LESSONS BEYOND ART:  
Diamante Poems  
Elementary School

Learn about how prose and poetry can influence artwork and vice versa. Write a simple poem practicing the parts of a sentence inspired by a work of art from the Tampa Museum of Art’s permanent collection.

Supplies
Provided worksheets, image of Frank Stella’s *Shards I*, pen and paper or a word processor

Who is Frank Stella
Frank Stella (American, b. 1936) is a painter who began as a leading figure in the Minimalist Art movement. His style has evolved and grown throughout his career. Stella’s work now includes multimedia relief paintings and large-scale sculpture.

Early in his career, the Abstract Expressionists influenced Stella. Abstract Expressionist paintings do not look like anything found in the life. Instead, they have expressive brush-strokes or marks and give the impression of spontaneity. The most famous Abstract Expressionist artist is Jackson Pollock. Pollock is known for flinging paint onto his canvases.

After moving to New York City in the 1950s, Stella changed his style. He focused on simplicity. Stella’s "black paintings," had black backgrounds. They featured with thin, white lines repeating across the canvas. Throughout the 1960s, Stella continued to create geometric paintings. Works like his *Protractor* series featured large shapes and bright colors.

In the 1970s, Stella’s style changed. He began introducing curves from drafting tools and organic shapes into his compositions. *Shards I*, from the series *Shards I-V*, the image to the left, is an example of one of these works. By the 1980s, Stella began creating works of art inspired by literature. In 1919, the artist El Lissitzky created art inspired by a song sung at Passover. This series inspired Stella to create *Had Gadya after El Lissitzky*. By the late 1980s, Stella was creating works inspired by Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*. You can find examples of both the *Had Gadya* and *Moby Dick* series on the Tampa Museum of Art’s website.

Today, Frank Stella creates works of art in two and three dimensions. When asked what his artwork is about, he famously stated: “What you see is what you see.” He allows the viewer to make meaning of the artwork for themselves. Stella continues to create work in his studio in New York.

More About Diamante Poems
A diamante poem takes its name from the shape it makes: a diamond. Diamante poems were introduced in 1969 by Iris Tiedt. There are two types of this poem: the synonym diamante uses two synonyms as the beginning and ending subject; the antonym diamante uses two antonyms as the beginning and ending subject.
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Learning Objectives
As a result of completing this project, students will be able to:
1. Correctly identify and use nouns, adjectives, verbs, and synonyms and antonyms
2. Create a poem inspired by a work of art

Resources
Frank Stella biography: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Frank-Stella
Abstract Expressionism: https://www.britannica.com/art/Abstract-Expressionism
Minimalism: https://www.britannica.com/art/Minimalism

Getting Started
1. Spend some time looking at Frank Stella’s Shards I, from the series Shards I-V. The work of art can be found on the previous page of this PDF or on the website of the Tampa Museum of Art.
2. Use the worksheet provided in this PDF to create a mind map with this work of art at the center. Set a timer for 3 minutes and just start writing down words that come to mind as you look at the image. Don’t edit! This is just a brainstorm. Write down everything that comes to mind as you look.

Make Your Own
We are going to use your mind map from the previous step to create a poem about Shards I.
1. Look at your mind map. Identify all of the nouns and circle them. Remember, nouns are subjects: people, places and things.
2. Next, identify all of your adjectives. Make a square around all of your adjectives. Remember, adjectives describe nouns. Look for words like colors, sizes, or moods.
3. Finally, identify all of your verbs. Make a triangle around all of your verbs. Remember, verbs are action words. They often end in “-ing.”
4. Focus on your nouns. Select your favorite subject. If you were the artist, which word do you think would make the best title for this work of art? Write this word as Line 1, the first word of your poem on the provided worksheet.
5. Next, decide if you are making a poem using synonyms or antonyms. If you are using synonyms, come up with another noun that means the same thing as your first noun. If you are using antonyms, come up with another noun that is the opposite of your first. Write your chosen synonym or antonym as the last word, Line 7, of your poem on the worksheet.
6. Next, focus on the adjectives that you wrote on your mind map. Select two adjectives that describe the noun you chose for Line 1. Write those words on Line 2.
7. Look at your verbs. Find three that are related to the noun you chose for Line 1. If they aren’t already, make them “-ing” verbs and write them on Line 3.
8. For Line 4, select two nouns about the subject in Line 1 and two nouns about the subject in Line 7.
9. Select three verbs that are related to the subject in Line 7. Make them “-ing” verbs if they aren’t already and write them down for Line 5.
10. Finally, select two adjectives that describe your subject in Line 7. Write these words in Line 6.
11. Share your completed poem with the class!
Mind Map

Look at the artwork in the middle of the worksheet. Set a timer for 3 minutes and write words in the boxes that come to mind as you look at the image. Don’t edit! This is just a brainstorm. Can you come up with more words than there are boxes? Draw lines to connect like words.

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Line 1: one noun - the beginning subject of the poem  
Line 2: two adjectives that describe the subject in line 1  
Line 3: three -ing verbs related to the subject in line 1  
Line 4: four nouns: two about the subject in line 1, two about the one in line 7  
Line 5: three -ing verbs related to the subject in line 7  
Line 6: two adjectives that describe the subject in line 7  
Line 7: one noun (either a synonym or an antonym of line 1) - the ending subject of the poem