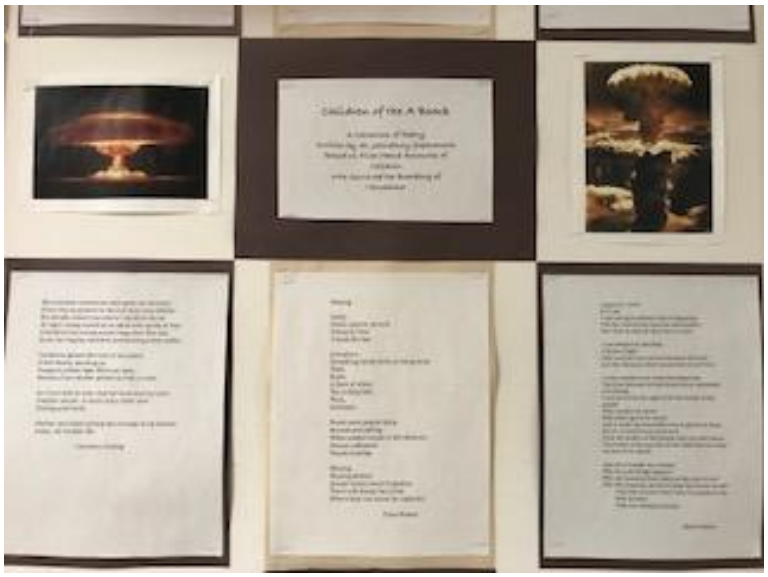
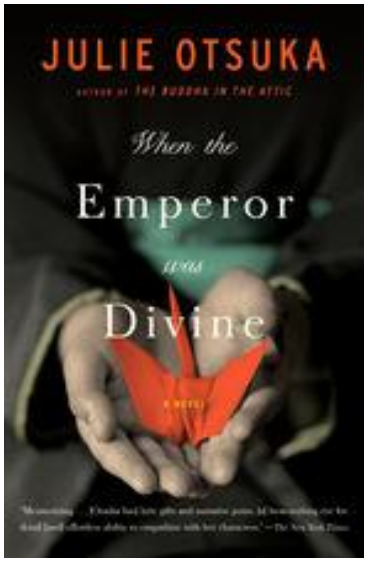
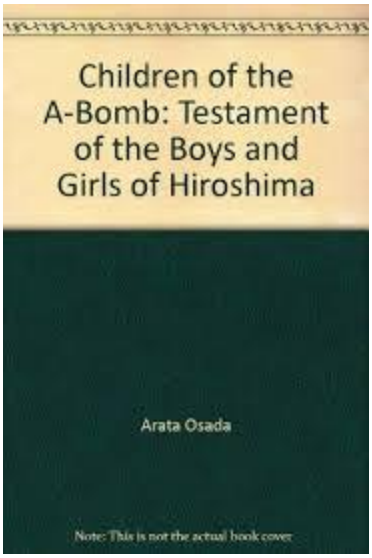
Poetry and Perspective: Hiroshima



Display of Student Poems

About This Assignment: This creative writing activity was completed in conjunction with a Literary Perspective unit centered on the novel, When the Emperor Was Divine. Students were given an excerpt from the book, Children of the A Bomb. This book, compiled by Arata Osada, contains letters written by children who survived the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The heart-wrenching letters serve as a source of inspiration for students to craft poems written from the perspective of the child who wrote the letter. Step-by-step graphic organizers guide students to gather the relevant information from their source, then helps them organize their information into a workable format for an original poem.

