

## Erasure Poetry

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**SUMMARY:** In this session we will tap into our artistic side and create morning poetry by erasing excess words from newspaper articles. If you are a poet, poet-curious, or simply love to cross a lot of things out with markers, this is a session for you!

**GOALS:** Participants will feel inspired to create, they will have a new artistic skill, and they will have moments for reflection with others

**AUDIENCE:** Anyone!

**TIMING:** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

- 1 page of newspaper per person
- Pens
- Black Sharpies

**SET-UP:** Either a room that has tables set up or a circle with chairs and clip boards

## SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Introductions
- 00:05-00:10 – What is erasure poetry?
- 00:10-00:25 – Creating your poem
- 00:25-00:40 – Poem Share and Closing

## SESSION OUTLINE

### 00:00-00:05 – Introductions

The session leader introduces the session topic and leads the group in a round of introductions (name, pronouns, camp, favorite spot on camp).

### 00:05-00:10 – What is erasure poetry?

Session leader explains the history and practice of erasure poetry. You can use the below formula/format:

Erasure poetry became popular when Austin Kleon published a book of poems in 2007 that he had curated by selectively highlighting certain words from newspaper articles. He blacked out all of the other words, and what was left was a poem. Today, we'll take a dip into his art form...

*Facilitator's note: You can find examples to show people [here](#). There are differences between found, erasure, and blackout poetry. Screen share with this [short video](#) of erasure poetry. If in person at camp, you can print some examples of erasure poetry from the link above and then skip to the instructions below.*

#### But how do we do it?!

1. Read through your article with a pen in hand -- leave your sharpie to the side for now!
2. As you're reading, circle any words that jump out to you as important or resonant. These are your "anchor words".
3. Once you've finished, read back through and circle any words that connect your anchor words. These can be conjunctions, verbs, a combination of words, etc.
4. Take your sharpie and highlight all the words you want to exclude from your poem
5. Voila! You have your poem!

### 00:10-00:25 – Creating your poem

Participants work through the instructions, each with their own page of newspaper to work from.

### 00:25-00:40 – Poem Share and Closing

The session leader invites participants to share their poems. Note: It is vulnerable to share your creative work in front of a group, so the session leaders should be sure to create a welcoming environment, calling up readers with enthusiasm and ensuring there is applause and support once they finish.

## BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

If you want to make the newspaper localized, you can try to get the local newspaper from the nearest town. That said, if you don't want to break the camp "bubble," you might choose to do this activity with camp news, with the camp handbook, or with a piece of Jewish text.