**Brave New World**
First Harper Perennial Modern Classics Edition
Reading into Writing: Biopoem

**Purpose:** Biopoems are an excellent way to help students learn about characterization, inference making, and poetry all at the same time. When they are assigned to write about a character in an organized format, like a biopoem, they have to look for clues in the text about the character’s personality, strengths, and weaknesses; they learn how the author characterizes that character. At the same time, not all needed information will be spelled out, therefore students learn to make inferences by contemplating the information given and then determining the unknown from what specific evidence they do find i.e. what the character fears, who they love, what they need etc. This is an interesting activity to use with *Brave New World* because many of the characters are made out to be almost exactly alike, and students will learn how to infer what differences do exist and how to make characters that seem static, come alive.

**Directions:** Students are to choose a character who they are interested in. Instruct them to return to the novel to locate three places where specific information is given about their character. If the student chooses Bernard for example, they might write down the information on page 57, “She saw in the corner the small thin body, the melancholy face of Bernard Marx.” Have them record the information and page numbers. Then give them the following layout and have them fill in the blanks using the information they found, new information they search for, or inferences they make from the text. In order to get students comfortable with the layout of the biopoem, it might be useful to have them write one about themselves at the beginning of the unit, before writing one about their chosen character.

**Biopoem layout:**

Line 1. First name

Line 2. Four traits that describe character

Line 3. Relative (brother, sister, daughter, etc.) of ______

Line 4. Lover of ______ (list three things or people)

Line 5. Who feels _____ (three items)

Line 6. Who needs _____ (three items)
Line 7. Who fears _____ (three items)

Line 8. Who gives _____ (three items)

Line 9. Who would like to see _____ (three items)

Line 10. Resident of _____

Line 11. Last Name

(Steps 1-11: Grierson, BYU, 2007)

Context: Biopoems are most useful if attempted after the class has completed reading the novel. At this point students are familiar with the characters and what happens to each of them. The teacher might introduce the biopoem format to students before or during reading of the novel and assign them to write one about themselves. This not only gets them familiar with the format, but also can address some of the themes of the book i.e. individuality vs. sameness. The biopoem will then be a sign of student individuality.

After: After students complete poems and turn in the final draft, have them do a pair share and then invite volunteers to share with the whole class. Re-emphasize the importance of making inferences, particularly about characters in this case, and how doing so enables the story come alive and makes personal connection possible as well.

Assessment: The assessment can be the biopoem itself, or the teacher can have students do an addition write up about their character. The write up might be a more in depth look at the chosen character that springs from the questions posed within the biopoem. This could be a quick level-2 write or could be the beginning of a longer length character essay.

Summary and Segue: Using a biopoem could be a great segway into a poetry unit or another lesson on characterization or inference making. Encourage students to continue making inferences in other things they read or watch.
Using this layout, write an original biopoem about a character of your choice from *Brave New World*. Type the final draft and turn it in on March 31.

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Line 2. Four traits that describe character

Line 3. Relative (brother, sister, daughter, etc.) of ______

Line 4. Lover of ______ (list three things or people)

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Line 11. Last Name

**Example:**

John

Misfit, real, angry, brave
Son of Linda
Lover of self-control, Shakespeare, and his mother
Who feels alone, crowded, and infuriated
Who needs words, freedom, and feeling
Who fears losing control, the reign of soma, and life without living
Who gives a damn, his opinion, and his life
Who would like to see an unstable world without soma and with beliefs
Resident of the reservation
Savage.