

How to Write Vocabulary Rhymes

From Flocabulary: Hip-Hop in the Classroom

http://www.flocabulary.com/teacher_writing_lesson_plan.html

Many students say that memorizing vocabulary words is a struggle, so we designed a simple lesson plan to help students learn, master and retain difficult vocabulary by writing a rhyme. This exercise can be done while a beat is playing

Here are some free beats: <http://www.flocabulary.com/instrumentals.html>.

Step 1. Choose Your Vocab Word and Pre-teach

In this case, let's use the word **vain** – an SAT-level vocabulary word that students might have to grapple with as early as middle school.

- A. Teach the word and the definition: Vain (adj.) too proud, into oneself
- B. Use the word in a sentence: (e.g.) "**Vain** people always carry a mirror in their pocket so they can check themselves out."

Step 2. The First Line

The formula:

_____ (Definition) _____ (Vocabulary Word),

_____ (Context) _____ (Rhyme).

We know that our first line will end with **vain**. To be an effective learning tool, the first line also needs to contain the word's definition. Here's a sample first line: "Lisa was so into herself, you know, she was so **vain**,"

If you're working with a group of students who have never done this before, it may be a good idea to provide the first line. Once students get used to the exercise, they'll be able to write it on their own.

Step 3: The Rhyming Word Bank

We know that our first line ends with vain, so our next step will be to create a list of words that rhyme with that sound: luckily, many English words do. For this exercise, have students raise their hands and call out words that rhyme. Make a list on the board like this:

Vain – perfect rhymes

Pain
Gain
Brain
Plane
Vein (homonym!)
Insane
Disdain
Entertain

Vain – slant rhymes

Day
Play
Wage
Take
Sale
Sayin'
Money

As you can see, the slant rhymes get further and further away from the root word, but they're all close enough (pronounced with a little poetic license) to rhyme with vain.

Step 4: Complete the Rhyme

Now that you have a rhyming word bank, your students will have to choose one of the rhyming words and use it to complete the rhyme.

You'll notice in the formula that we ask students to think about context in their second line. This is a key point and can really separate great writers from writers who simply complete the assignment. In this case, writing with good context means that the second line supports the meaning of the vocabulary word you are defining, through action or theme.

For example, here is a second line that doesn't use context:

"Lisa was so into herself, you know, she was so **vain**,
She likes rain."

While this is a perfectly fine rhyme, we are relying on the first line's definition as a context clue but not really getting another exposure to the word's meaning.

Here's a better example that uses context.

"Lisa was so into herself, you know, she was so **vain**,
She looks in the mirror so much it drives me insane."

Step 5: Perform

Each student should now have at least two lines written. At this point, you can offer students that chance to perform their rhymes for the class (over a beat or a cappella). This is always a fun way to end the lesson and it's always great when you (the teacher) share as well.

Step 6: Repeat

Now that students get the idea, they shouldn't have a problem repeating this process with other vocabulary words that you chose. Provide students with a list of 8 words and have them write an entire verse on a specific topic!

Get your students everything they need to write, perform and record their own educational raps with the Writing Academic Rhymes Package:

http://www.flocabulary.com/warp_order.html