The following pages contain sample activities from the book.
7. Chastushka

A kind word is like a spring day.
~Russian Proverb

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Software
Microsoft PowerPoint or Keynote (Macintosh)

Content CD
Chastushka

Vocabulary
propaganda
communism
capitalism
government

Overview
A chastushka is a 4-line poem, with an ABAB or ABCB rhyme scheme. It can be compared to both rap music, as the chastushka can be both improvisational and musical, and limericks, for the simplicity, satire and lewd tendencies of both types of poetry.

Instructions
1. Study the evolving borders of Russia, including its former states.
2. Briefly touch on Russia’s conflict with Western countries, and the ideological conflict between communism and capitalism. Chastushkas were used as propaganda by the Russian government, to reinforce the “proper” ideology, but were also simply comical diversions, or creative love poems.
3. Show the sample on the Content CD, and have your students create their own chastushkas to add to the PowerPoint presentation.
4. Add a clip of Russian folk music and set the presentation to continually loop.

5. Upload the presentation to your class website, feed it into the lobby or cafeteria television, or simply play it on a laptop in the waiting area during parent-teacher conference nights.

Extensions

• The Korean War, The Cold War, The Cuban Missile Crisis, The Vietnam War: All of these dramatic events from the second half of the twentieth century pivot on the Communism/Capitalism debate.

• In all wars, propaganda is key to the government retaining public support. Ask your students to write chastushkas that could be used as propaganda for a current American campaign, whether it be war, the green revolution, or turning culture against tobacco or other drugs.

• Facilitate a Socratic Seminar that debates the ethics of propaganda. If the discussion begins to drift toward absolutes, bring in our government’s use of anti-litter or forest fire campaigns.
8. Found Poem

*I am a bear of very little brain, and long words bother me.*

~Winnie the Pooh

**Content Area**

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**Grade Level**

6-8

**Software**

Microsoft PowerPoint or Keynote (Macintosh)

**Content CD**

Found Poem

**Web Links**

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/wordmover_mlk/word_mover.htm

http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/holes_mover/index.html

**Overview**

A flash of inspiration doesn’t always strike when we sit down to write a poem. A beneficial exercise to get the ideas rolling is to write a “Found Poem.” In visual art, found objects can be assembled to create a sculpture with a new life of its own. In writing, an essay, speech or story can be used to create a poem with a meaning all its own. Not only is this a great tool for poetry writing, but it also gets students to closely examine the original text.

**Instructions**

1. Certain texts have indelibly staged how we view American independence, such as the Ride of Paul Revere, America the Beautiful, the Declaration of Independence, etc. While studying the American Revolution, set aside one class period for writing found poems.

2. Distribute to each student an excerpt from a related historical text, and explain that you will be making poems of your own from selected words from the original text.

3. Show the slide show from the Content CD, which demonstrates the process step-by-step.
4. Give your students time to create their poems, emphasizing that the end result doesn’t necessarily need to have the same theme or topic as the original text.

5. Share the results as a class with each student first reading the original text, then their poem.

Extensions

• The same exercise can be used to teach a variety of subjects. All you need is an original text to dissect. Some suggestions:

  Darwin’s Origin of the Species
  Lewis & Clark’s Journals
  Pioneer Journals
  First-hand accounts of entry at Ellis Island
  Presidential Speeches
  Excerpts from Suffragist Newspapers