

YOUR WORDS^{STL}

USING THE ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
AS A SOURCE FOR CREATIVE WRITING PROMPTS



BLACKOUT POETRY

Designed by Joey Ferber

Suggested Time: 45-60 Minutes

Students will analyze and use a variety of aspects of the newspaper in creating poetry, both fiction and non-fiction.

- Students will learn to use the newspaper for daily practical use as well as a source of inspiration for writing.
- Students will improve upon reading comprehension through direct and explicit strategy instruction.
- Students will strengthen vocabulary through the introduction of new words, use in one's own writing and repetition.
- Students will use the articulation of one's thoughts through writing as a resource for improving and maintaining one's psychological health.

Warm-up (10 mins):

- Choose an article from the print or e-edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. If students are using the e-edition of the paper, they will need to print out the article.
- Have each person choose a word or phrase in the article.
- When every student has contributed to the poem by circling a word or phrase, black out the rest of the words.
- Read the resulting group poem aloud. How did the poem make them feel? What did they like or dislike?

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Analyze (15 minutes):

- Gather several examples of blackout poetry. Incorporate different styles and uses of the technique (i.e. poems on different mediums, poems that incorporate images, or drawings, poems that use different shapes, etc.)
- Have one person read one of the examples aloud then have another read it a second time.
- Discuss the examples: What was the original article about? What shapes or images do they see on the page? What does this poem make you feel? What does this poem remind you of? What meanings can you infer from the blackout poem? How does the poem relate to the original article?

Create (20 minutes):

- Give a copy of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch or have them log into the e-edition of the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](http://www.stlouispostdispatch.com).
- Have students look through the newspaper until they find an article that piques their interest. If students are using the e-edition, they will need to print their article out.
- Ask students to read the article and circle or write down any words or phrases that stand out.
- Ask students to cross out all the remaining words with a marker. As they cross out words, ask them to notice the changes they've created in the narrative. They should feel free to creatively mold their developing poem by crossing out or outlining additional words.

Share (15 minutes):

Spend remaining time sharing work aloud. Provide constructive feedback as a group.

Here are a few useful links with examples of blackout poetry:

<http://newspaperblackout.com/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/blog-posts/john-depasquale/blackout-poetry/>

<https://www.powerpoetry.org/actions/5-tips-creating-blackout-poetry>

<https://www.pinterest.com/makeblackouts/blackout-poetry-shared/>