

5-W Poem

Overview of the Activity: A **5-W** poem is a poem that answers the questions *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*. To demonstrate this book activity, I select a main character, from one of my favorite read-alouds. I model the writing procedure during Whole Group Instruction. I emphasize to students that we will be concentrating on strong word choice, grammar, the thorough portrayal of story elements, as well as creativity. Together as a group we brainstorm ideas, for the **5-W** questions, which I record on overhead transparencies.

- Line 1: **Who** (the subject)
- Line 2: **What** (what happened)
- Line 3: **Where** (where did it happen)
- Line 4: **When** (when did it happen)
- Line 5: **Why** (why did it happen)

During our group discussion, students make meaningful selections and must justify their word choices. Together we decide on the best selection based on word choice, how thoroughly the 5 questions were answered, and the rhythm of the piece. After making a selection for each line, I cover the five **W** words and read the poem orally. Hearing the rhythm, when the poem is read aloud, helps students revise the writing if needed. I explain that final drafts will be written without the five **Ws** listed on the side. I encourage students to use classroom dictionaries, thesauruses, and friends to find words. When students have completed their final drafts, illustrations may be added and the poems assembled into a class book or placed on a bulletin board display.

How to Write a 5-W Poem

1. Select a character from a chapter book.
2. Answer the 5-W questions. Use descriptive words and phrases that will summarize the story.
3. Read your poem aloud. Listen to the rhythm of your poem.
4. Revise your word choice until you are comfortable with how the poem sounds.
5. A dictionary or thesauruses can be used to find descriptive words.
6. Edit for spelling and punctuation.
7. When you rewrite or type your final draft, delete the **5-W** words.
8. Include a notation that lists the book title & author.
9. Print a final copy.
9. Illustrations may be added to your poem before being displayed.

5-WS:

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- Line 5: **Why** (why did it happen)