VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION GUIDE
Workshop: *Erasure Poetry (Analog)*
Teaching Artist: Eric Elshtain

Learn about erasure poetry and the different techniques that can be used to create an erasure poem. You will also learn about poets who use these techniques in their art, and will draw inspiration from them to create your own erasure poetry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

OBJECTIVES:

You will learn:

• The definition of erasure poetry, and how you can create your own

• Different techniques and styles of erasure poetry

• How erasure can become social and political commentary

• About several different poets and how they incorporate erasure poetry techniques

MATERIALS:

• a text source (page from a newspaper, magazine, old book, or printed)

• a Sharpie, pencil, colored pencil, or paint

• a ballpoint pen

• printer

• a soft surface to work on (ex. a stack of looseleaf paper)

• glue or tape

DIFFERENTIATED LEARNING
Methods

Instruction is provided in text and video formats, available in both Spanish and English.

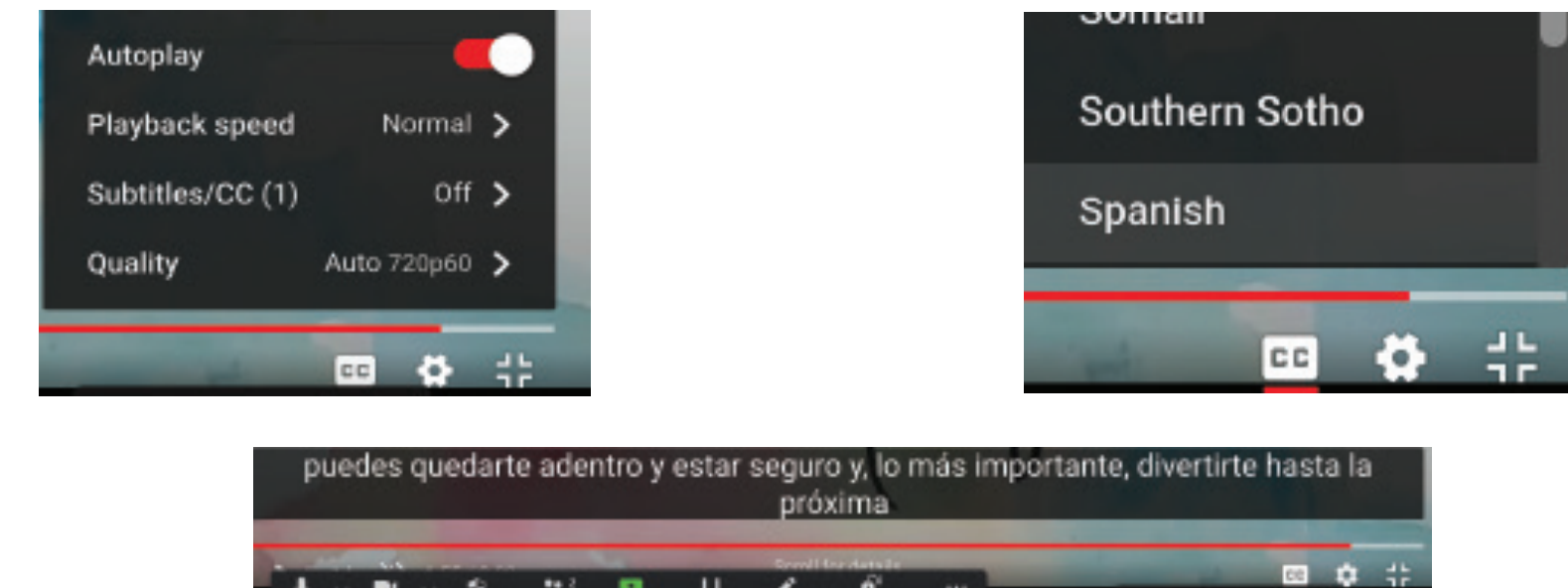You may also work by printing this art-making guide.

YouTube can automatically create closed captions.

Click the [CC] button near the lower right corner of the viewer frame.
Please note: captions are generated by algorithms, so their quality may vary.

A variety of language subtitles are available for each video.

• **If you are visually impaired, you can make choices orally to a friend or family member. The result can be recorded rather than written down.** Additionally, the source text can be an excerpt from an audiobook; with repeated listenings, your friend or family member can assist you in recording your choices. You can "erase" the text by not reading it out loud.

BACKGROUND/RESOURCES

You will be introduced to these artists, art histories, movements and/or concepts:

Erasure poetry: a form of found poetry, wherein a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text, creating a wholly new work from what remains

Blackout poetry: a form of erasure poetry in which the poet completely blacks out the unwanted text, leaving it completely invisible to the reader

INSTRUCTION:

Today's Project:
Erasure Poetry
(Part 1 - Analog)

Today, we will work together to compose a short poem. You will be able to do it, even if you have never written a poem before.

Erasure Poetry:

a form of found poetry, wherein a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text, creating a wholly new work from what remains.

Today, I want to show you a technique called **erasure poetry**. Erasure poetry is a form of found poetry, wherein a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text.

Erasure Poetry:

a form of found poetry, wherein a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text, creating a wholly new work from what remains.

This creates a wholly new work from what remains.

Erasure Poetry may be used...

as a means of collabortion, creating a new text from an old one; and thereby starting a dialog between the two.

Erasure poetry may be used as a means of collaboration, creating a new text from an old one and thereby starting a dialogue between the two.

Erasure Poetry may be used...

as a means of controntation, a challenge to a pre-existing text.

