



In My Own Words

Description & Book: *Ahgottahandleonit*, by Donovan Mixon

Poetry programs can be done as a one-time event or as a series. With little to no cost and very little prep, this type of program can be done relatively easily in any library or school.

Teens can use different forms of poetry to express anything they have in mind. Using the materials used below, teens will have an opportunity to create any of the following poetry styles: Concrete, Freestyle/Free Verse, Poetry Scramble/Collage, Book Page Poetry, Exquisite Corpse Poetry, Acrostic Poetry, or an oral recitation of a freestyle rap/poem.

Materials:

- Blank sheets of paper
- Discarded books and magazines
- Scissors
- Black or dark colored marker
- Text heavy computer printouts

Estimated Cost: \$0 - \$25

Prep time: 5-30 Minutes

Instructions:

Teens should be allowed to do the poetry style that they most feel comfortable with. Remind teens that poetry can be deep, painful, and even playful, but it can never be used to inflict harm towards others. Teens should be respectful of everyone's contributions.

- **Concrete poetry:** In which the meaning or effect is conveyed partly or wholly by visual means. For example, if the poem is questioning something, the words of the poem can flow in the shape of a question mark.
- **Freestyle / Free verse:** Teens can write anything they want. This style is free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm and does not rhyme with fixed forms.
- **Poetry Exchange:** Teens bring in their favorite poems and exchange them with other teens
- **Poetry Scramble / Collage:** The facilitator would print out a poem and cut it out one line or word at a time. Teens would have to put the poem back together in their own creative way.
- **Book Page Poetry:** Use the pages of old books, newspapers, magazines, or any text heavy sheet printed off of the internet and teens will black out any text they don't want to use and leave visible only the words they wish to use. The visible remaining words would be their poem.
- **Exquisite Corpse Poetry:** Fold up a sheet of paper so that only one line can show at a time. Let each teen only see the line before and add a line to it, then pass it on to the next teen to add their line. When all teens have had a chance to add their lines, read the entire creation aloud.

- **Acrostic Poetry:** where certain letters in each line spell out a word or phrase. Typically, the first letters of each line are used to spell the message, but they can appear anywhere.
- **Oral recitation** of a freestyle rap/poem

Additional Resources:

Teachers and librarians can:

- try to work together by collaborating with each other to reinforce what the teens are doing in school.
- use novels in verse as a tie in to their programs.
- use online resources to help shape their program to best suit their needs.

Learning Objective:

Poetry can help teens:

- improve their language skills and reading comprehension.
- grow emotionally, intellectually, and cathartically.
- have a safe way to explore their feelings and work through their issues.
- help enforce a feeling of empathy

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