



Jump-in Reading & Pointing

We love this activity, taught to us by Timothy Duggan, Ed.D. at Northeastern Illinois University's College of Education. It encourages you to really pay attention to the meaning and power of individual lines or phrases in a text. Plus, because we're reading the same passage a bunch of times, it encourages us to do what actors—and strong readers—have to do when they're reading more challenging texts: they read, and reread, and yes, even re-reread them again! It works with short stories, novel excerpts, and, of course, passages from Shakespeare.

In the [▶ accompanying video](#), you'll see how a group of Chicago Shakespeare staff tried this activity over Zoom. We really didn't need to modify it at all from how we've done it in an actual classroom. We used the [Prince's monologue](#) from the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet*. This is enormously versatile as a tool for entering all kinds of packed texts—including famous speeches and documents.

1. SILENT READING

For about 5 minutes, everyone reads through a passage of the text silently, noting any lines, words, or expressions that you find confusing, interesting, or important—and there will possibly be quite a few on your first read-through! Mark those lines or phrases as you go.

2. JUMP-IN READING

Next, read the passage aloud together. One person starts to read the passage out loud and stops whenever they choose—it could be several lines or sentences, or just one. Anyone else then “jumps in” to continue. If two people start reading at the same time, one yields to the other so that only one voice is heard at a time. Continue “jumping in” until the end of the passage. As you go, mark any lines or phrases that stood out for you.



3. POINTING

This part is now a third kind of reading of the passage, this time with a chance to create your own meaning in a type of “found poem” you’ll be making together. Check out our found poem in [Appendix B](#)! Look back at the lines and phrases (even individual words) that stood out to you in the first two readings. The person leading the activity begins by reading one individual line or passage that stood out to them and might make sense as a place to begin this shared poem. Then anyone adds to the found poem you’re creating together by reading one of their lines, or phrases or words that jumped out at them, and so on. The order is completely random—and it’s totally okay to repeat a line, phrase or word you’ve heard before.

Let the activity go for a while—try to be comfortable with any silences that land between your different voices! At some point when this third reading has run its course, stop and give everyone a chance to mark any lines they heard that they liked but hadn’t marked before. Make a few notes of your thoughts on these lines (why you chose it, your questions, etc.), then write a few sentences about what you discovered in this third reading about the original text that you didn’t hear in it before you began to devise your group poem.

4. FREE WRITE

Everyone picks a line or phrase, just one to start with, and writes it at the top of a page. Using this one line as a starting point, write about it silently for 5–10 minutes. Explore its significance in the scene, its connection to the rest of the play (or novel, or poem, or newspaper article—in other words, any piece of text!), or how that line relates to your own life and experience. As a group, return to the passage and talk about what thoughts and ideas it sparked in all of you.

Consider Common Core Anchor Standards R2, R4, R9



Appendix A

Romeo And Juliet Act 1, scene 1

PRINCE

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbor-stainèd steel—
Will they not hear?—What ho! You men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins: 5
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your movèd prince.
Three civil brawls bred of an airy word
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague, 10
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave-beseeming ornaments
To wield old partisans in hands as old,
Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate. 15
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time all the rest depart away.
You, Capulet, shall go along with me,
And, Montague, come you this afternoon 20
To know our farther pleasure in this case,
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.



Appendix B

Jump-In Reading & Pointing Found Poem

Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground Bloody hands
Rebellious enemies, profaners, you men, you beasts
Enemies to peace
Mistempered, mistempered
Will they not hear?
Airy word
Cankered with peace
Thrice
On pain of death
Rebellious
If ever you disturb our streets again
Cankered hate
Beasts
To the ground
Bred of an airy word
Your lives shall pay
Will they not hear
All men depart
Enemies to peace
Forfeit
Forfeit of the peace
Profaners
Purple fountains
Will they not hear
Depart away
Disturb the quiet
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground
By thee, old Capulet
Judgement
Neighbor-stainèd
Beasts
Forfeit of the peace



Cankered hate
Will they not hear
Fire
Thrice
Thrice
Depart
To know our farther
On pain of death
Your lives shall pay
Common judgement-place
Pain of death



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