

The Children's March: Stories from the Birmingham Children's Crusade

Grade Levels
6-8

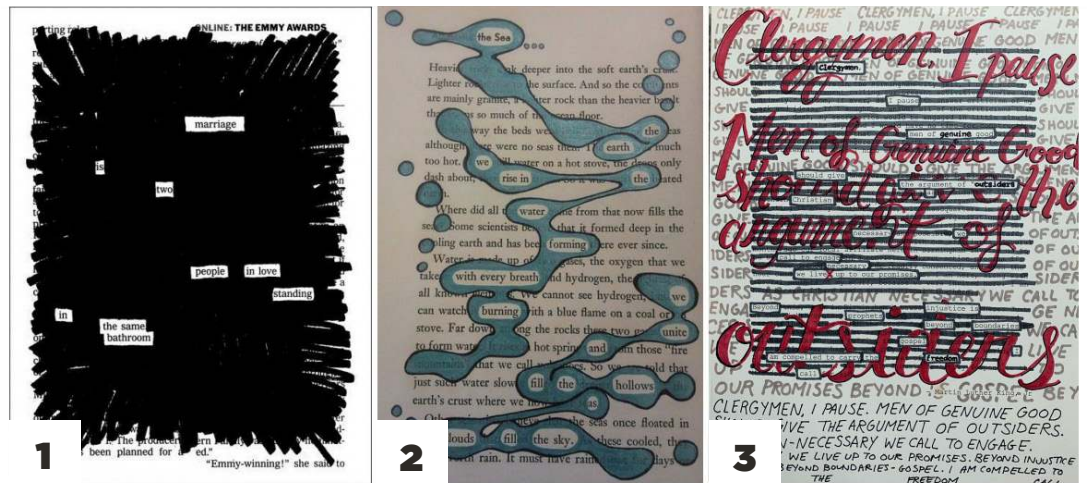
Blackout Poetry

We all know music is not the only way to raise your voice! Resistance comes in many creative forms. Many people prefer writing or drawing, and a fun, thoughtful form of these mediums is blackout poetry!

To make a blackout poem, you simply take an existing text (often newspaper articles or historical documents) and begin marking through words that you don't want in your poem and leaving behind words that you do. By doing this, you create your own new poem out of an entirely different original text. You could also read through the text and circle words that stick out to you. Next, re-read the poem and mark through the words you don't want in your poem and see if you can connect your circled words to create a new piece of art!

Sometimes people focus just on the words, and sometimes blackout poetry is also a form of visual art.

Here are some examples:



1 Created by Austin Kleon 2 Created by Cassandra van Gessel 3 Created by Shay Stewart for Atlanta History Center's MLK Day 2020

Use the links below to pick a historical document related to The Children's March or the larger Civil Rights Movement and make your own blackout poetry! Share your work on social media with the hashtag #makehistory and Atlanta History Center may display it on their Instagram or Facebook pages!

PLEASE NOTE The following are historical documents—they use different vocabulary than we use today. In 1963, the common term used in reference to Black people was “Negro.” Today we use “Black” or “African-American.”

**The Children's
March: Stories
from the
Birmingham
Children's
Crusade**

**Grade Levels
K-3**

Sample Texts

John F. Kennedy Jr.'s Civil Rights Address

Read it [here](#).

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"Excerpt from a Report to the American People on Civil Rights", 11 June 1963. Columbia Broadcasting System. Non-exclusive licensing rights held by the JFK Library Foundation.

Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have a Dream" speech

Read it [here](#). Black-out options on page 2.

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Martin Luther King Jr., 1963, Speech by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. At the "March on Washington," National Archives, Archives.gov. Reviewed on January 31, 2020.

Maya Angelou "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"

Read it [here](#).

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Poetry Out Loud, Poetryoutloud.com, Maya Angelou, "Caged Bird" from Shaker, Why Don't You Sing? Copyright © 1983 by Maya Angelou. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Source

The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou (Random House Inc., 1994)

Want to learn more? Check out

John Carroll's *Make Black Out Poetry: Turn These Pages into Poems*