

Concrete Poetry

September 25, 2019

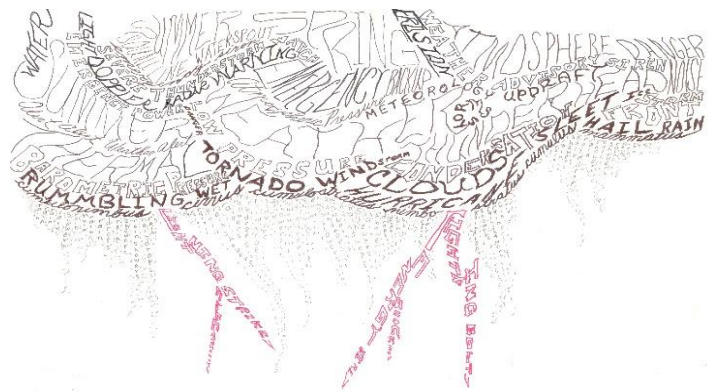
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Science can be a hard sell to an administrator. They are mostly concerned about the tested subjects of literacy and math. Teachers also have concerns that their own evaluations will be reflected in their students' test scores for those subjects. This simple cross-curricular activity can bridge the gap.

Concrete poetry takes a concept, idea or subject that we can conceivably draw and incorporates characteristic words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs or phrases) into an art activity. It uses science vocabulary (or from any other curriculum piece) while engaging the learner in a creative activity that can be started during observation time and completed back at school or home. Here are potential steps to create one:

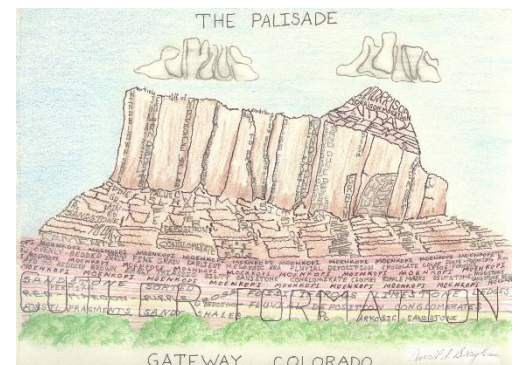
- Determine a subject
- Generate a list of characteristics for that subject
- Lightly draw a representation of that subject
- Use the list of characteristics to fill in the representation – exaggeration of the letters is valuable
- Refine and colorize as needed – maybe even back at school or home

The following are some examples of ones I have done:



The first one I did was conceived during education course work in Thailand where I was studying tides. I stylized the words I chose to make the simple drawing of a series of waves. Words included animals, tide causes, components of the beach and location among other things. A second example of this idea is a thunderstorm. I used thickness and density of the words to create a shading effect and color (lightning bolts) to highlight difference.

Another possibility is taking a photo and re-imagining it with words. The Palisade (right) incorporated the names of geologic formations along with their identifying characteristics. This was started during an observation of about 30 minutes but completed over the next couple of days adding color and the identifying characteristics of the formations.



Whatever comes out, this creative activity is meant to use appropriate vocabulary in an artistic way to solidify concepts in our minds. I used mostly nouns but verbs, adjectives, adverbs and short phrases are useful components as well. Feel free to let students modify this activity. After all, I started this activity without knowledge that concrete poetry was an actual thing!