



Tree

A tree

A Christmas tree

A green Christmas tree

A funky, green Christmas tree

A fantastic, funky, green Christmas tree

A fantastic, funky, green, sparkly, Christmas tree

A jolly, fantastic, funky, green, sparkly, snowy Christmas tree

A jolly, fantastic, funky, green, sparkly, snowy, colossal Christmas tree

A tree

By Heather McCain's second graders, Jacks Valley Elementary School, Carson City, NV

Welcome to the Add-a-Word Poetry Workshop! Teach your students to write an add-a-word poem. This is a simple, repetitive poem that lends itself to exaggeration.

Objective: Use the writing process to write an add-a-word poem.

Materials: Copies of sample poems such as “A Tree” and Gregory Denman’s poem, “Pig.” Paper and pencils.

Key vocabulary: Adjective

Step 1: Tell the students that we’re going to be writing a poem that uses a lot of adjectives. Introduce or review what an adjective is: a describing word. Think aloud about several adjectives that describe you. For example, I’m “tall.” I’m “happy.” I like apples, so I’m “apple-eating.” I ride a bicycle, so I’m “biking.” (If you use Thinking Maps, make a Bubble Map of adjectives about yourself). Then have students write one or more adjectives describing themselves.

Step 2: Read “A Tree” aloud. Also read “Pig,” by Gregory Denman aloud, then read it again having students read along with you. Talk about the pattern of the poem, how one adjective is added to each new line. Have students point to unfamiliar words in the poem and talk about the nonsense word, “pinkled.” Also note the adjective phrase, “pick of pink,” and say that when we write our poem, it will be fine to use a nonsense word and/or an adjective phrase.

Step 3: Brainstorm possible topics for a class add-a-word poem. Have the students contribute ideas until you have ten or more possible topics. (If you use Thinking Maps, make a Circle Map of possible topics).

Step 4: Choose a topic for the class poem. Brainstorm ten or more adjectives that describe the topic. (If you use Thinking Maps, make a Bubble Map of adjectives about your topic).

Step 5: Write the class poem. Use the adjectives from step four and any new adjectives that pop up along the way. During this process, reread “Pig” and notice how Gregory Denman added a new adjective to each line.

Step 6: Read the class poem together. Now you are finished modeling the process. Students use the same process to write their own add-a-word poems. After revising and editing their rough drafts with help from an adult, they write their final drafts on a large piece of paper. They may illustrate their final drafts. Have students read their poems to a partner, a small group, or the whole class.

Source: “The Process and Practice of ‘Add-a-Word’ Poetry,” by Gregory Denman, author of *When You’ve Made it Your Own...Teaching Poetry to Young People*. For information on Thinking Maps, visit www.thinkingmaps.com

Name _____

Page 1

Brainstorm possible topics for an add-a-word poem. (Make a Circle Map if using Thinking Maps. Otherwise, make the graphic organizer of your choice).

Possible topics

Name _____

Page 2

Come up with ten or more adjectives that describe your topic. (Make a Bubble Map if you use Thinking Maps. Otherwise, make the graphic organizer of your choice). Key vocabulary: Adjective

My topic is
