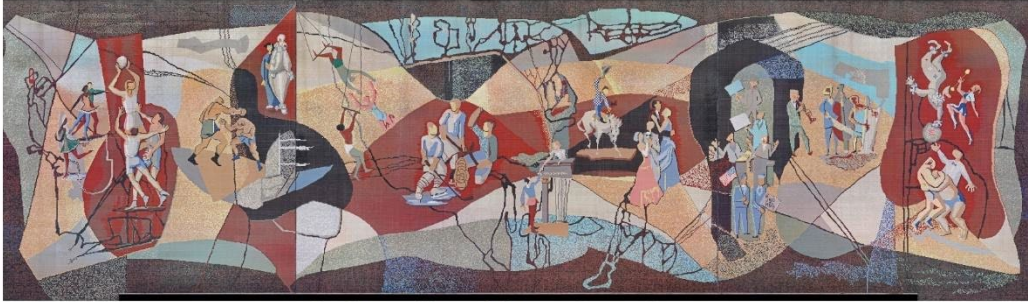


# PERSHING MURAL PROJECT CURRICULUM

## Learning From the Past, Understanding the Present, and Discovering the Future



THE PERSHING MURAL ~ A NEBRASKA CULTURAL LANDMARK

### Didactic Cinquain Poetry

*This lesson introduces students to the didactic cinquain poetry form. Students will be asked to create cinquain poems using the Mural as their inspiration.*

#### Included in this Lesson:

- Lesson Plan: Didactic Cinquain Poetry
- Power Point: Didactic Cinquain
- Pershing Mural Digital Image

*Note: This lesson interfaces beautifully with the lesson “Celebrating the Mural” in that a poetry “ode” is the focus of the study.*

#### Nebraska Standards Addressed:

Connect: LA5.W.4C Use words, phrases and key vocabulary to connect ideas

Present: LA5.W.3B Use precise words and phrases, descriptive/sensory details, dialogue and sensory language to convey thoughts, feelings, experiences, and events

Create: LA.5.W.3 Write creative and/or pieces that describe well-developed event or experience.

## **Objectives:**

- The students will be able to describe a Cinquain Poem.
- The students will be able to analyze Cinquain Poems by Adelaide Crapsey.
- The students will be able to list the elements of a Didactic Cinquain.
- Using the Pershing Mural as inspiration, the students will create Didactic Cinquains.

## **Grade Level:**

Written at 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Level (educators are encouraged to adjust the lesson to meet needs of Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade)

## **Materials Needed:**

Access to the Pershing Mural or visuals of the Mural, paper and writing utensils or computers/tablets, Thesaurus and dictionary

## **Time Requirement:**

1-2 (50 minute) session(s)

## **Vocabulary:**

**Cinquain Poetry:** (French for Cinq” or “five” and pronounced Sin-Cane) five-line stanza in poetry. They have 2 syllables in the first line, 4 in the second, 6 in the third, 8 in the fourth line, and just 2 in the last line

**Didactic Cinquain:** A variation on the American cinquain in which line length is determined by the number of words in each line instead of the number of syllables

**Haiku:** A Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in three lines of five, seven, and five, traditionally evoking images of the natural world.

**Syllable:** A single, unbroken sound or a spoken (or written) word

**Tanka Poetry:** Japanese form originating in the 7<sup>th</sup> century that does not rhyme and is made up of five lines. There are five syllables in the first line,

seven in the second, five in the third, and seven syllables in lines four and five.

### **Direction Instruction:**

American Poet Jack Spicer has said, “A really perfect poem has an infinitely small vocabulary.” Such is the case with the Cinquain poetry form we will be learning about in this lesson.

Back in 7<sup>th</sup> Century Japan, the Poetry form of Tanka arose. Tankas were short messages written to express gratitude, love, or self-reflection. Written in five short sentences, they did not rhyme. They were like short, secret letters in poetic form that resulted from personal experiences that were full of feeling and deep emotion. A Tanka was five lines long with a certain number of syllables in each line (5,7,5,7,7).

The poetry form of Haiku evolved from Tanka in the 1600’s in Japan. Instead of consisting of five lines, Haiku only had three lines with five syllables for the first line, seven for the second and five for the third. Those writing Haiku poetry honed in on their senses to focus on their personal insights, nature, and the seasons.