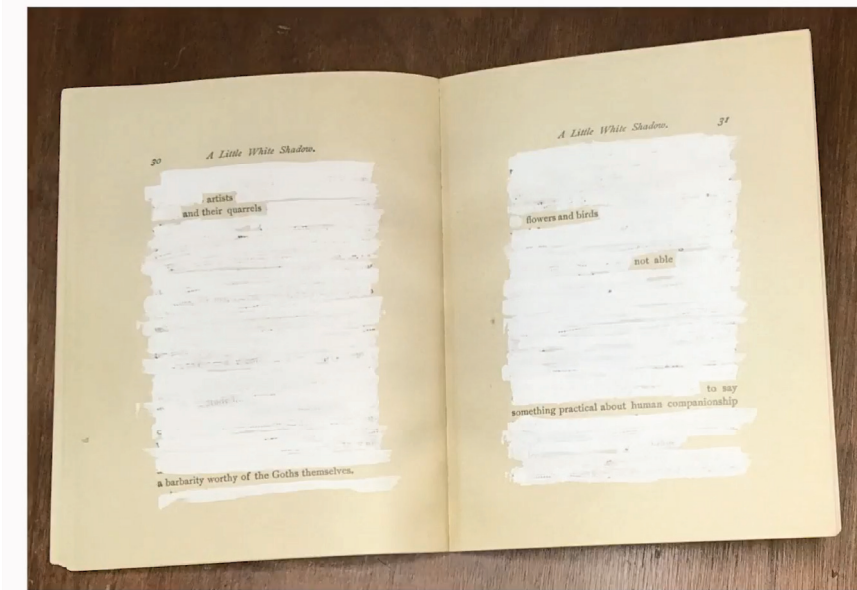It may also be used as a means of confrontation— a challenge to a pre-existing text.
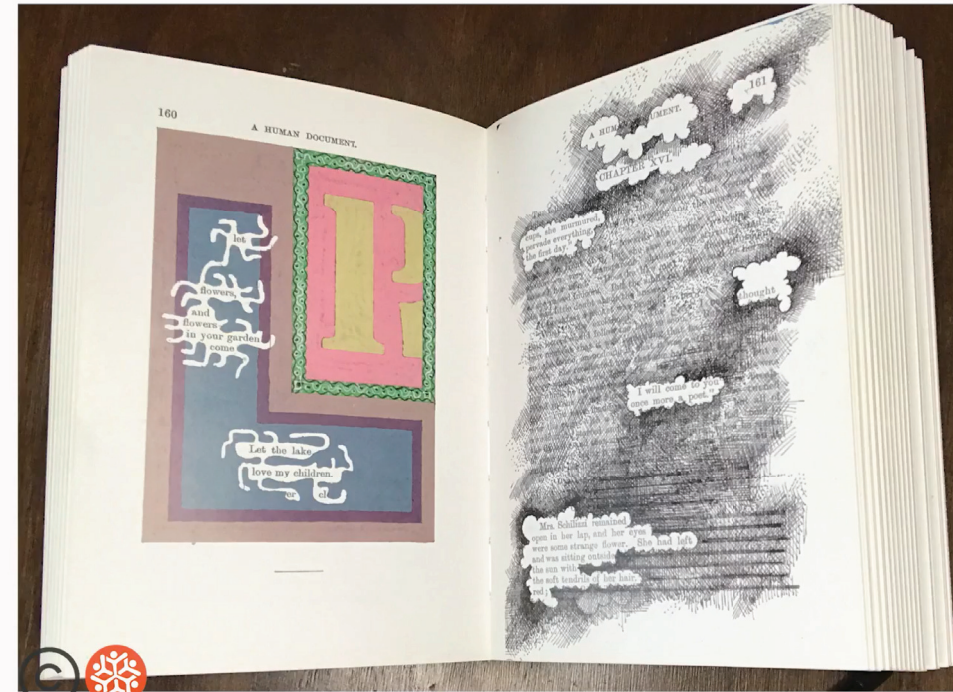

Z'na

Rainbow Words

Poetry, 2017

Erasure can take many different forms, and can work on many different scales. Some erasure poems are just a single page, taken from a book, a newspaper, or a magazine.

INSTRUCTION CONTINUED:

Mary Ruefle

A Little White Shadow (excerpt)

Poetry, 2006

Some poets have taken short books, old books that they've found in used bookstores. And they've covered over each page to create a whole new collection of poems.

Tom Phillips

A Humument (excerpt)

Poetry, 2005

Some have taken large novels that they've found, and have painted over every page with intricate illustrations and drawings, and creating their own story from the story that existed, or exists, within that source text.

Part 1:

