

Snap Button Poetry

Wearable art combines visual design with found poetry

(art + literature)

Wearing a button pin in support of a campaign dates back as far as President George Washington. Early buttons were sewn on garments or worn as pendants. The modern design of a metal button with a plastic cover and wire pin clasp was first seen in mass production in the late 19th century, during William McKinley's presidential campaign.

Widely associated with politics, pin-back lapel buttons or badges were used for advertising purposes, distributed as momentos, souvenirs or prizes, or worn as a sign of social activism.

Most people regard buttons as trinkets to be worn and thrown away. To an artist, however, "disposable" items are often a foundation for making something extraordinary.

With a slightly convex cover, a snap-together button provides just enough space for small collage items. A button can also be a frame for a short "found" poem. The website Poets.org says, "Found poems take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. The literary equivalent of a collage, found poetry is often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems."

Combining a message with visual design creates an expressive piece of wearable art.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Provide materials for selecting letters, words, and phrases for found poetry. Words are everywhere: magazines, books, and newspapers are obvious sources, but interesting text can be found in letters, junk mail, text messages, packaging, instruction sheets, cookbooks, receipts, and elsewhere.
Inspiration and examples of found poetry can be found at Verbatim Poetry, a blog that "Aims simply to frame the ordinary words of real life to see if there is poetry in them."
2. Provide collage items for button design. Snap-together buttons have a 1/8" space between the back and front when snapped together, so there is room for a small amount of dimensional materials. Ideas for collage elements include:

- Colorful and decorative papers
- Fabric scraps
- Ribbons
- String, twine, cord
- Sequins and rhinestones
- Seed beads
- Cardboard or wood shapes
- Metallic foil



Materials (required)

[Snap-In Plastic Buttons](#), 2-1/4", package of 12 (60817-1012); need one button per student

[Elmer's Washable Gel School Glue Stick](#), 0.88 oz (23810-1088); share one between two students

Collage Materials, suggest:

[Black Ink Mulberry Paper Scrap Pack](#) (12465-3590)

[Momenta Doilies](#), assorted (01338-)

[Aitoh Double-Sided Foil Origami Paper](#), 18 sheets (11271-1001)

[Creativity Street Sequin Mix](#), 4 oz (60718-)

Materials (optional)

[Pepperell Cotton Macramé Cord](#), 2 mm, assorted colors (65285-)

[Momenta Chipboard Alphabet Stickers](#) (03193-) or [Alphabet Stickers](#) (65393-)

[Potpourri Glass Bead](#) assortment (61518-)

[Jewelry Charm Assortment](#), pkg of 100 (63832-1100)

[Uni-Posca Paint Markers](#), 0.7 mm (19994-)

[Aleene's Clear Gel Tacky Glue](#), 4 oz (23884-1204); share four across class



1. The best way to create found poetry is to simply search for interesting words and phrases and claim them. Cut them out and arrange them. Keep them, discard them or think about ways to connect them. Found poetry is very free form. It can be nonsensical, or express deep thoughts. It can be a collection of just words or complete sentences. Found poetry is a hunt for buried treasure.

A paper insert is provided with each button. Trace this circle onto another piece of paper and arrange found poetry words inside this circle. Allow 1/8" around the outer diameter to accommodate the curve of the button. Do not glue words down, simply create an arrangement. Cover with a piece of clear film and tape down to hold words in place temporarily.
2. Create a background for the poem using the provided paper insert, or start by tracing it onto another piece of paper or fabric. Some ideas for background art:
 - Torn paper collage
 - Stamped fabric
 - Stamps and small prints
 - Drawings
 - Watercolor on watercolor paper
 - Small acrylic paintings on canvas or paper
3. Arrange the found poem on the background. Glue all pieces in place. Allow to dry.
4. Snap both pieces of the button together. For extra security, apply a strong craft glue to the seam on the back side of the button where both pieces meet. Add glue to the openings where the pin back emerges as well, to hold it steady.
5. Continue enhancement of the outside of the button. Some ideas:
 - Glue cord to the outer edge of the circle to create a frame.
 - Use paint markers to make a simple color or a patterned border.
 - Create "danglers" by stringing beads and charms, then tying them onto the pin back.
 - Design tassels or fringe with cotton string.

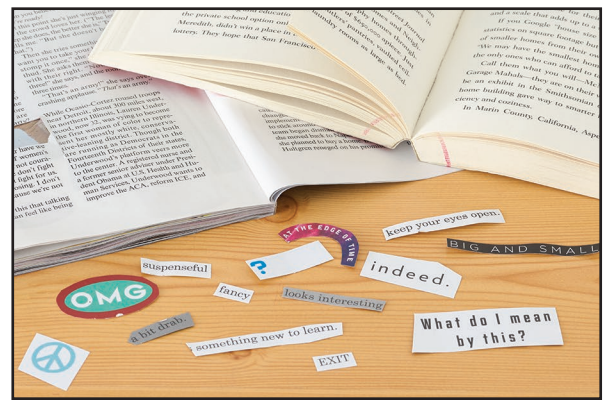
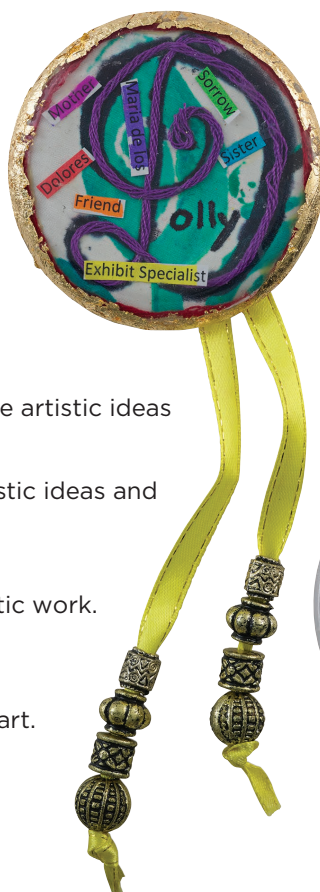
- Instead of framing found poetry, use this process to make artistic name badges.

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 8: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.



Step 1: Search text sources for words and phrases. Create found poetry.



Step 2: Use collage materials to design a background for the poem.



Step 3: Snap both pieces of the button together and enhance the outside surface.

