

2026 WILD WORDS: Poetry

Poems don't have to rhyme or even make sense. Sometimes poems tell a story, but other times they simply make you FEEL a certain way—a combination of words that makes you feel happy, sad, angry, curious, or filled with joy. You can think about making a poem like making a painting, where the words are your different colors of paint. Try using the writing prompts below to write some poems of your own. Even if you think you don't like poetry, give it a shot! You've got an important story to tell & we would love to hear about it.

- 1** While listening to music you love or hate, write down what you hear or "see" from the song. Try to avoid cliché or overused phrases, and capture concrete images & expressions.
- 2** Find a photo from a long time ago, or one on your phone. Write a poem about what you see. Google "Photograph from September 11" by Wisława Szymborska for an example where the author focuses on the photo and its significance.
- 3** Use the point-of-view of an inanimate object or an animal (real or mythical). Google "Self-Portrait as a Door" by Donika Kelly to see an example.
- 4** Write a poem addressed to a future version of yourself. You can even address the letter to yourself (poems written like a letter are called epistolary poems). Google "Someday I'll Love Ocean Vuong" by Ocean Vuong for an example.
- 5** Make an erasure poem, where you erase words from existing text and the words that stay make up the poem. Source texts could be an online article or a page from an old book/magazine. Include a citation for your source text to give credit to the original author.
- 6** Use repetition of a certain word or phrase to write a list poem. The word or phrase might relate to a theme you want to write about. For example, a poem about secrets might repeat the phrase "I never told anybody _____. " Google "Light Home" by Kwame Dawes for an example.

- Prompts modified from Audrey Kim's blog post at theadroitjournal.org

Wild Words: Adirondack Teen Writing Anthology is a new publication of the Adirondack Center for Writing, created to give teens a place to publish their original creative writing.

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Learn more: www.adirondackcenterforwriting.org/wildwords