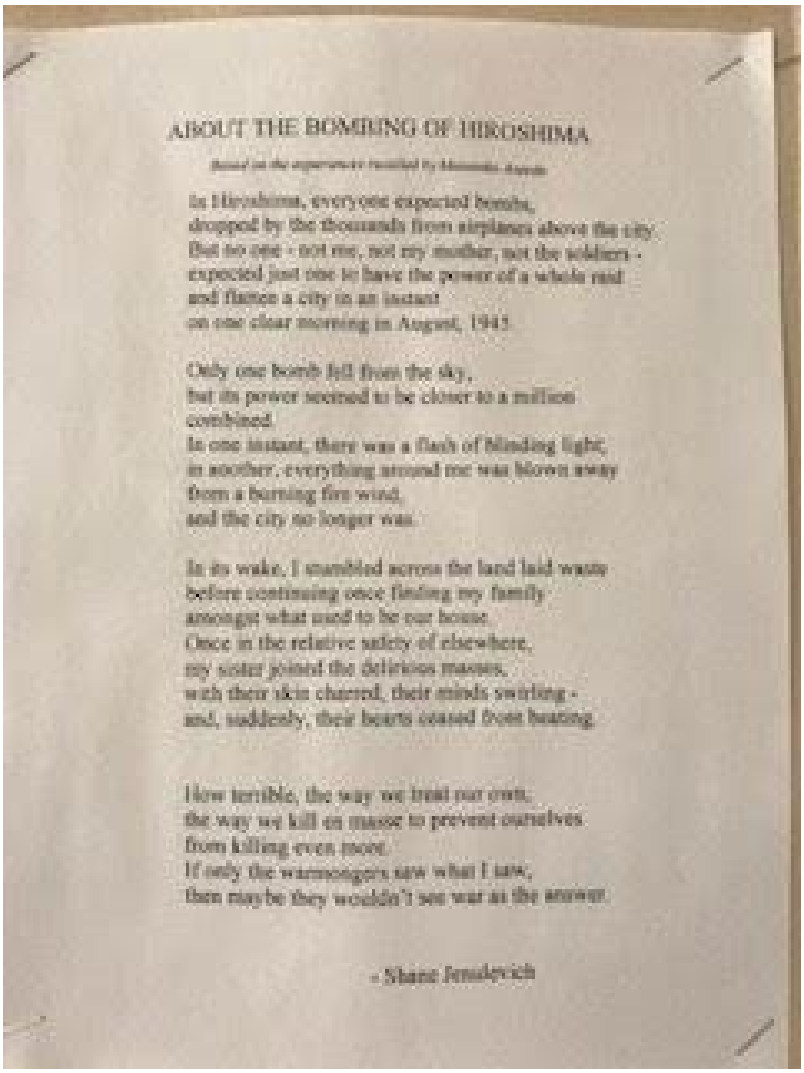




How It Impacts Student Learning: **This exercise in creative writing helps students to recognize tone and the use of language to establish tone and voice. It also builds students' capacities for empathy by encouraging them to take the perspective of someone else. Finally, the writing process underscores the form and structure of narrative poems while also increasing students' understanding of imagery.**

How It Reflects My Educational Philosophy: **This assignment brings together two of my favorite subjects: history and creative writing. The emphasis on perspective taking derives from my commitment to fostering social justice, and the step-by-step graphic organizers is inspired by my desire to help students accomplish more than they believe themselves capable of, by breaking down large assignments into manageable pieces.**

Samples of Student Work:



ABOUT THE BOMBING OF HIROSHIMA

[illegible]

In Hiroshima, everyone expected bombs,
dropped by the thousands from airplanes above the city.
But no one - not me, not my mother, not the soldiers -
expected just one to have the power of a whole raid
and flatten a city in an instant
on one clear morning in August, 1945.

