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## 6-Word Manifestos



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**Objective:** To write a concise personal manifesto using an iterative writing process, and produce a graphic poster of that manifesto to be displayed in an exhibition.

**Best for:** High school students, individually

**Concepts and skills:** Writing and composition, voice, typography, layout, digital fabrication (laser-cutter).

**Materials:**

1/8" chipboard, two (2) 8.5x11" pieces per student

One sheet of 8.5x11" neon paper per student

Glue

**Tools:**

Adobe Illustrator

Laser-cutter

**Time:** Approximately one week of classtime (5-6 hours)



**Assignment:**

1. What is a manifesto? With students, review the meaning of the word and the purpose of a manifesto as a writing form (include examples of famous manifestos, as selected by teacher). We use “Where I lived and What I lived for” by Henry David Thoreau, which is not a self-contained manifesto, but a chapter from *Walden* that articulates a sense of voice, statement about the world, and the author’s role in it in a specific literary style. Below, under Related Tools, are a few others we love.
2. As students to dissect a manifesto and pick apart its elements: Is there a thesis? What is the author advocating for? How does the author talk about his or her own life?
3. Based on these understandings, ask students to brainstorm words for their own manifesto. Ask them to make 3 lists: 25 nouns of people, places, things, or concepts that are present in their life, 25 adjectives that describe them as a person or the nature of their life experience, and 25 verbs for actions that they engage in, experience, or love.
4. Using these 75 words, compose a manifesto of any length.
5. Using a reductive process, ask students to cross out unnecessary words. Repeat this process until each student has reduced the manifesto to its most essential parts: the 6-word manifesto (this need not be a complete sentence).
6. In Adobe Illustrator, have students write their 6-word manifesto in Helvetica, left-justified, so that it fits on a 8.5×11” artboard. Letters should have a stroke weight of .0001 (for laser-cutting) and no fill.
7. Print these layouts to the laser cutter, cutting through one of the chipboard sheets. Retain any lost pieces (like the center of the letter O, which will need to be pasted back into the composition).
8. Lay the neon sheet of paper on top of the second (uncut) piece of chipboard, then lay the cut piece of chipboard on top, creating a sandwich with the neon sheet on top. Glue these pieces together.
9. Replace and glue any of the remaining letter pieces (like the center of the letter O) to complete the 6-word manifesto poster.
10. Display as a whole class, in a grid configuration on a centrally located wall.

**Assessment:**

50% Writing process and quality

50% Digital and laser-cut production

**Related Tools:**

Where I lived and what I lived for

Frank Lloyd Write's 10-point Manifesto for his Apprentices

Apple: Here's to the crazy ones

Cesar Chavez' Delano Proclamation

Bruce Mau's Incomplete Manifesto for Growth



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