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## Constructing Found Poems

*Middle (6th - 8th grade)*

Time required: 20-30 minutes

Specific recommendation: 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts

### Goals/ Objectives:

- Identify salient details about a chosen subject from a newspaper article
- Write a nine-line poem about a chosen topic

### Common Core Objectives:

- RI.6.2: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details
- W.6.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content

### Materials:

- **Song of America Links**

*Song of America* Charles Ives page: <http://songofamerica.net/composer/ives-charles>

*Song of America* “Ann Street” song page: <http://songofamerica.net/song/ann-street>

*Song of America* Charles Ives radio program: <https://songofamerica.net/program/ives-the-chronicler/>

*Basic Musical Elements* handout: <https://songofamerica.net/downloads/basic-musical-elements-handout/>

- Local or national newspaper articles

### Instruction:

- The teacher introduces composer Charles Ives to the class  
[\[http://songofamerica.net/composer/ives-charles\]](http://songofamerica.net/composer/ives-charles)
- Students receive a copy of the text “Ann Street” [\[http://songofamerica.net/song/ann-street\]](http://songofamerica.net/song/ann-street) and the teacher explains the origin of the poem
- The teacher or a student volunteer reads aloud the poem
- The teacher encourages the students to “play around” with the words of the poem—changing rhythms, dynamics, etc.—to see how they think of it as “music.”
- Students listen to Charles Ives’ composition [\[https://songofamerica.net/program/ives-the-chronicler/\]](https://songofamerica.net/program/ives-the-chronicler/) at 40:56, or 40:20 with Thomas Hampson introduction]
- The teacher leads a discussion about the music and how it reflects the words of the poem
  - Refer to the *Song of America* Basic Musical Elements handout for an easy guide to talking about music:  
<https://songofamerica.net/downloads/basic-musical-elements-handout/>

- *Guided Practice*
  - The teacher presents a short article from an online or print newspaper and reads the story aloud, providing students with a copy
  - The teacher asks the students to identify the main idea of the story, which is written on the board as the title to a poem
  - In partners, students then underline salient details from the news article, including answers to the questions: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*, if applicable
  - Students share their details and the teacher will compose a nine-line poem using the details
    - Using the poem, students brainstorm about how they would set the poem to music in simple terms; this could involve adding some “found songs”—e.g., snippets of songs they know
  
- *Independent Practice*
  - The teacher provides students with an approved newspaper, either print or online
  - Students choose one article and identify the main idea, making an annotation in the margin
  - Students underline salient details from the article
  - Students independently write nine-line poems based on main idea of the article and its salient details
  - Using their new poem, students will individually brainstorm about how they would set the poem to music in simple terms and share with the class.