTION****

Share/Listen/Consider/Reflect

Teacher Framing of lesson:

*Today, we're gathering as artists, historians, citizens, to share our artistry and our takes on a complex history that will always be relevant to people citizens who want to consider who we were as a nation, who we are now, and who we want to be.

1. Small group share.

-Tell students they will be pairing up in small groups to share their erasure poems.

-Take time to elicit, write down, and post presentation norms (for both sharing and receiving art in small groups/whole class).

-Teacher suggests that those receiving poem…

Listen for:
-The Poem's POV. What voice is the erasure poem assuming?
-Conversation. How does the poem interact with its source text?
- Poet's Tools. Which of the tools was the poet able to utilize?

2. Whole Class. Ask for volunteers to share erasure poems.

-Review posted presentation norms.
-Reiterate questions. *Listen to poet/poem to consider the questions:*

-What voice/POV is the erasure poem assuming?
-How does the poem interact with its source text?
-Which of the tools was the poet able to utilize?

-Present poems.
-Discussion based on above questions.

3. Assessment. Individual Reflections

Reflection Prompts:

Answer Both of These:
1. How does your poem interact with the primary source material?
    If needed:
    -Consider the argument you made in your poem vs. the argument made in the source text.
    -Consider what a poem can do differently than the source text's prose.
    -Consider the role of emotion/feeling in your poem vs. source text.

2. Describe something you heard in another poet's work that challenged you to look at/or feel this history in a new, or deeper way. Explain.

Choose one or more of these questions to answer:

4. What is the role of poets and artists in interpreting and challenging history? Or…
How might an artist add to, or deepen conversations that in and out of school, are typically framed as "academic."

5. Imagine being asked to respond to your source text again, would you choose to respond with:
   a) Poetry (erasure, free verse, sonnet, song lyric, etc.)
   b) Visual art (drawing, painting, poster, comics, cartoon, sculpture)
   c) Dance
   d) Drama
   e) Essay
   g) A PowerPoint/Slides presentation
   f) Another form

   Explain why you think your choice would help <u>you</u> best interact with a source text and respond to history in a way that would compel your audience to think deeply.

6. Did the restriction inherent in the erasure poem help/hinder your ability to communicate your ideas? Explain.

Extensions/Alterations

-As your poets are finishing their works, you may allow them the option of transitioning their erasure poems into a more standard form on the page. If so, this is an opportunity to discuss *enjambment,* the choice a poet makes when the create line breaks. Offer examples and ask: **Why did the poet choose to break the line here?* (the answers will mostly likely be about conveying meaning, and creating Music) **The decision regarding where to break a line of text is often preceded by a lot of experimentation, followed by a <u>very intentional, and personal artistic choice.</u>*

-Some students may be dissatisfied after they've created their erasure poem. They may say that they were unable to express their ideas the way they wanted because the source text didn't provide them with the right words in the right order, or the writing in the source text didn't allow them to fully utilize the Poet's Tools. If this is the case, tell the poet that you honor their effort, and you now release them from the limitations of the erasure poem and they are free to respond to their source text with a palette made up of *all the possible words*. If you have a student who feels overly constrained by the erasure poem, and passionately fights against the form, you might just have a serious artist on your hands. Feed their desire to create without limitations.