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A Poet's Cento: Reflecting on the Written Word through Writing

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Abstract:

Students will create their own cento using lines from poetry discussed in class during a poetry unit. In a short analysis, students reflect on the lines of poetry that they chose to include as well as their process as a poet. This lesson allows the students to become even more familiar with their previously studied work while working through the writing process as an author. The short reflective analysis prompts students to be metacognitive about their process and product. This lesson is best used at the end of a poetry unit.

Common Core Standards:

- W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
- W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
- W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Procedure:

1. The teacher will explain that a cento (meaning patchwork in Latin) is a poem comprised completely of lines from other published poetry. Although the poem does not need to have a particular meter, or rhyme scheme it does need to repurpose lines to create meaning.
2. Students are asked to write their own cento using lines from pieces of poetry that were studied in the course unit. Students must work within with these guidelines:
 - The cento must begin with their favorite line from their favorite poem.
 - The cento must be at least 5 lines long.
 - Attention should be paid to the juxtaposition of images and concepts that they create when piecing their poem together.

- Just like any piece of original work, students must consider purpose, audience and tone.
- Lines should be assembled to take advantage of and create literary elements, paying attention to line and stanza breaks.
- Students will cite the authors that they borrowed from on the bottom of their page. Author names will be listed in the order in which their line appears in the poem.

3. Students will write a one to two page analysis of their work. The analysis should include a discussion of:

- The borrowed lines, what did they chose to include and why?
- The process, how they brought the lines together.
- The product, what did they create/ intend to create? Discuss literary elements, tone, purpose and line/stanza breaks.