One of the most famous Haiku poets was Matsuo Basho (1644-1694). He believed that Haiku was “an opportunity to compress the meaning of the world into a simple pattern, leaving glimmers of hope in small, simple things and revealing the connectedness of all life on earth.”

Here is an example of his work:

The old pond is still  
a frog leaps right into it  
splashing the water

*Translated by Earl Miner & Hiroko Odagiri*

In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New York-born poet and English teacher, Adelaide Crapsey (1878-1915) invented the poetry form of Cinquain. Inspired by the Japanese poetry forms of Tanka and Haiku, she

used this compressed style of writing to present her poetry in new ways. She focused on poetic rhythm and meter in her writing and her cinquains generally consisted of two syllables in the first and last lines with the middle lines having four, six and eight syllables.

Crapsey suffered from tuberculosis of the brain lining so her young life was cut short prematurely. Since she knew she was dying, much of her Cinquain poetry focused on the act of dying. Her is an example of her work:

### **MOON-SHADOWS**

Still as  
On windless nights  
The moon-cast shadows are,  
So still will be my heart when I  
Am dead.

Because of Crapsey's poetic innovations, many Cinquain variations emerged, including the Didactic Cinquain. This has become a popular form of Cinquain because of its simplicity. Unlike Crapsey's Cinquains, Didactic Cinquains use word counts instead of syllables in poetry composition.

Elements of the Didactic Cinquain Poem:

- 1) The first line is one word which is the title of the poem.
- 2) The second line contains two words which are adjectives that describe the title.
- 3) The third line has three words that tell the reader more about the subject of the poem or show action. Many times, these words are gerunds that end with *-ing*.
- 4) The fourth line has four words that show emotions about the subject of the poem and may be individual words or a phrase.
- 5) The fifth line is one word that is a synonym of the title or is very similar to it.

Here is an example of Didactic Cinquain:

### **Apple**

Apple  
Juicy, sweet

Chomping, Crunching, Lip-Smacking  
So good to eat  
Yummy!

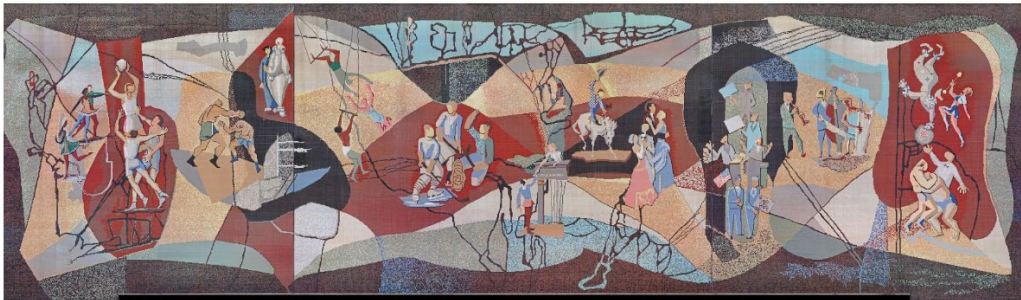
**In-Class Practice:**

- 1) Display the elements for the five lines of the Didactic Cinquain for the students to reference.
- 2) Ask the students to name a topic for the class to create a cinquain together, listing the options on a visual and select one.
- 3) Use the topic the students have selected as the title and first line of the cinquain.
- 4) Ask the students to brainstorm and list as many adjectives as they can come up with as descriptors of the topic (noun) for the second line. As a group, select two and finish the second line.
- 5) Now ask the students to list as many action words ("-ing" words) as they can that tie in with the topic (noun). As a group, select three and finish the third line.
- 6) Take time to read aloud the first three lines of the poem and see if the students want to make any changes.
- 7) Move on to the fourth line and have the students list emotion words or phrases that go along with their topic. When they narrow their choice down to four words, add it to the poem.
- 8) Now ask the students to come up with as many synonyms (or like words) as they can for their noun in line one. Select one and finish with the fifth line.
- 9) Now read the poem in its entirety. Discuss and make changes as the students see fit. Ask the students:
  - a) What do you like about this class poem?
  - b) How does the poem make you feel?
  - c) What emotions are evoked from the poem?
  - d) Are you able to visualize the topic (noun) based on words you have chosen to construct the poem?
  - e) Is there anything you would do differently?

