

**Handout**

# Creating a Found Poem: Founding Era Primary Sources

**Directions:** A found poem is one that is created using only words that have been copied and rearranged from another text. Use the following steps to create your poem.

1. Select one of the following sources to use for your found poem:
  - Petition for Freedom to the Massachusetts Legislature, 1777
  - “On the Equality of the Sexes” by Judith Sargent Murray, 1790
2. Read the source at least two to three times. If possible, read it aloud at least once.
3. While reading the source one additional time, copy down at least 10 to 15 words or phrases from it that you find memorable or powerful and that help illustrate the central message of the text.
4. Arrange the words and phrases you have selected into a poem. You might want to copy the words and phrases onto notecards or separate sheets of paper so that you can easily rearrange them. Try to arrange the words in a way that captures what you think is the essence of the source, as well as your experience of hearing it. Here are a few more guidelines for creating your poem:
  - You DON'T have to use all of the words and phrases you chose.
  - You CAN repeat words or phrases.
  - You CAN'T add other words besides those you copied from the source.
  - Your poem DOESN'T have to rhyme.
5. When you are satisfied with your poem, give it a title.