



BLACKOUT PUMPKIN PATCH POETRY

Grade Level

4+

Length of Lesson

45 minutes

Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to create poetry using non-fictional texts.

Materials Needed

- Access to paper copies or online version of our AITC Pumpkin Ag Mag
- Black markers

Standards

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2;
RL.4.5; RI.4.7; W.4.5;
L.4.4; RL.5.6; RL.5.7;
RI.5.1; RL.6.4; CCRA.R.4;
CCRA.R.6; CCRA.R.7

Lesson Summary

This lesson is designed to introduce or strengthen students' skills of writing poetry. Blackout poetry is a great beginning to a poetry unit because it allows students to create a poem by removing words from an already written piece of non-fiction!

Suggested Sequence of Events:

1. Read through the AITC Pumpkin Ag Mag to learn more about pumpkins and familiarize students with the text they will be using!
2. Complete the activity following the procedures:
 - Make copies of the different sections of the Pumpkin Ag Mag and have students choose which section they would like to focus on.
 - Once students have chosen their section, have students read through it a few times to become more familiar with the material.
 - Students will begin to create a poem by "blacking out" any words and phrases that they do not want to use. The words that are left will become their poem. Note: For some students, it may be a good idea to have them start by using a pencil. Once they are sure of their choices, they can permanently black out the words with a marker.
 - Once students have chosen their words, they should start creating their poem on a separate piece of paper or on a computer. Depending on your students, you may want to create different parameters. Typically for blackout poems, students must use the words in order as they were originally written. Feel free to change this "rule" if necessary. You can also consider allowing students to change the form of words, such as allowing them to change verb tenses or making singular nouns into plural nouns. You can also encourage students to add any punctuation they feel necessary for their poem.
 - Once they're happy with their poem, students can use some of the words from their poem to create a meaningful title.
4. Whole class discussion and reflection of activity. Here are some discussion starters: What is the topic or focus of your poem? What did you learn about pumpkins and farming through this activity? How did your poem change from the original text? What did you find challenging about this activity?

TEACHER RESOURCES

Extension Ideas:

- Have students read their poems out loud to the class.
- Have students who chose the same section compare their poems.
- After students have blacked out the text to form their poem, challenge them to do another, and this time, create an image that relates to their poem.
- Use our “Ag Mag Scavenger Hunt” lesson to help your students analyze the text even further.
- Have students create other blackout poems using their choice of any of our [AITC Ag Mag](#) topics.
- Read a selection of other poems about pumpkins. Try these to start with:
 - “The Pumpkins in the Corn” by Sir Charles George Douglas Roberts
 - “The Pumpkin” by John Greenleaf Whittier
 - “When the Frost is on the Punkin” by James Whitcomb Riley
 - “The Hustling Pumpkin Vine” by Uncle Mose
 - “Pumpkin is Queen” by Mrs. May C. Hanks
 - “Jack-O-Lantern” by John B. Tabb
- Find various recipes that use pumpkin products. Dig deeper and compare pumpkin dishes from around the world.
- Complete IAITC’s “Ode to a Vegetable” lesson and have students write “odes” to other fruits and vegetables.
- Go to agintheclassroom.org to contact your County Ag Literacy Coordinator for free classroom sets of our Ag Mags!

TEACHER RESOURCES

Blackout Poem Example:

- *Here is the original text from a section of the Pumpkin Ag Mag:*

How are Pumpkins Pollinated?

Before a pumpkin can begin to grow inside the female flower, a grain of pollen from the male flower must land on the stigma at the top of the pistil. This is called pollination. Pollination can happen in different ways. Wind can blow pollen from flower to flower. Insects help pollinate pumpkins, too. As they search for food, pollen rubs onto their legs and bodies. As these insects visit other flowers, the pollen is rubbed off without them even knowing it.

One of the most important insects for pumpkin pollination is the squash bee. Unlike honeybees, which live aboveground in huge colonies, squash bees live solitary lives in underground nests. They are also faster fliers and hairier than honeybees. These traits make them much more effective pollinators for pumpkins. Pumpkin farmers do many things to help pollinators thrive on their farms.

- *And here is a blackout poem created from this section. Words were kept in the same order. The author chose where to place the line and stanza breaks and added punctuation throughout the poem.*

Before a Pumpkin Can Grow

Insects help
pollinate pumpkins;
Pollen RUBS
onto
legs
and
bodies.

Visit flowers:
pollen is rubbed off
without knowing!

Squash Bees = important insect
pumpkin pollination

Solitary lives in
ground nests
(under)

F A S T E R !
and
H A I R I E R ! !
than
honeybees

More effective
pollinators—

Help pollinators
THRIVE on farms