

Humuments

Writing the Poem

First stage: You will need original pages or photocopies from any text of your choice. Humuments can be made from any written source: novel, magazine, advertisement, instruction manual and so on. If possible, get hold of any pulp fiction or 'bad' writing as the fun of this exercise is often to make good, creative writing come out of an otherwise boring or dull text.

Second stage: The words you choose must be selected in the order that they are written on the page. This is one of the key rules! The discipline of this exercise, unlike with found poetry, is that you cannot rearrange or repeat words and/or phrases you have selected (unless they are repeated in the original text). You can, however, cut off letters from one word to make another if this is possible.

Using a pencil, begin to underline individual words and/or short phrases from the text you have. It is important that you do not select too much continuous writing from your text as this will make your writing too similar to the original. Unlike the writing of found poetry, you will be trying to create individual poetic lines.

The selection of words you choose must make *grammatical* sense (so you will probably need **connectives** like *and, with, this, is* and so on), but it does not have to make literal sense.

Third stage: Once happy with your selected words, you now need to encase them in a speech bubble, either a continuous one or more than one if making separate sentences/speakers. Try to find clear routes through the text so that your speech bubble follows the correct, grammatical order of your words (look at the examples you are given). Do this in pencil, making the outline give as much space as possible to the encased words. This can then be traced in a thicker ink.

Final stage: Once you have your selected words in the speech bubble, you need to 'remove' the rest of the remaining text. You can do this by simply colouring over the remaining words with a variety of colours. Alternatively, you can design patterns or an illustration which in some way reflect the meaning of your new text and draw/paint this over the remaining text (again, look at the examples you are given).

Your humument can stand on its own, or you can produce a series of related texts by using various pages from the same original resource. Perhaps you'd like to tackle a whole novel like Tom Phillips?!