

Diamante Poem Writing Assignment

Martin Luther King, Jr. chose powerful words to communicate his message to the people assembled around the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The power of his words is immediately obvious in the fact that most of us recognize the phrase "I have a dream" while fewer of us would recognize the name "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom." The words from Dr. King's speech have become more meaningful than the specific name of the event where it occurred.



To explore the power of the words from Dr. King's speech, we will write some short poems, diamante, which are based on contrasting words or ideas and shaped like a diamond (The word *diamanté* is from the French, meaning decorated or sparkling like a diamond). Diamante consists of seven lines, which move from one concept to the opposite, following this pattern:

Line 1	Noun	opposite of line 7
Line 2	Adjective, Adjective	description of line 1
Line 3	Participle, Participle, Participle	-ing or -ed words describing line 1
Line 4	Four words OR a four-word phrase	first two about line 1; second two about line 7 OR a phrase that describes the relationship between line 1 and line 7
Line 5	Participle, Participle, Participle	-ing or -ed words describing line 7
Line 6	Adjective, Adjective	description of line 7
Line 7	Noun	opposite of line 1

Consider this example.

Freedom
Precious, Exclusive
Appreciated, Loved, Protected
Jewel, Right, Restraint, Hate
Confined, Controlled, Condemned
Expensive, Heartless
Discrimination

Writing Activity

Choose a word pair from the list of opposites generated during the class discussion as the focus for your poem. Alternately, you may choose a word from one of the other lists we created while exploring the speech and choose a synonym for this word for your second word.

As you write, check the lists of powerful words that we've compiled for descriptive words that you can add to your poem. Remember that powerful, passionate words will make the contrast. Your finished diamante should capture the powerful relationship between the two words that you've chosen as your focus.

Diamante Poem Rubric

	4	3	2	1
Content and Topic	Demonstrates an excellent understanding of topics from the speech and of required poetic devices.	Demonstrates a good understanding of topics from the speech and of required poetic devices.	Demonstrates a fair understanding of topics from the speech and of required poetic devices.	Demonstrates a limited understanding of topics from the speech and of required poetic devices.
Word Choice	Uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced.	Uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone.	Uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch, or flair.	Uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Jargon or clichés may be present and detract from the meaning.
Poetic Format and Creativity	Uses accurate diamante form, and contains many creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has really used imagination.	Uses accurate diamante form, and contains a few creative details and/or descriptions that contribute to the reader's enjoyment. The author has used imagination.	Uses accurate diamante form, and contains a few creative details and/or descriptions, but they distract from the story. The author has tried to use imagination.	Does not use accurate diamante form. There is little evidence of creativity in the poem. The author does not seem to have used much imagination.
Title	Is creative, sparks interest and is related to the poem and topic.	Is related to the poem and topic.	Is present, but does not appear to be related to the poem and topic.	No title.
Grammar and Mechanics	Is essentially error-free in conventions, grammar, and usage.	Contains a few errors in conventions, grammar, and usage.	Contains a several errors in conventions, grammar, and usage.	Contains many errors in conventions, grammar, and usage that detract from the meaning of the poem.