Blackout technique

The simplest form of erasure poetry is **blackout poetry,** where you use a black marker to block out the text that you don't want people to be able to read.
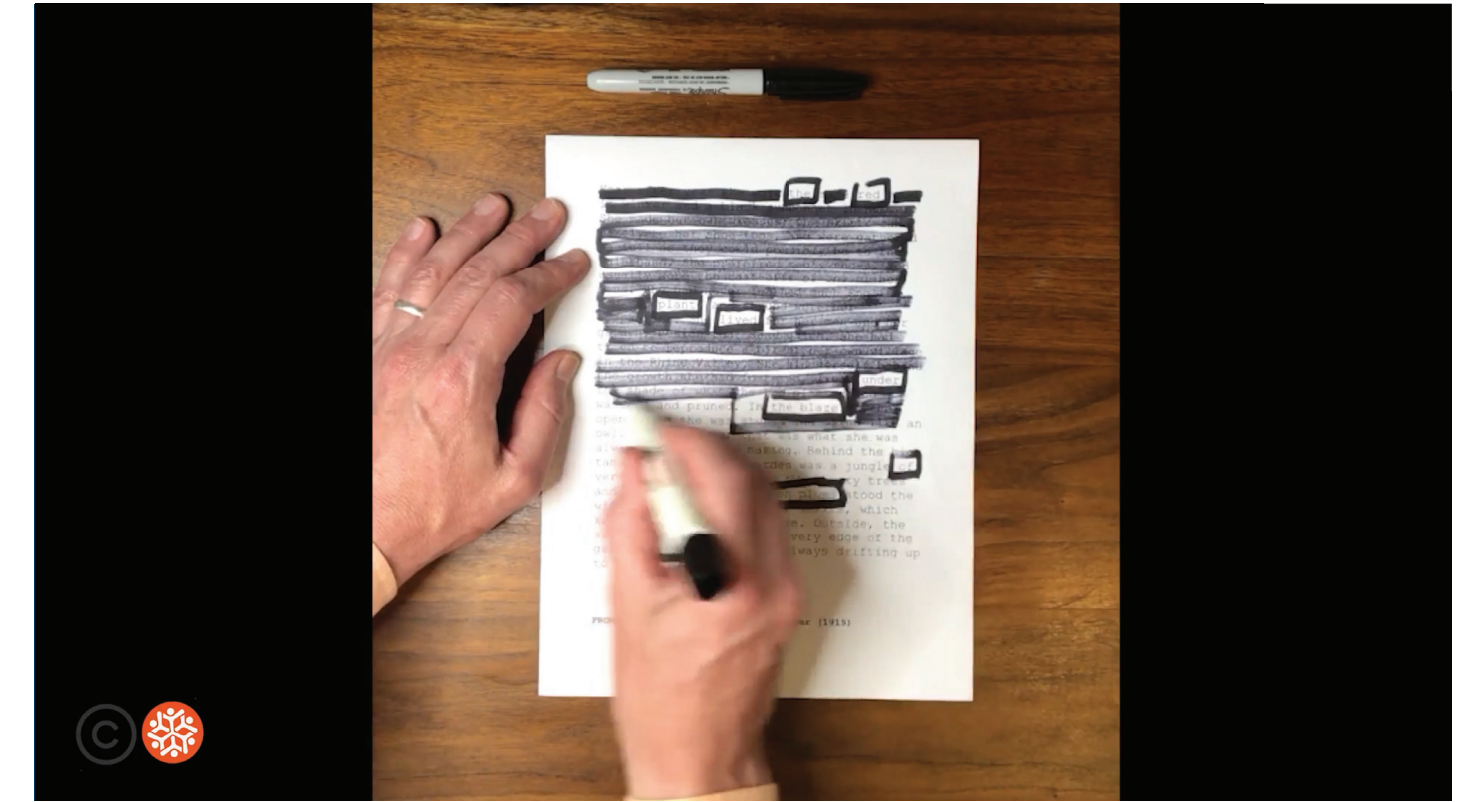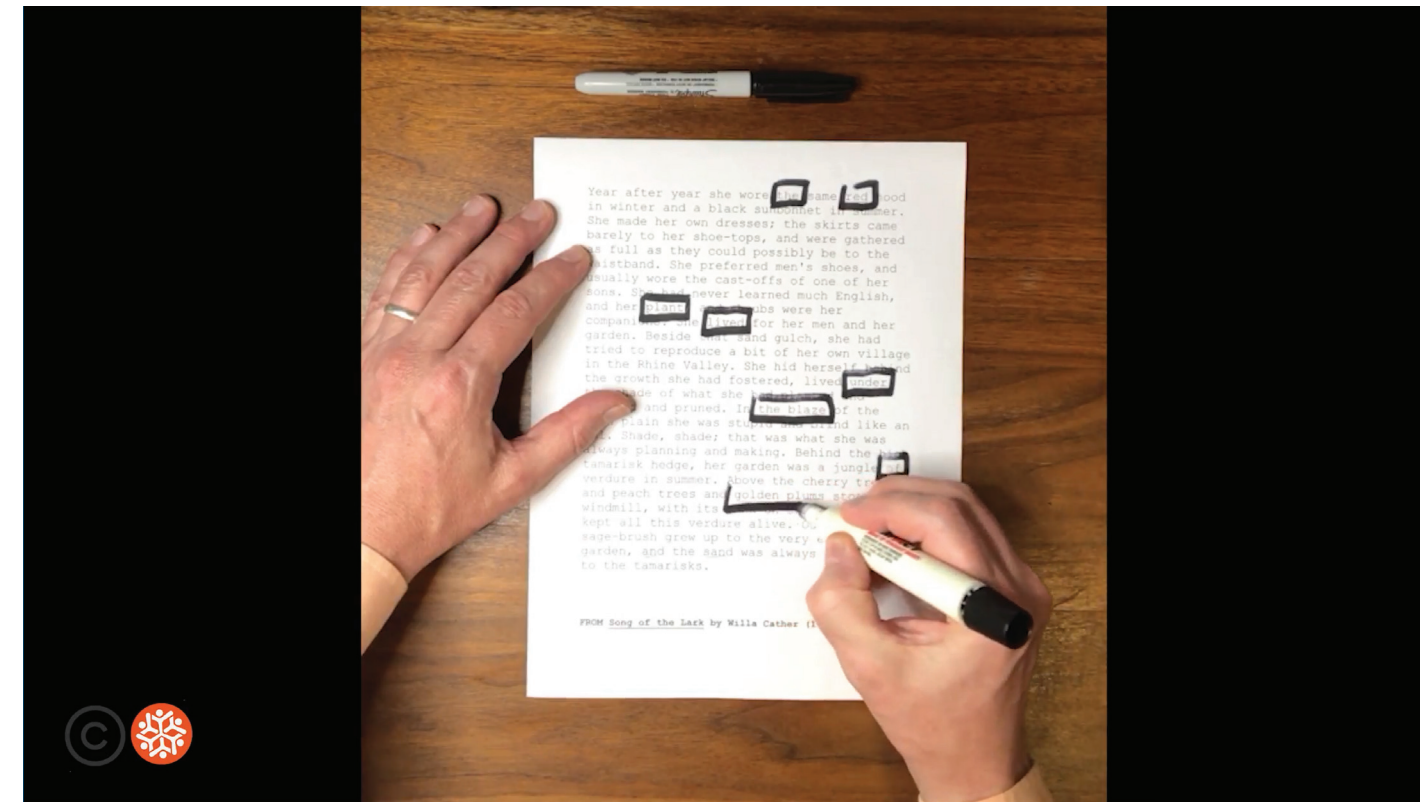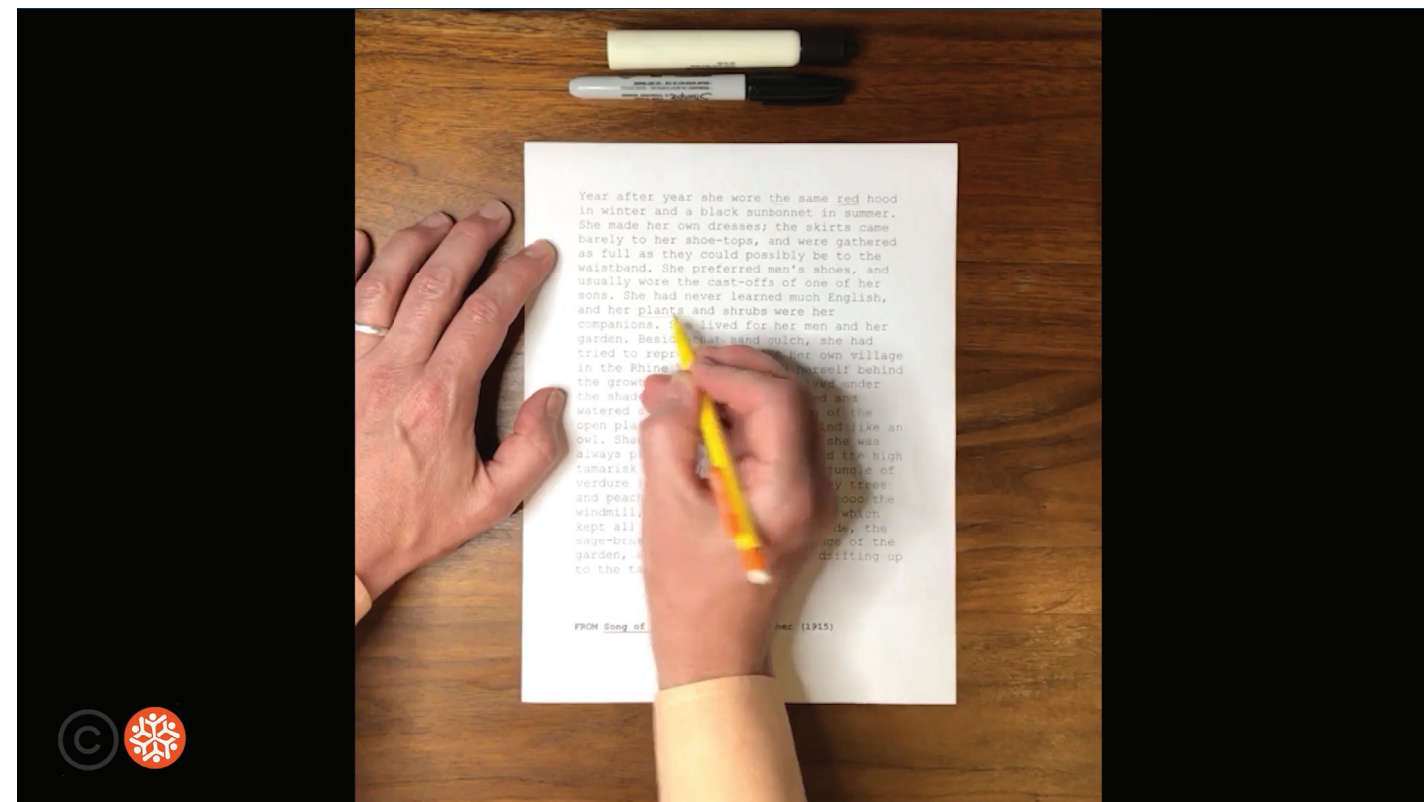
Begin making your initial choices with a pencil. Outline any interesting words or phrases that speak to you. These are the words and phrases that will be visible to your reader.

