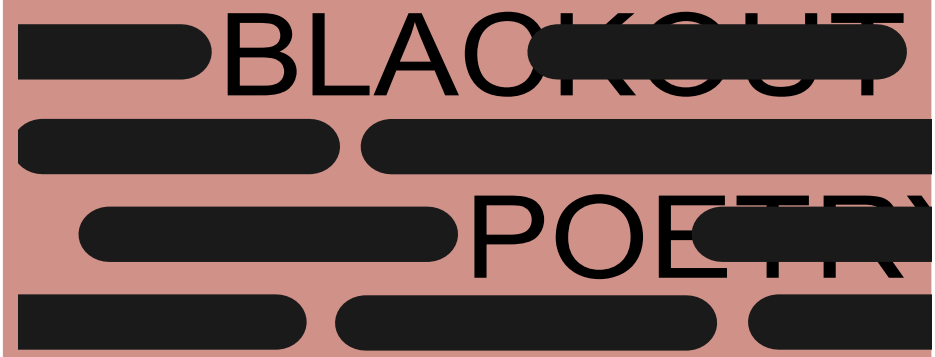
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Blackout Poetry

This strategy invites each student to associate their own ideas with the words in an old book or similar source. Each student blacks out all lines on a page, excepting the words they choose in association with a topic. When only these words are visible, a new story is created. This strategy examines language, word choice, and theme, and it can be used across all content areas.

LEARN.K20CENTER.OU.EDU/STRATEGIES

BLACKOUT POETRY

Summary

Working from a given theme or topic, students brainstorm associated ideas and find related words on the page of a book or similar source. Then, students create poetry by blacking out every line of the page, excepting the associated words they have chosen. The resulting poems reflect students' associations with the topic.

Procedure

1. Have each student find a source text (an old book, newspaper, photocopied page, etc.). The subject and content matter of these sources are not important.
2. Ask each student to brainstorm words and phrases relating to a given theme or topic of study and record them on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Invite students to scan the source text and lightly circle anchor words—words that stand out due to their meaning, significance, or relevance to the brainstormed ideas.
4. Ask students to list these words on a separate sheet of paper, organizing them in order of appearance from left to right and top to bottom.
5. Have students study their lists and select the words they want to use in their final poem.
6. To create their blackout poems, have students use a black marker to black out the page line by line, excepting the words they've chosen to use in their poems. The result should be a mostly black page with only students' selected words visible.