

# Creating Poetry Using a Traditional Shoshone Tale

## Summary

After reading the Shoshone traditional tale "How the Wood Tick Became Flat," students will use words from the story and words that describe the action or characters from the story to create a group diamante poem. The students will then choose one more traditional tale and apply the process of creating an original diamante poem as a partner activity or individual activity, using an interactive website as a resource. The students will publish their poem for posting on an author/poet wall. Acknowledgements to CLAUDIA MOBERLY of Middleton, ID, whose wonderful lesson on diamantes on the Read, Write, Think literacy website served as an excellent guide for this lesson.

## Time Frame

5 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Group Size

Pairs

## Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

## Materials

Copies of "How The Wood Tick Became Flat," an adaptation of a traditional Shoshone tale. Books can be printed from the CD or ordered from the San Juan School District Media Center at 435-678-1229. The website link is below. Access to computers for the interactive writing activity, found at [www.readwritethink.org/materials/diamante](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/diamante); Chart Paper for group diamante; Individual sheets for brainstorming; Read|Write|Think Site Tools page; Index cards.

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should become familiar with the diamante poem format; be prepared to explicitly teach the forms of nouns, verbs, and gerunds (words with the -ing ending, aka as participles). Familiarize yourself with the [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org) website so the students will be able to navigate efficiently. Also, become familiar with the Shoshone Nation, in particular the Northwestern Band (tribal headquarters are in Brigham City, UT).

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students should have a clear understanding of VERBS, NOUNS, AND GERUNDS and be able to pick examples from text. Students should be familiar with the traditional tales through book center, library time, read alouds.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to study the text, familiarize themselves with the characters in the story and become familiar tales of the Native Peoples of Utah. They will learn or re-visit the poetry form of diamante by using the text from "How The Wood Tick Became Flat". Students will use modern technology to assist them in this process. They will practice teamwork skills of participation and cooperation and setting a goal to brainstorm, revise, edit, and publish a diamante poem. Extensions are varied and many.

## Instructional Procedures

**PREPARATION** 1. Schedule two 45-minute sessions in your school's computer lab. These do not need to be on consecutive days. Bookmark the Diamante Poems interactive writing tool on the computers students will be using. These computers should be connected to a printer so that students can print off their poems. 2. Review the Diamante Poems interactive writing tool to familiarize yourself with it. The most recent version of the Flash plug-in can be downloaded for free from the ReadWriteThink Site Tools page, if your computers need it for this interactive activity. 3. Review books on nouns, adjectives, verbs, and gerunds, listed in the bibliography section. Find examples of nouns, adjectives, verbs, and gerunds to share with students during Session 1. Examples are included in the Read, Write, Think website and the "Dynamite Diamante" lesson. Then go on to share this next section, which introduces gerunds: Verbs tell of ships cruising, dogs snoozing, slime oozing, They tell of spies spying, guys trying and losing, Of leaves when they're falling, and wind when it's blowing, The rain when it's raining, the snow when it's snowing. 4. Make a transparency of the Diamante Brainstorm or create a similar page on chart paper or a white board. Make copies of this handout for each student in the class. 5. Copy the Word Sort Chart onto chart paper or a board in your classroom. 6. Hand out one copy of the Sample Diamante Poems handout to each student in the class. This handout includes three examples. Have students visit the Today's Kids website, which includes a number of examples of student diamante poems or the Animal Inn Poetry website, which has another example. You may want to copy one or two of these poems onto chart paper to use with the class as well. 7. Make one copy of the Diamante Format handout for each student in the class.

**INSTRUCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES--- SESSION 1----** 1. Review the parts of speech noun and adjective, asking students for definitions and examples of both that you list on a piece of chart paper. Read students the noun and adjective examples you have selected from the Cleary and Heller books, (listed in the bibliography). Ask students to tell you words that were new to them or pages they particularly enjoyed hearing. Include the new words on the chart paper. 2. Ask students to define the word verb and collect examples that you write on a new piece of chart paper. Introduce the term gerund. A gerund is a verb form ending in --ing that acts as a noun. Add the --ing ending to the verbs on the list that students generated (you might use a different color marker). 3. Read students the verb and gerund examples you have selected from the Cleary and Heller books prior to the lesson (suggested examples are listed in the Preparation section of the Read, Write, Think website lesson plan, or select others you prefer from these books) and ask them to tell you words that were new to them or pages they particularly enjoyed hearing. Include the new words on the chart paper.