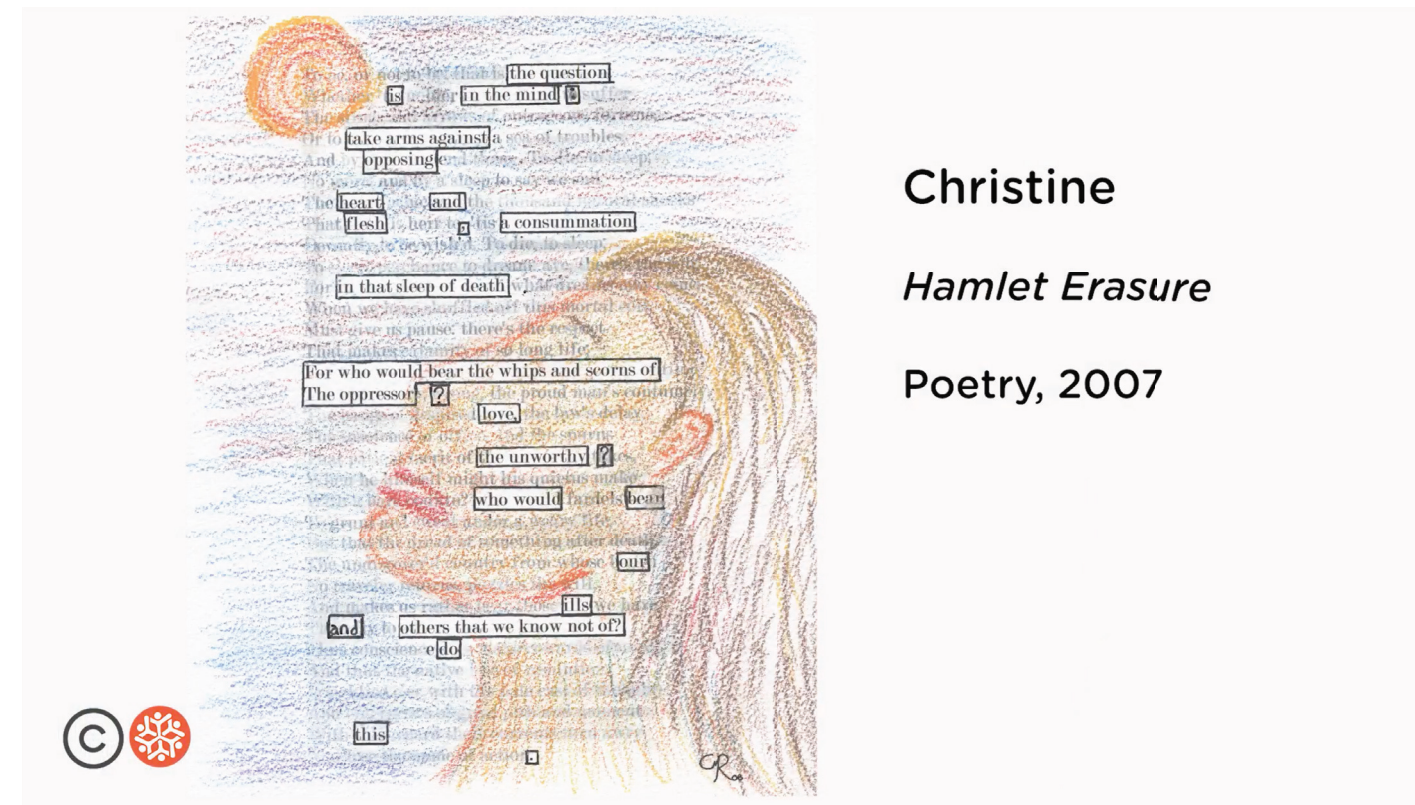With a Sharpie or other black marker, begin to outline the words you've marker out with your pencil.

