Tecumseh: Blackout Poem

Blackout poems can be created using the pages of old books or even articles cut from the newspaper. Using the pages of an existing text, blackout poets isolate then piece together single words or short phrases from these texts to create lyrical masterpieces. You will use the “Quotes by Tecumseh” handout to create your blackout poem.

**DIRECTIONS:**

**Step 1:** Scan the handout of Tecumseh quotes before reading it completely. Keep an eye out for an anchor word as you scan. An anchor word is one word on the page that stands out to you because it is packed and loaded with meaning and significance.

**Step 2:** Now read the page of quotes in its entirety. Use a pencil to lightly circle any words that connect to the anchor word and resonate with you. Resonant words might be expressive or evocative, but for whatever reason, these are the words on the page that stick with you. Avoid circling more than three words in a row.

**Step 3:** List all of the circled words on a separate lined piece of paper. List the words in the order that they appear on the page of text from top to bottom, left to right. The words you use for the final poem will remain in this order so it doesn’t confuse the reader.

**Step 4:** Select words, without changing their order on the list, and piece them together to create the lines of a poem. You can eliminate parts of words, especially any endings, if it helps to keep the meaning of the poem clear. Try different possibilities for your poem before selecting the lines for your final poem. If you are stuck during this step, return back to the original page of quotes. The right word you are searching for could be there waiting for you.

**Step 5:** Return to the page of Tecumseh quotes and circle only the words you selected for the final poem. Remember to also erase the circles around any words you will not be using.

**Step 6:** Add an illustration or design to the page of quotes that connects to your poem. Be very careful not to draw over the circled words you selected for your final poem!

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Use black pen or black marker.
2. Illustration or design must be colored, or in black pen or black marker. You will lose points if done in pencil.
3. 10 points possible.
Blackout Poem Examples
Quotes by Tecumseh

From my tribe I take nothing, I am the maker of my own fortune.

When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life, for your strength. Give thanks for your food and for the jot of living. If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies in yourself.

When the legends die, the dreams end; there is no more greatness.

So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. Love your life, perfect your life, beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and its Purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you over the great divide.

When your time comes to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and dies like a hero going home.

No tribe has the right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers.... Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the great sea, as well as the earth? Didn't the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children? The way, the only way to stop this evil is for the red man to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was first, and should be now, for it was never divided. We gave them forest-clad mountains and valleys full of game, and in return what did they give our warriors and our women? Rum, trinkets, and a grave.

Where today are the Pequot? Where are the Narragansett, the Mohican, the Pokanoket, and many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and the oppression of the White Man, as snow before a summer sun. Will we let ourselves be destroyed in our turn without a struggle, give up our homes, our country bequeathed to us by the Great Spirit, the graves of our dead and everything that is dear and sacred to us? I know you will cry with me, 'Never!Never!'

I am Shawnee! I am a warrior! My forefathers were warriors. From them I took only my birth into this world. From my tribe I take nothing. I am the maker of my own destiny! And of that I might make the destiny of my red people, of our nation, as great as I conceive to in my mind, when I think of Weshemoneto, who rules this universe!