

**Ecphrastic poetry & the
development of professional
literacy in history**

What is ecphrastic poetry?

- Ecphrastic poetry is the conversation between two pieces of art. The writer interprets a work of visual art and then creates a narrative in verse form that represents his or her reaction to that painting, photograph, sculpture or other artistic creation.

<http://www.firkinfiction.com/11.html>

Ecphrastic poetry and history

- How do you write a history-related poem ecphrastically?
- Complete the following steps:
 1. View a stimulus image and identify a history-related concept it evokes.
 2. If required, write down the concept, definition, law, formula etc.
 3. Identify a suitable poetry type and write the poem.

What concept does this image evoke?



The Vikings

Example Haiku poem

*From the North they come,
to steal from monasteries,
then return to sea.*

What concept does this image evoke?



Temperance theme
Anti-alcohol movement

Example Concrete poem

SONG OF THE DECANter.

There was an old Decan-
ter, and its mouth was
gaping wide: the
rosy wine had
clibbed away
and left
its crys-
tal side;
and the wind
went humming:
humming,
up and
down the
wind it blew,
and through the
reed like
hollow neck
the wildest notes it
blew. I placed it in the
window, where the blast was
blowing free, and fancied that its
pale mouth sang the queerest strains to
me: "They tell me—punny conquerors! The
Plague has slain his ten, and War his hundred
thousand of the very best of men; but I ('t was
the bottle spoke,) but I have conquered
more than all your famous conquerors, so
fearful and famed of yore. Then come ye
yeiths and maidens all; come drink from
out my cup, the beverage that dulls the
brain and burns the spirits up; that
puts to shame your conquerors that
slay their scores below: for this
has deluged millions with the la-
vitude o' wo. Though in the
path of battles darkest streams
of blood may roll; yet while
I kill the body, I dama the
very soul. The cholera,
the plague the sword,
such ruin never wro't,
as I, in mitch or mal-
ice, on the innocent
HAVE BROUGHT."

What concept does this image evoke?



Napoleon Bonaparte

Example Acrostic poem

Napoleon Bonaparte, was 5'3 tall

A great leader of France

Political and army leader

Often sought for conquers

Liberated France from Robespierre

Emperor of France in 1804

One of the world's greatest generals

Napoleonic code's influence on civil law is arguably
lasting legacy

What concept does this image evoke?



The end of the Cold War

Example Limerick poem

Mikhail Gorbachev did what was right,
While restraining the Soviet might;
"Perestroika" was new,
"Glasnost" overdue,
The Cold War he thawed without fight.

What concept does this image evoke?



The Egyptian Civilisation

Example Free Verse poem

We are the Ancient Egyptians

You really have to admire us.

We built the mighty pyramids,

And we invented papyrus.

About three thousand years ago

We were the world's top nation.

We'll tell you a bit about ourselves

For your appreciation.

Example Free Verse poem

This is Egyptian writing,
It's called a hieroglyphic.
We write with pretty pictures,
Isn't that terrific?



We made the giant pyramids
Triangle shaped, not square.
If you go to Egypt now
You can still find them there.

Example Free Verse poem

Egyptians worshipped many gods,

Like Ra, the god of the sun.

There was Horus and Monthu, Anubis, Seth, Shu,

And the king of the gods, Amun.

Our kings were known as "Pharoahs",

There were many through the years.

We'll tell you about the most famous ones

Starting in the next verse.

What concept does this image evoke?



World War I

Example Cinquain poem

World War I

devastating, hurtful

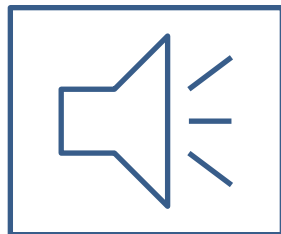
fighting, killing, destroying

fear, pain, hatred, sorrow

Death

What concept does this musical composition evoke?

Money, money, money by the ABBA.



Henry VIII and his wives

Example re-worked song lyric

Henry, Henry, Henry, had so many,
wives that had to die.

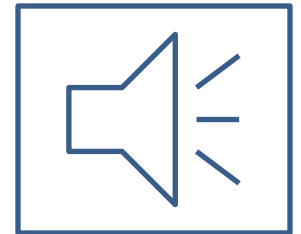
Henry, Henry, Henry, had so many,
only one survived.

Six wives in all!