Now, with the same black marker, start crossing out sections that you do not want visible in your erasure.
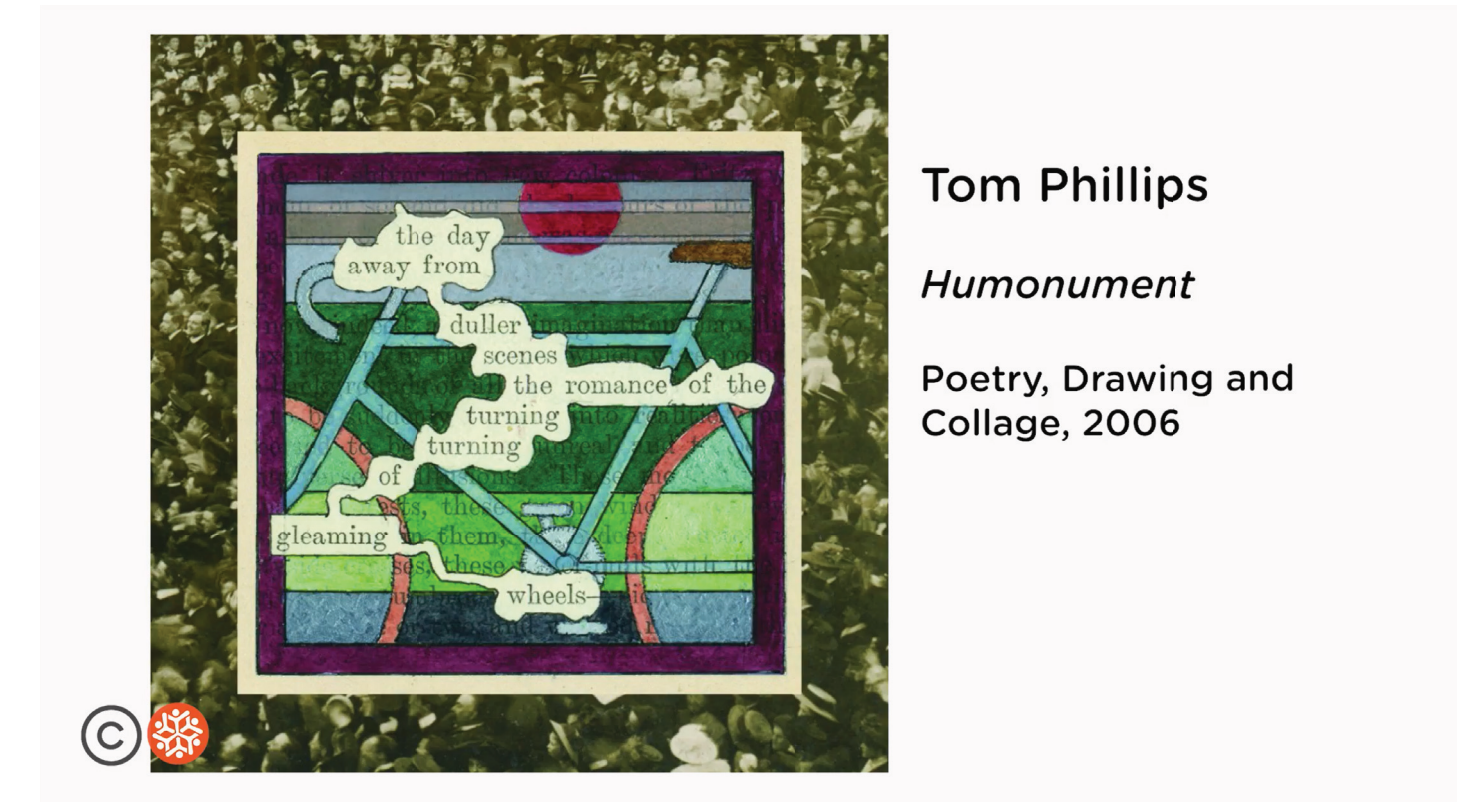
INSTRUCTION CONTINUED:

