

Blackout poetry

Transform existing creations into something new

Work with the creative constraints of existing texts to launch your creative process and transform old ideas into new ones.

Exercise these creative muscles:

Uncertainty

When you exercise your capacity to build on existing textual creations, you learn to face the perceived limitations of uncertainty and expand your creative world.

Making

When you practice working with simple, everyday materials, you develop your ability to look for creative opportunities in any situation.

How to...

1. **Start with existing text.** Find a newspaper or any other existing text (e.g. poetry, sheet music, old books). Make sure you choose something you don't mind writing on; otherwise, you can make a photocopy of it to use for the exercise. Note: what you choose isn't important here, so there's no need to spend too long deciding on a text. In fact, choosing something at random often enhances your creativity.
2. **Prepare your making tools.** All you need to complete this exercise is your text (or photocopy) and a black marker.
3. **Choose words.** Skim the text and pick out words that jump off the page or resonate with you.
4. **Isolate the words.** Use your black marker to draw squares around each word you chose.
5. **Black out the rest.** Use your marker to eliminate the remaining text by covering it up.
6. **You are a poet!** Take a step back and admire your work. Share your newly created poem(s) with others.