PURPOSE: The First Word acrostic is used to activate student thinking about the concept or topic students will be studying prior to beginning a unit. The Last Word provides an opportunity for students to examine where they were in their thinking at the beginning of a unit of instruction and reflect on how their present understanding extends or modifies their initial understanding.
**DESCRIPTION:** This formative assessment is a strategy in which students construct statements about a concept or topic before and after instruction.

**PROCEDURE:**

1. Choose a word or a short phrase that represents a major concept or focus on the curricular topic you are teaching.
2. The First Word is given to students before beginning a sequence of instruction.
3. Students complete an acrostic poem using the word or phrase.
4. Collect the First Word for analysis and save them for a final reflection.
5. After lessons are completed on the concept or topic, students repeat the process on a new sheet of paper called the Last Word. Students compare and examine their First Word to see if it aligns with their current thinking.
6. Students write the Last Word revising prior statements to include more detail, complexity, and appropriate terminology; or correcting misunderstandings by completely rewriting the statement to be correct. If their ideas have not changed, they repeat what they stated before.