Congratulations! Your blackout erasure poetry is complete.

Christine

Hamlet Erasure

Poetry, 2007

Some poets will use illustrations to cover portions of their source texts.

**Tom Phillips**

Humonument

Poetry, Drawing and Collage, 2006

Poet and artist Tom Phillips uses pencil drawings, pen drawings, paints, and even collage to cover his source texts for his erasure poems.

If you want to try the draw or paint over technique, pause the video now.
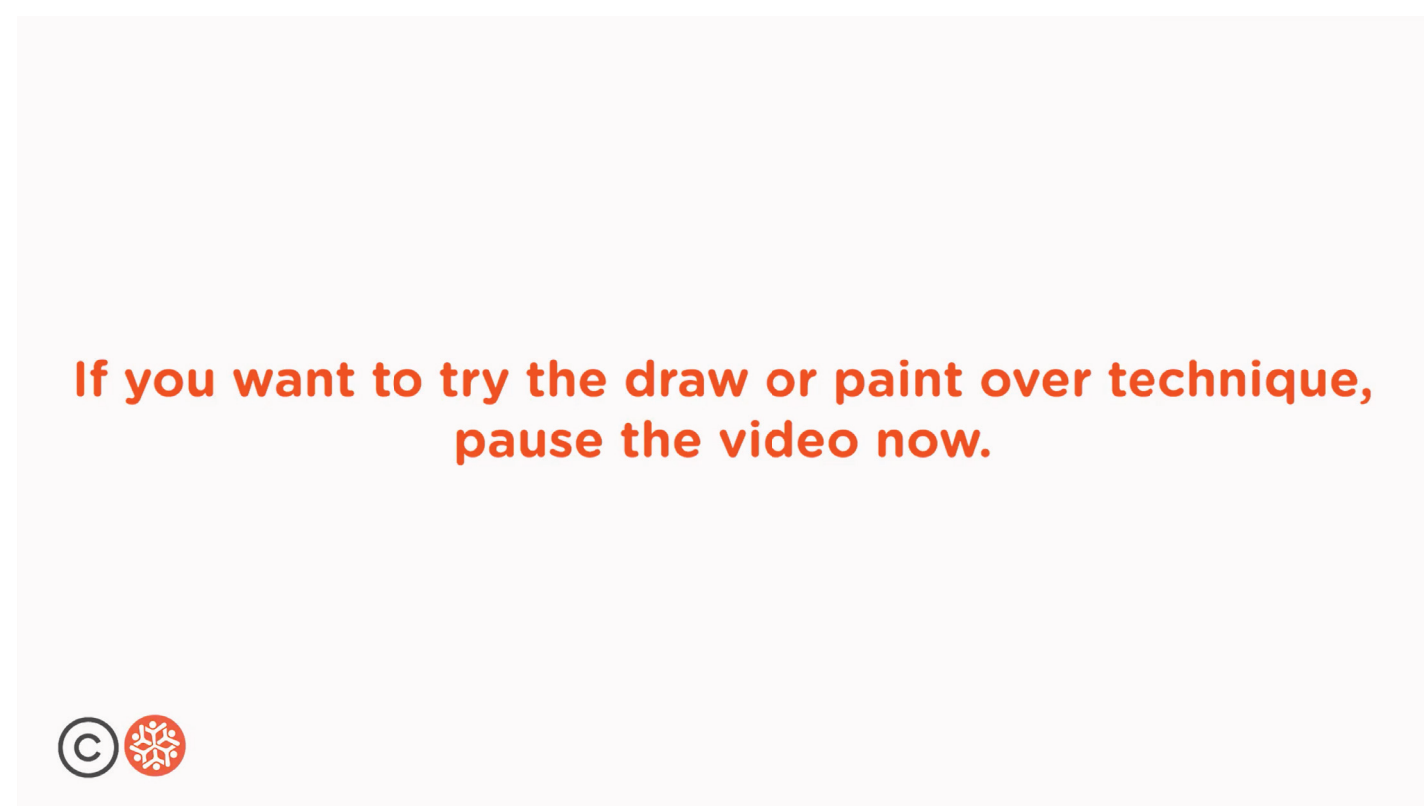
If you'd like to try the draw or paint-over technique, you may do so now (or any time you feel inspired to do so!)

