

Generative Writing Loops Activity Handout #2:

The Roles and Instructions



The roles, described below, are designed to help you craft poems in a group. As you begin this exercise you should assign each person in the group one of the following roles:

1. **Image Weaver:** This person must provide at least two concrete images for the poem.
2. **Language Keeper:** This person must supply five exotic words for the poem and provide wordplay. The group must then incorporate the Language Keeper's words into the poem.
3. **Metaphor Generator:** This person must supply at least two fresh metaphors or similes for the poem. To create a sense of unity in the poem, the Metaphor Generator should look at the Image Weaver's images before writing the metaphors.
4. **Music Maker:** This person is responsible for creating a sense of music in the poem, without depending on overly obvious rhyme (e.g., cat, hat, that) This person must take the Language Keeper's five words and generate five more words that sound musical alongside them (e.g., if the Language Keeper has provided "eclectic", the Music Maker might choose to provide "electric"). During the sonnet-writing exercise, this person will need to come up with all the major sounds of the poem. Create an A sound, a B sound, a C sound, a D sound, and an E sound.
5. **Meter Keepers (sonnets only):** All of you are responsible for whittling down your lines into 10-syllables for the final product. Don't let this restriction be scary or limiting, though. Have fun and see this all as a challenge.

Poetry Exercises: Once the roles are assigned, do your best to write the poems as instructed. Each person might find it easier to work separately and then come back together as a group to meld all the raw materials (your creations) together.

Exercise #1: Free verse poem

After you assign roles, do your best to brainstorm a topic for your poem. If you are stuck you could take any subject as your topic. Like Pablo Neruda, you might be inspired to write an ode to your socks. Or you might want to write about your favorite band, movie, or book. You might want to write about a favorite sport, about skateboarding, or about this class. Whatever you choose, try to pick something concrete to write about, instead of a larger abstraction like love or death, both of which may lead you into clichéd territory.

Exercise #2: Italian sonnet

First, assign a role to each group member. Your first sonnets are going to be about the challenges of writing poetry. You should set up the first eight lines as the problems or challenges in writing poetry. Your final six lines will then solve the problem that you pose.

Try to create 10-syllable lines to make your 14-line poem. If this seems daunting, you might simply try to write longer lines and then whittle them down to 10 syllables later.

Have fun!