

2021 National Poetry Day

National Poetry Day is

poetry
and **theme of** Choice

National Poetry Erasure Day

celebrating poetry

noisily

Erasing as Choice

For this year's National Poetry Day and the theme of *Choice*, I am promoting the use of erasure poetry as a perfect technique for playing.

Rather than supply a wide range of resources, I have produced model work based on a GCSE English examination text *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* to suggest working with students who are studying this or similar and therefore encouraging a playful if informed response.

Put simply, the technique of erasure is to take an original text and make choices from that template to subvert it, focus within it, play with it, find poetic (even if unrelated) lines in it, alter it and so on.

Process

Rather than produce detailed student notes, here is a generic outline of the process for adapting to whatever approach you want to take:

- Use any texts, and these can be originals (from books to magazines to newspapers and anything else in print), or as photocopies, or if having access to computers/tablets, pre-loading texts onto these.
- If using computers/tablets, I like using copies with the text in a faint shade which allows highlighted words and therefore 'erasing' the whole remaining text by making these definite choices.
- If using computers/tablets, opening a text in Paint (or similar) allows you to literally erase the words from the text to leave those remaining as the chosen text poem.
- Erasure can quite simply be using actual paper texts and physically choosing the words to erase by crossing through or similar, or you can make choices by highlighting the words wanted with colour or circling or similar (check Tom Phillips Humuments for elaborate and artistic examples).

- The models provided use a GCSE exam text and thus target students reading and studying that book. This can set a creative challenge in responding to that text.
- However, this work can be organised around any texts and for all ages.
- Limiting the range of texts used can make a comparison of choices made within this constraint quite interesting!
- Providing a wide range of texts can make the process more accessible and varied.

Three more examples from the first paragraph of this note – enlarging the selection of text can help the process of choosing:

National Poetry Day *Choice*

i s poetry

playing

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