Part 3:
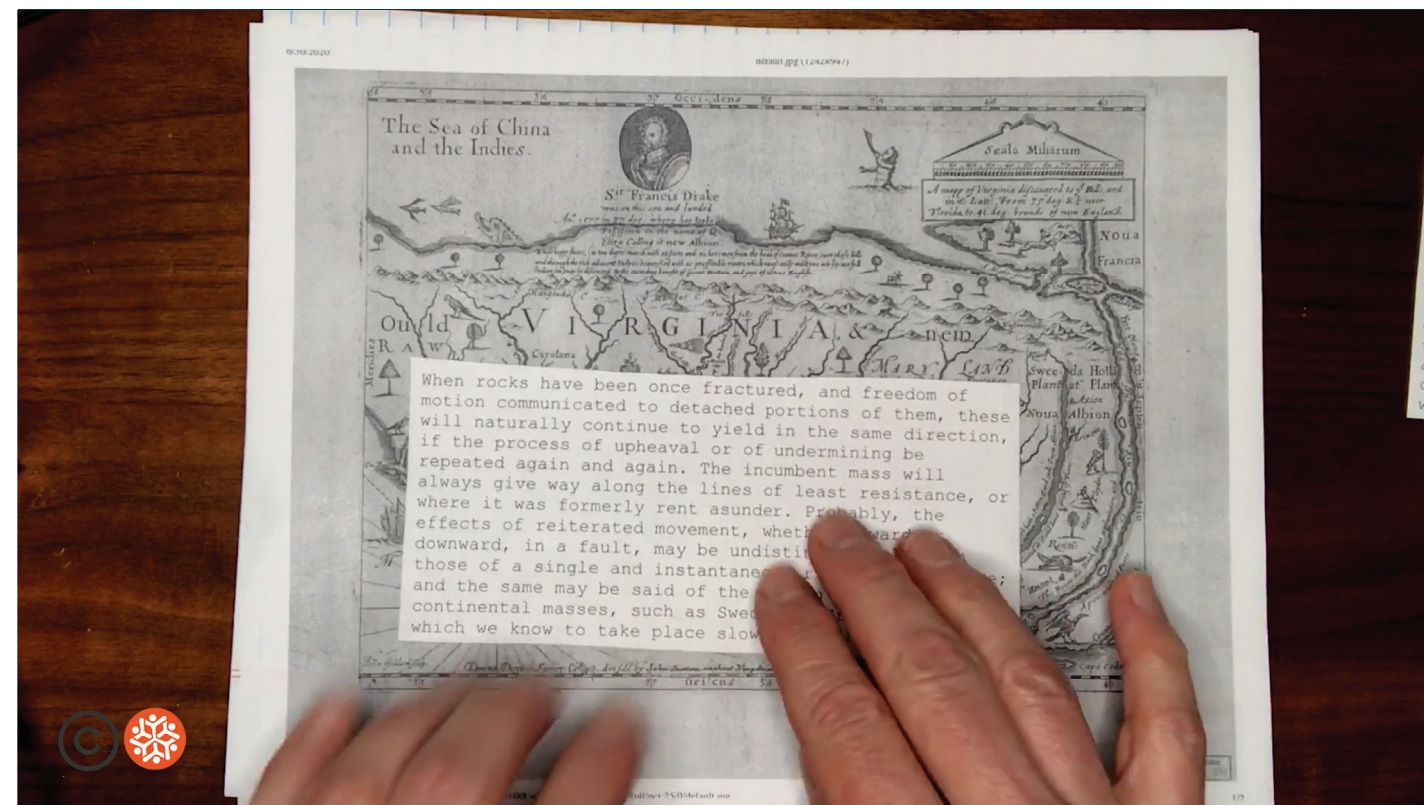
Trace and cut technique

Next, I'll show you a technique that involves physically placing an image over a piece of text.
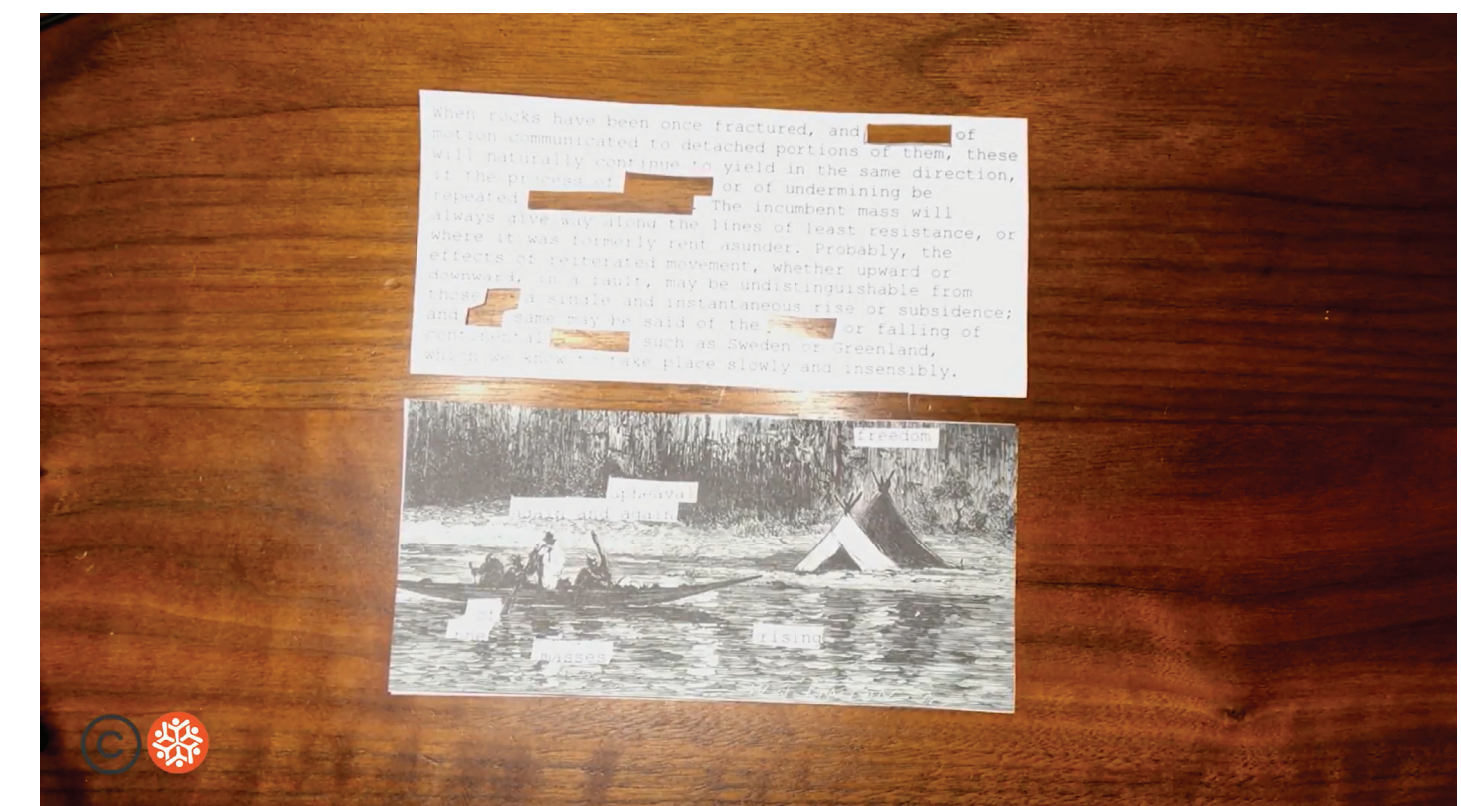
I will show you how to complete this technique without any cutting instruments. Begin to gather your materials.

