**Focus on Poetry inspired by ICONIC PHOTOS**

**Activity: Write a poem from the point of view of any of the individuals portrayed in this slide show**

**Idea #1: Write a poem based on the style of Alden Nowlan’s poem *Junkets.***

Alden Nowlan is a well-known Canadian poet. In this poem, Nowlan imagines that he is speaking to John Keats (1795-1821), a famous British poet. Keates was considered a genius whose life was cut short at 25 when he died of tuberculosis. “Junkets” was nickname given to him by another poet, Leigh Hunt, who was known for his puns.

In this poem, Nowlan imagines that he has the rare privilege of meeting someone he really admires. He begins by treating Keats very familiarly, calling him by his nickname, commenting on his red hair and short stature. (Keates was under 5 feet.) He imagines all the things he could do with Keates, and then becomes overwhelmed by shyness and awe.

A poem in which the poet addresses an absent person, idea or thing is called an apostrophe.

**Write your own apostrophe by writing a poem in which you imagine that you are speaking to one of the people in this unit. Take your inspiration from Nowlan’s poem. The emphasis should be on the connection between the person you are speaking to and war.** (Read down the first column and then the second.)

*Junkets*

You magnificent I could never

redhaired runt! reach you.

I wish I could And even if

telephone you you were here

right now in town

and ask you over. I’d be afraid

of intruding:

There’s gin. I’m like that.

And we could Worst of all,

send out for it would never

Chinese food, work,

if you liked. Junkets:

I don’t suppose I’d keep thinking,

you’ve ever tasted it. dear God,

But you’re so far away. I’m talking with John Keates.

**Source:**Alden Nowlen*,* published in Cameron, Bob; Hogan, Margaret; Lashsmar, Patrick. (1983) *Poetry in Focus.* Toronto: Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.

**Idea #2: Write a “found poem"**

A found poem uses words that are already published, arranged into brief comments or descriptions.

The found poem below is by an anonymous writer. The language is taken from the *Warren Report,* the official investigation into the assassination of American president, John F. Kennedy. Kennedy was a young, charismatic president of the United States in the early 1960s. The nation was shocked when he was gunned down while travelling in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963.

**Choose one of the people in this gallery, collect facts or statements about this person found in research, and assemble a ‘found poem’.**

*John F. Kennedy*

The body

is that

of a muscular

well-developed

and well-nourished

adult

Causasian male

measuring seventy-two

and a half inches

and weighing approximately

one hundred

and seventy

pounds.

**Source:** *Anonymous;* published in Cameron, Bob; Hogan, Margaret; Lashsmar, Patrick. (1983) *Poetry in Focus.* Toronto: Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.

**Idea #3: Write a haiku**

A haiku is a form of verse that was invented in Japan hundreds of years ago. The English version is three short lines of five, seven, then five syllables. Haikus focus on a mood, strong feeling or an atmosphere. They are often about nature but can also express a person’s thoughts and emotions.

The best haikus are based on one simple observation, often using a surprising contrast.

Here are some examples:

What a pretty kite Everything I touch

The beggar’s children are flying with tenderness, alas

High above their hut. pricks like a bramble.

*Issa Issa*

An old silent pond... Over the wintry

A frog jumps into the pond, forest, winds howl in rage

splash! Silence again. with no leaves to blow.

*Basho Soseki*

It’s cold—and I wait Oceans filled with tears

For someone to shelter me Shed by the angels weeping

And take me from here. For souls felled in war

*Demetrios Trifiatis Demetrios Trifiatis*

War between nations Stars fall from the sky

Rivers overflow with blood Darkness overcomes the earth --

The earth convulses. Screams fade to nothing.

*Gail Doyle Gail Doyle*

End of days has come

All life has been extinguished

The earth is no more.

*Gail Doyle*

**Write a haiku inspired by one of the people or situations in this gallery.**

**Idea #4: Write a poem about the death of Alan Kurdi modeled on Margaret Atwood’s *Death of a Young Son by Drowning***

You will find this photo in 1.1.4

Death of a Young Son by Drowning [Margaret Atwood](http://www.poetryinvoice.com/poets/margaret-atwood-0)

He, who navigated with success

the dangerous river of his own birth

once more set forth

on a voyage of discovery

into the land I floated on

but could not touch to claim.

His feet slid on the bank,

the currents took him;

he swirled with ice and trees in the swollen water

and plunged into distant regions,

his head a bathysphere;

through his eyes’ thin glass bubbles

he looked out, reckless adventurer

on a landscape stranger than Uranus

we have all been to and some remember.

There was an accident; the air locked,

he was hung in the river like a heart.

They retrieved the swamped body,

cairn of my plans and future charts,

with poles and hooks

from among the nudging logs.

It was spring, the sun kept shining, the new grass

leapt to solidity;

my hands glistened with details.

After the long trip I was tired of waves.

My foot hit rock. The dreamed sails

collapsed, ragged.

I planted him in this country

like a flag.