

THE POWER OF NATIVE LANGUAGE - OSAGE WORDS POETRY WRITING ACTIVITY



From Osage Language Unit activities, you have learned the **importance of language**:

Language is the **essence of culture**. In many ways, language determines thought.

Indigenous languages

- embody traditions and spiritual concepts
- communicate culture from generation to generation
- store traditional environmental knowledge
- contain names that give life and meaning to the world
- shape and revitalize cultural identity

Read the **OSAGE CULTURAL GLOSSARY**

Notice the three ways words are presented: first in Osage orthography (alphabet), next in English Phonetic (how to pronounce the Osage word), and last in English.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Choose one or more word(s) from the **Osage Cultural Glossary** to include in a poem. Use the English Phonetic form (middle column).
2. Poem should contain **at least 5 lines**.
3. Use poetic devices such as **imagery** - language that appeals to the senses (see, hear, smell, hear, taste) and **figurative (nonliteral) language - personification** of animals and nonhuman things, **metaphors and similes**, etc. Poem can rhyme or not as you wish.
4. Incorporate aspect(s) of **Osage culture** as you interpret this word in your poem:
 - connection to land and nature
 - appreciation of beauty and harmony
 - respect for tradition, family and community
 - commitment to democracy

Here is an EXAMPLE of a poem using these Osage words: Meen-kah - female animal, Nee - water, and Meen-ohn-pah - moon, and Wah-zheen-kah - bird

Evening Scene

The Meen-kah brings her young to Nee
As Meen-oh-pah tops the hills.
She smells the early evening air
Cool, still and sweet.
She listens as the Wah-zheen-kah
Sing their evening love songs.
She watches her babies drink.