

Cinquain

By Brenda B. Covert

¹ American poet Adelaide Crapsey created the cinquain[sing-KANE]-based on the Japanese haiku- around one hundred years ago. She was single, and her poetry wasn't published until after her death. Much of her poetry pertains to death. Her preoccupation probably had much to do with the disease that eventually killed her at age 37. A famous American poet named Carl Sandburg wrote a cinquain in her honor, ensuring that we would remember her poetic efforts.

² This form of poetry is written using a pattern rather than rhyme and rhythm. "Cinq" [pronounced SINK] is French for the number 5. A cinquain, then, is a poem of five lines! Each line follows a specific pattern.

Line
1- one word title

Line
2- two words that describe the subject of the title

Line
3- three action words related to the subject (think **verbs**)

Line
4- 4 or 5 words that express your feelings about the subject (Not a complete sentence)

Line
5- the same word as in Line 1, a synonym, or a similar word.

³ This is easy! To write a cinquain, all you have to do is remember these numbers:

1
2
3
4-5
1

⁴ Here is an example of a cinquain. Note that the first and last lines are the same thing; the last line is specific, where the first line was general.

Tree
Sturdy, Tall
Climbing, swinging, playing
Fun among the branches
Maple

5 Here is another cinquain. As you read it, do you see the animal in your mind's eye?

Cat
Black, stealthy
Crouching, watching, waiting
Must you hunt small animals?
Feline

6 Line 4 represents the author's feelings about what this cat is doing. What word would you use to describe the author's feelings? _____

7 Let's work on a cinquain together. Fill in the blanks of the following cinquain.

Fruit
Round, (choose a color)
Plucking, biting, chewing,
Tastebuds savor nature's candy
(name a specific fruit)

8 Does your poem make you hungry? Find out how many different fruits your classmates chose to describe.

9 Now let's try a more difficult cinquain. Are you ready? The title has been chosen for you.

Bug
(2 words - choose color, size, shape, or even the number of legs)
(3 words to describe what it is doing)
(Are you scared, grossed out, or enchanted? Say it with 4 or 5 words)
(Specific name of bug)

10 Did you choose a ladybug, a cricket, a spider, or something else?

11 For your next effort, you are going to create a cinquain about yourself! **For line 1** you might write *boy*, *girl*, or *me*. You may choose to use your first name or a nickname. As the author, you may select any word that represents you! **For line 2**, you need two description words. These may tell about your physical appearance, your usual behavior, or your personality. **Next comes line 3.** Choose three verbs that represent things you enjoy doing. These words may be related to sports, hobbies, or other pastimes. **Line 4** will share your feelings about yourself. Are you cheerful, nervous, angry, sorrowful, excited, or bored? The feelings you share may be related to the actions in Line 3: Express your emotions in four or five words. Now we end with **Line 5**. You may choose to

repeat the word from Line 1, or use your name here. You may have in mind a word that sums up who you are (or want to be), such as "football star" or "comedian" or "singer."

¹² After you are satisfied with the results of your personal cinquain, write it on a separate sheet of paper and attach a photo or drawing of yourself. Then it will become a keepsake.

¹³ For your final assignment, you get to choose the subject of the cinquain! If you have trouble thinking of something to write about, you may choose to describe a pet, a toy, or a favorite food. On the other hand, you could write about something you dislike, such as a food or a chore. The following example is based on something that I dislike.

Thief
Sly, selfish
Sneaking, stealing, laughing
Show no mercy, Judge!
Criminal

Name _____ Date _____

Cinquain Poem Writing

Example:
triangles
pointy edges
revolving, rotating, angling
Triangles are all different.
180°

Line 1:	one word (subject or noun)
Line 2:	two words (adjectives) that describe line 1
Line 3:	three words (action verbs) that relate to line 1
Line 4:	four words (feelings or a complete sentence) that relates to line 1
Line 5:	one word (synonym of line 1 or a word that sums it up)

Create your own Cinquain poem below. Remember to follow the pattern listed above.