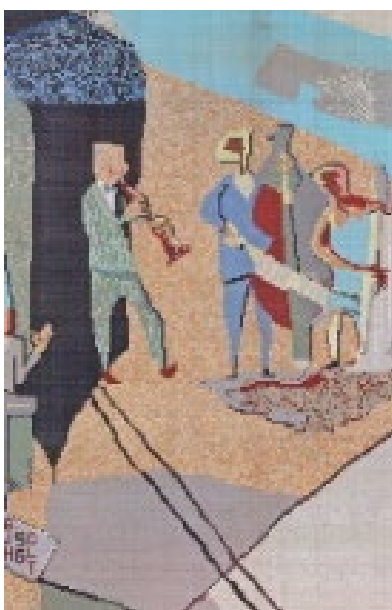
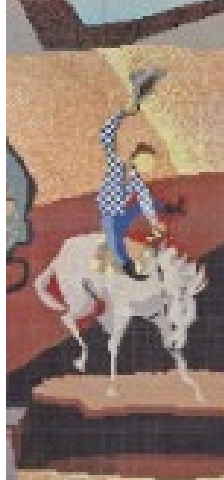
**Guided and Independent Practice:**

The students' assignment is to compose a Didactic Cinquain with the Pershing Mural as the inspiration. Here are the steps for you will ask them to follow:

- 1) Study the Mural and the many images it holds:
  - a) What stories can be told by the many activities you see in the mural?
  - b) What is the rider feeling while on the bucking bronco?
  - c) Is the trapeze artist confident so high in the air or is he nervous?
  - d) Is the basketball player going to make that shot?
  - e) What play are the actors performing?
  - f) Are the ballroom dancers at a special event?
  - g) How long have the jazz band musicians played together?
  - h) Is the figure skater afraid of falling?
  - i) How close is the score for the hockey match?
  - j) What are the men holding flags celebrating?
  - k) Is it a fair wrestling match with one wrestler so much bigger than the other?
  - l) What antics do the clowns have up their sleeves to amuse the audience?
  - m) How hard is it to balance on a ball?
  - n) How exciting was it to be at Pershing with all these activities going on?



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- 2) Based on the images in the Mural, choose a subject for your poem.
- 3) Brainstorm, making a list of words and phrases you could use, just like you did as a class.
- 4) Follow the Didactic Cinquain model for your poem:
  - a) The first line is one word and is the title of your poem.
  - b) The second line contains two descriptor words of the title (adjectives).
  - c) The third line has three action words, usually ending in “-ing” to tell your reader more about the subject.
  - d) The fourth line has four words that show emotions about the subject of your poem—these can be individual words or phrases
  - e) The fifth line is one word that is a synonym (a word that has the same meaning as another word or nearly the same meaning).
- 5) Edit your poem for flow and clarity.
- 6) Read your poem aloud and share it with others for critique and input.
- 7) When satisfied, declare your poem complete and finished.
- 8) Write a second or third poem if you would like.

### **Evaluation:**

The student will be assessed on their end-product, a Didactic Cinquain, with the Pershing Mural as the inspiration:

- 1) Was a portion of the Mural or the activities that took place at the auditorium the subject for the poem?
- 2) Did the student follow the format for a Didactic Cinquain?
- 3) Was the meaning behind the poem clear and did it flow?

The Poems can be read aloud to the class or put into a binder or displayed for the class to read and enjoy.

### **Closure:**

Writing is a wonderful form of expression and comes in many forms. Today the students have explored the poetic form of Didactic Cinquain and created their own works. As budding poets, students should be



encouraged to start their own poetry journals to document their experiences and feelings.

## Resources:

Tanka, Wikipedia: Free Encyclopedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanka> *Public Domain*)

Adelaide Crapsey, Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adelaide\\_Crapsey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adelaide_Crapsey) *Public Domain*)

Haiku, Wikipedia: Free Encyclopedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiku> *Public Domain*

Suiseki Blog <https://suiseki.wordpress.com/2017/08/31/frog-haiku-by-basho/> *Special thanks to Phat Vo and Suiseki for giving permission to use content from their website for this lesson plan (2-12-24).*

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