

# Astropoetry

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## Goals

- ☐ Practice making observations while creatively putting together a poem based on an astronomical object

## Activity Overview

In this activity the participants are to write down as many words as possible describing an astronomical object in an image. The words should be adjectives, nouns, adverbs and verbs and be written onto small slips of paper. The slips of paper are then creatively arranged into the structure of a poem.

## Background

This activity encourages the youth to look closely at astronomical images and use their imagination to create astropoetry! The act of looking at these images, and beginning to say something about the astronomical objects in the images, reinforces the first step in the image/data analysis process. Strengthening the participants' image analysis abilities is crucial when progressing into the observing project activities. Some examples of astropoetry are included at the end of this write-up.

## Preparation

Space Required: Large room/discussion space

Materials:

- ☐ Several Hubble images of various astronomical objects (refer to the appendix for examples). It may be useful to use images that are objects used as part of the Tour of the Universe activity if you are planning on facilitating that activity as a follow-up.
- ☐ Chart paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Slips of scrap paper, notecards, or post-it notes
- ☐ Tape

Preparation time: ①

Activity time: 20 minutes

#### Gathering of materials and final preparations:

Prior to leading this activity, you should have assembled all of the necessary materials, and you will want to have set up the chart paper in the front of the room for taking down the items as the group brainstorms. (If possible, the lists that the participants generate should be left up or should be recorded and given to the participants to keep as the course progresses.) And you should have your example items that have astronomical words in the name to start off the brainstorming.

## Procedure

#### Discussion lead-in:

Explain to the participants that by looking closely at some images of astronomical objects, and using their imaginations, they will now create astropoetry! First model the process by providing an example. Hold up an image and say a few descriptive words that come to mind. Jot these words down on the slips of paper, and then explain that after the pairs of participants come up with about 30 words, they can then begin piecing together their poem.

#### Creating Astropoetry

1. Break the youth up into pairs, and distribute the astronomical images, markers, and slips of paper; hold off on providing the chart paper so that they do not rush through the activity before having 30 sufficient words.
2. Instruct participants to closely examine their image and write down on the slips of paper words that describe the image, and possibly what it reminds them of (e.g. marble, pancake, hula hoop). Mention that they should try and come up with not just adjectives such as bright, shiny, but nouns, adverbs, and verbs. Remind them to write down only one word per piece of paper or notecard.
3. Once they have 30 words on the slips of paper, have the youth arrange the words into a poem in any manner they like. Let them know that it is perfectly acceptable to add words such as: it, the, as, etc... to complete their sentences or phrases.
4. When the pairs have their words arranged into a poem that they are happy with, have them transfer the poem onto the piece of chart paper.
5. Tape the image onto the chart paper, be sure the youth have titled their poem and added their names and hang them somewhere in the room.

### Sharing the Poems

Have the pairs recite their poems to the group. Participants should practice good oral presentation skill when they present their poems—speaking slowly, loudly, clearly, and not fidgeting or swaying. Often poems are read twice; have the partner read the poem through the second time.

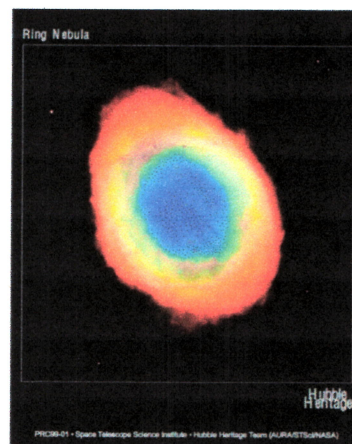
## Follow up

This activity can be typed up and included as a part of the second or third observing project by some of the pairs if the image they chose relates to their project. Otherwise the activity can be done again with an image that the youth have taken or are using for their observing project. This activity can be done many times over the course of the program independently of other activities.

## Watch out for...

- ❑ Encourage both participants in a pairing to be hands-on when arranging the words into the poem. Also, inform the youth that they will be sharing their poems in front of the group. If you feel as though some groups may be hesitant to do so, break the youth into smaller groups when it comes time to share the poems. However, they should still work on the good presentation skills.

### Examples of Astropoetry



### Dumbbell Nebula

Spreading new and old stars are dying and forming in an evolving in a bright dust  
An outcast and illuminating oddball of white light is in a field of midnight blue dots  
Remaining dots of light shout from clustered butterfly and crab images in outer space



### **Antennae Galaxy**

A magnificent, bright, red, fireball-like heart is moving  
An exploding fuzzy dark aura of dust is expanding  
Morphing blue and yellow fire are colliding to be an origin of stars  
An evil shrimp is born