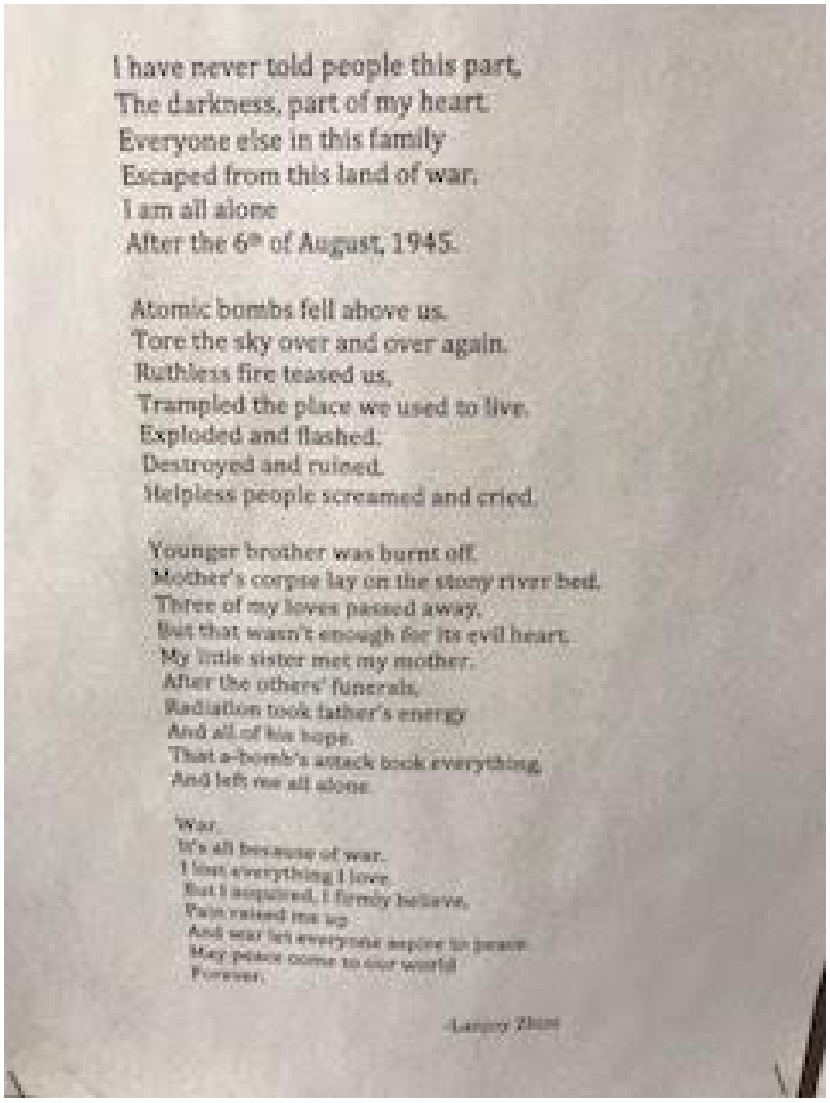
Only one bomb fell from the sky,
but its power seemed to be closer to a million
combined.
In one instant, there was a flash of blinding light;
in another, everything around me was blown away
from a burning fire wind,
and the city no longer was.

In its wake, I stumbled across the land laid waste
before continuing once finding my family
amongst what used to be our house.
Once in the relative safety of elsewhere,
my sister joined the delirious masses,
with their skin charred, their minds swirling -
and, suddenly, their hearts ceased from beating.

How terrible, the way we treat our own,
the way we kill en masse to prevent ourselves
from killing even more.
If only the warmongers saw what I saw,
then maybe they wouldn't see war as the answer.

- Shane Jendrovich

This student's poem was so well done that it was submitted to the school literary magazine and accepted for publication.



I have never told people this part,
The darkness, part of my heart.
Everyone else in this family
Escaped from this land of war,
I am all alone
After the 6th of August, 1945.

Atomic bombs fell above us.
Tore the sky over and over again.
Ruthless fire teased us,
Trampled the place we used to live.
Exploded and flashed.
Destroyed and ruined.
Helpless people screamed and cried.

Younger brother was burnt off.
Mother's corpse lay on the stony river bed.
Three of my loves passed away,
But that wasn't enough for its evil heart.
My little sister met my mother.
After the others' funerals,
Radiation took father's energy
And all of his hope.
That a-bomb's attack took everything,
And left me all alone.

War.
It's all because of war.
I lost everything I love.
But I acquired, I firmly believe,
Pain raised me up.
And war let everyone aspire to peace.
May peace come to our world
Forever.

-Lanqiu Zhou

This student, from China, was inspired by the assignment to create a number of sketches in his painting and drawing class.

Moving Forward: This assignment is one that I have used a few times with my standard sophomores. For several, it was their favorite assignment. I would love to find a way to bring this assignment to the Humanities classroom. I hope to find similar sources from an event connected to our Humanities history curriculum and use these sources as the basis for a poetry writing activity with my freshmen.