Brainstorm other examples of verbs and gerunds with the students and record them on the chart paper. Point out the base words, which change their function when --ing is added. Ask students to use the gerunds in sentences that you then record on the chart paper. 4. Show students the Word Sort Chart you have created on the board or chart paper and review the different spelling patterns for each column (you may choose to provide one example for each). 5. Have the students grouped in groups of 2-3. Have each group of students write at least six examples (two from each spelling pattern), on index cards; then ask them to tape their cards in the correct column on the Word Sort Chart. 6. As a class, decide if there are any words that should be moved into a different column, then discuss the reasons for the move. Note: You should make the books you used in this session available for students to read during independent reading time and when they are writing their poems in Session 3. Gather a collection of Native American traditional tales/trade books for a book center as well. -----**SESSION 2-----** 1. Distribute the Sample Diamante Poems handout and any additional samples you have chosen to use. Ask students to discover the pattern of these poems using the following questions: What do you notice about the shape of the poems? What are these poems about? How do they start? How do they end? What do you notice about the number of words in each line? Do the poems use nouns? Adjectives? Verbs? Gerunds? Among the things you want to discuss are the following: The poem is shaped like a diamond, giving it the name diamante poetry. Diamante poems can be about one thing or they can compare and contrast two opposite things. The number of

words varies by line. Different parts of speech make up the different lines. Lines 1 and 7 are nouns. Lines 2 and 6 are adjectives. Lines 3 and 5 are gerunds. Line 4 is a transitional line that moves from the first part of the poem to the second. It can either be four nouns or a thought that has at least five words. The words in the poem all relate to the first and last lines of the poem, which serve as a title and conclusion. Sometimes the same word is used, sometimes two words that are synonyms, and sometimes two words that are opposites. 2. Ask students what they notice about the words used in the diamante poems you have chosen. Questions for discussion include: How do they think that the writers came up with these words? If they were writing a poem, where could they look to find words that relate to their topic? 3. Distribute the Diamante Format handout and review. 4. Tell the class you will now compose a diamante together. Ask the students to think about the characters in "How the Wood Tick Became Flat," the traditional tale from the Utah Northwestern Band Shoshone tribe. Re-read the story, if need be. 5. Working as a class, use the Diamante Brainstorm overhead or chart you have created to come up with appropriate words that are related to the topic you have chosen. List more words than the poem will require. 6. Model the choice of the most descriptive and appropriate words from the list by encouraging a class discussion about which words should be used and why. Discuss the order in which they should be placed to create a class diamante poem. Ask students what they think the transition should be from the beginning of the poem to the conclusion. 7. Review spelling patterns necessary for correct spelling of gerunds. -----SESSIONS 3 and 4----- 1. Students will compose their own diamante poems using another traditional tale. Have them think about some of the other traditional tales they've read in class, or other Native traditional tales from the series, whether it be from the Navajo, Ute, Shoshone, Paiute, or Goshute sets. There are several very good trade books to choose from also. The children and tribal leaders from the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone tribe recently illustrated and published an adaptation of a traditional Shoshone tale, *Coyote Steals Fire*. 2. First, have students select topics. Tell them that getting started is always the hardest part. 3. Discuss potential sources for interesting words. Possibilities include the books you shared and the charts you created during Session 1, reference books in your classroom, and vocabulary lists. 4. Pass out the Diamante Brainstorm handout and ask students to create word lists for their poem. Remind them of the process you used during Session 2 to search for words for the class diamante poem. Tell them that having more words than they need for their final poem will allow them to choose the words that will best reflect the traditional story they selected to focus on. 5. Have students use their word list and the Diamante Poems interactive writing tool to write a diamante poem. Students should print their poems when they are complete. If your students' skills vary widely, have them work in pairs. 6. Remind students of the three possible spelling patterns used in correctly spelled gerunds. Ask them to check the gerunds they used in their poems to make sure they are spelled correctly. You might have them use print or online dictionaries such as WordCentral.com. If they need to, they can reenter their poems and print final versions. -----SESSION 5----- 1. Ask student volunteers to share their poems with the class. If they are comfortable asking for comments, allow time for class responses. 2. Collect student poems and hang them up in the classroom. Students may wish to illustrate their poems.

### Strategies for Diverse Learners

If your students' skills vary widely, have students work in pairs. Students can illustrate their diamante poems using collage, as children from the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation did in illustrating the recent adaptation of the Shoshone traditional trickster tale (*Coyote Steals Fire*; Sam Weller, publisher). A Desert News article on the book's publishing is attached in this lesson plan.

### Extensions

Dramatize the story by creating a PUPPET SHOW. Have students practice storytelling and share the story with classes. As a class, a SCIENCE exploration/discussion about how animals and humans

and their environments overlap, or a discussion about parasites (as wood ticks are parasites). Begin a STUDY of the SHOSHONE PEOPLE. Web Sites: Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation Facts, photos, and maps of the Northwestern Band (there are five bands of the Shoshone Nation).

### Assessment Plan

Students will publish their own personal or paired-activity diamante poem.

### Rubrics

[Oral Presentation Poetry Performance Rubric](#)

### Bibliography

Readwritethink.org. "Dynamite Diamantes" by Claudia Moberly. How The Wood Tick Became Flat, adaptation published by San Juan School District and State Office of Education, 2006. Read, Write, Think literacy website: [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org) A Mink, a Fink, a Skating Rink: What Is a Noun?, To Root, To Toot, To Parachute: What Is A Verb?, and Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What Is An Adjective? by Brian Cleary and Kites Sail High: A Book About Verbs, Many Luscious Lollipops: A Book About Adjectives, and Merry-Go-Round: A Book About Nouns by Ruth Heller.

### Authors

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