Oh the things they could do

If they hadn't married Henry

That was their downfall.



Activity

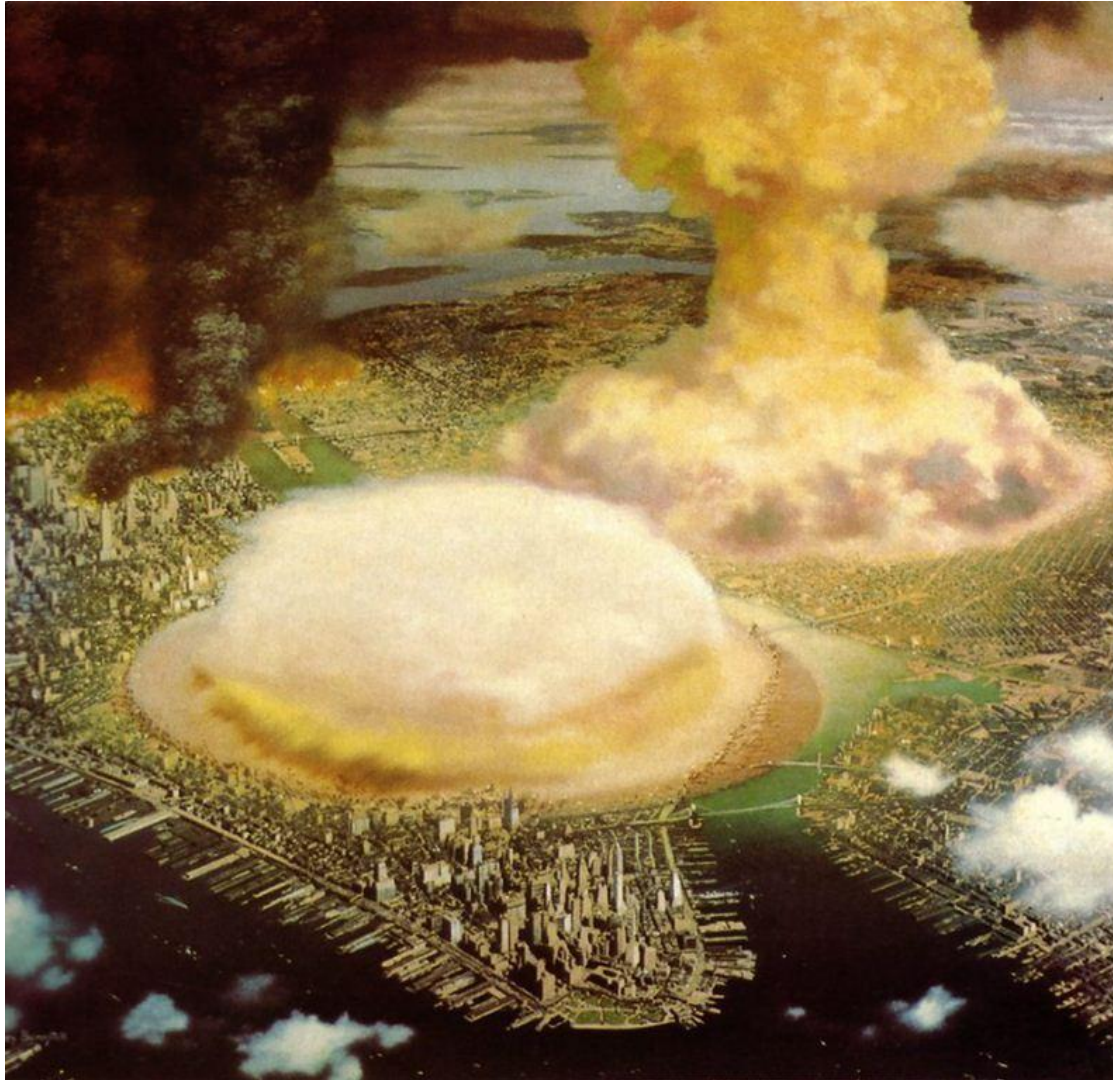
Using the given stimulus material, create the following types of poetry:

- Free verse
- Acrostic
- Cinquain
- Haiku
- Limerick

STIMULUS IMAGE 1



STIMULUS IMAGE 2



STIMULUS IMAGE 3



STIMULUS IMAGE 4



STIMULUS IMAGE 5

