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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2014 Volume II: Playing with Poems: Rules, Tools, and Games

Visual Poetry

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This Visual Poetry unit will show the similarities between the art making process and the process of writing or crafting a poem. Poets are intentional about the imagery their poems create in the same way an artist conveys a sense of beauty in their images. Poets share the same sense of perception as an artist does always carefully observing the world around them.

My third grade classes will analyze a painting by Stuart Davis called *Combination Concrete #2* to find the similarities in the elements of art and the elements found in writing poetry. This painting is full of line, bright colors, text, and overlapping shapes. From this busy painting students will create visual poems. Davis was surrounded by artists while growing up; I will incorporate visual poetry activities relating to some of his artist friends such as Charles Demuth and poet, William Carlos Williams. The unit will demonstrate a form of poetry called Ekphrastic Poetry, poems written about famous works of art or art that relates to a poem in some way. An example of a poem inspired by a work of art is William Carlos Williams's poem "The Great Figure." The painting is by a friend of Williams; Charles Demuth called *I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold*.

The culminating event of this unit will be a Poetry Café set-up in the art room to display the ekphrastic poems created, recite poems, and show off student blogs. The students' parents will be invited to attend the Poetry Café.

(Developed for Visual Arts, grade 3; recommended for Visual Arts and Literacy, grade 3)

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