INSTRUCTION CONTINUED:

Here, I've gathered two copies of my paragraph. I've also printed out an image from the Internet that's free to use.


This is a paragraph from a book titled **Principles of Geology**, published in 1830 by Lyell. In my initial example, I created it into a poem about the force of freedom by using an image of what appears to be a group of Indigenous Americans returning to their homes.
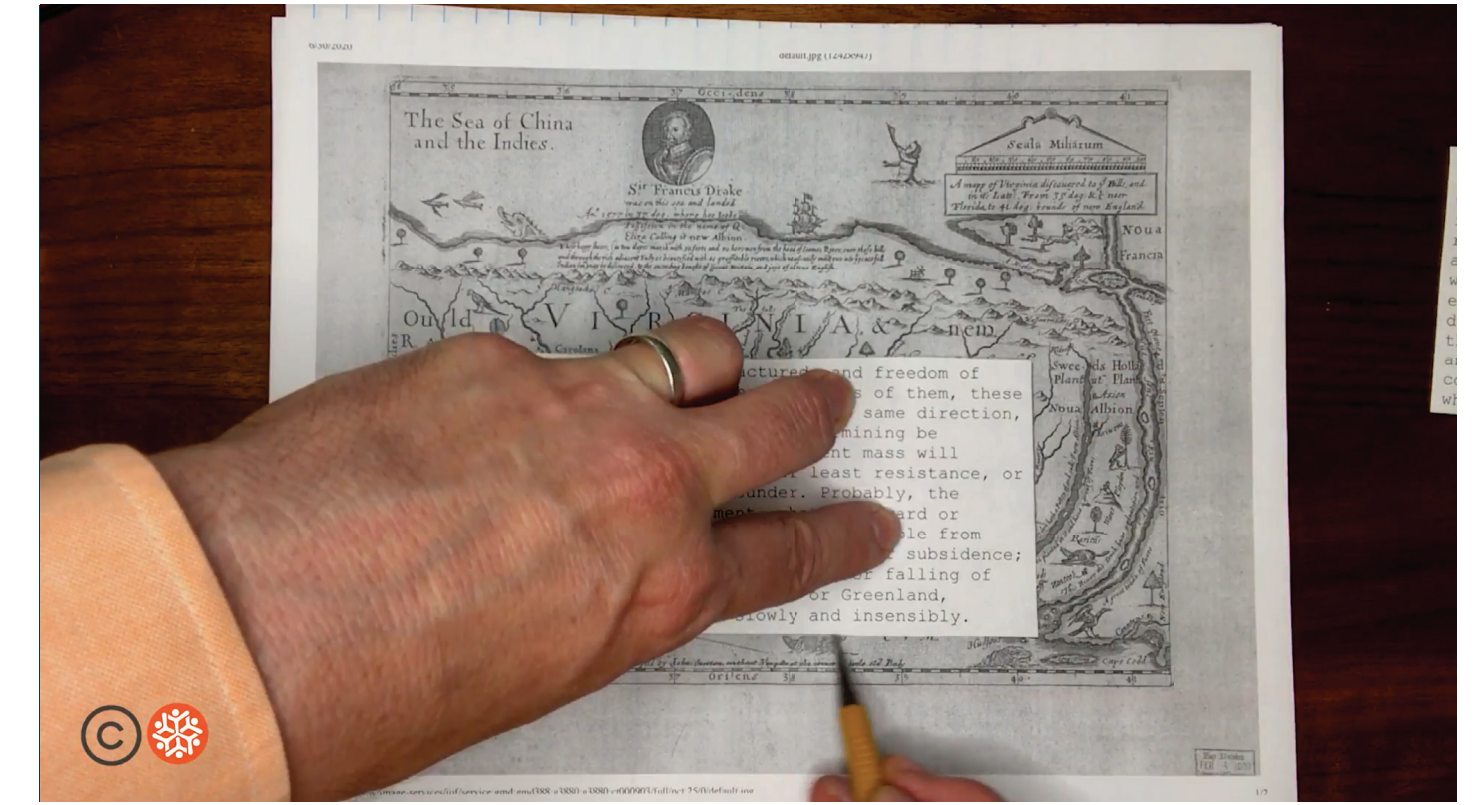

Choose a portion of your image and place your paragraph on top of it. Trace around your paragraph with a pencil.
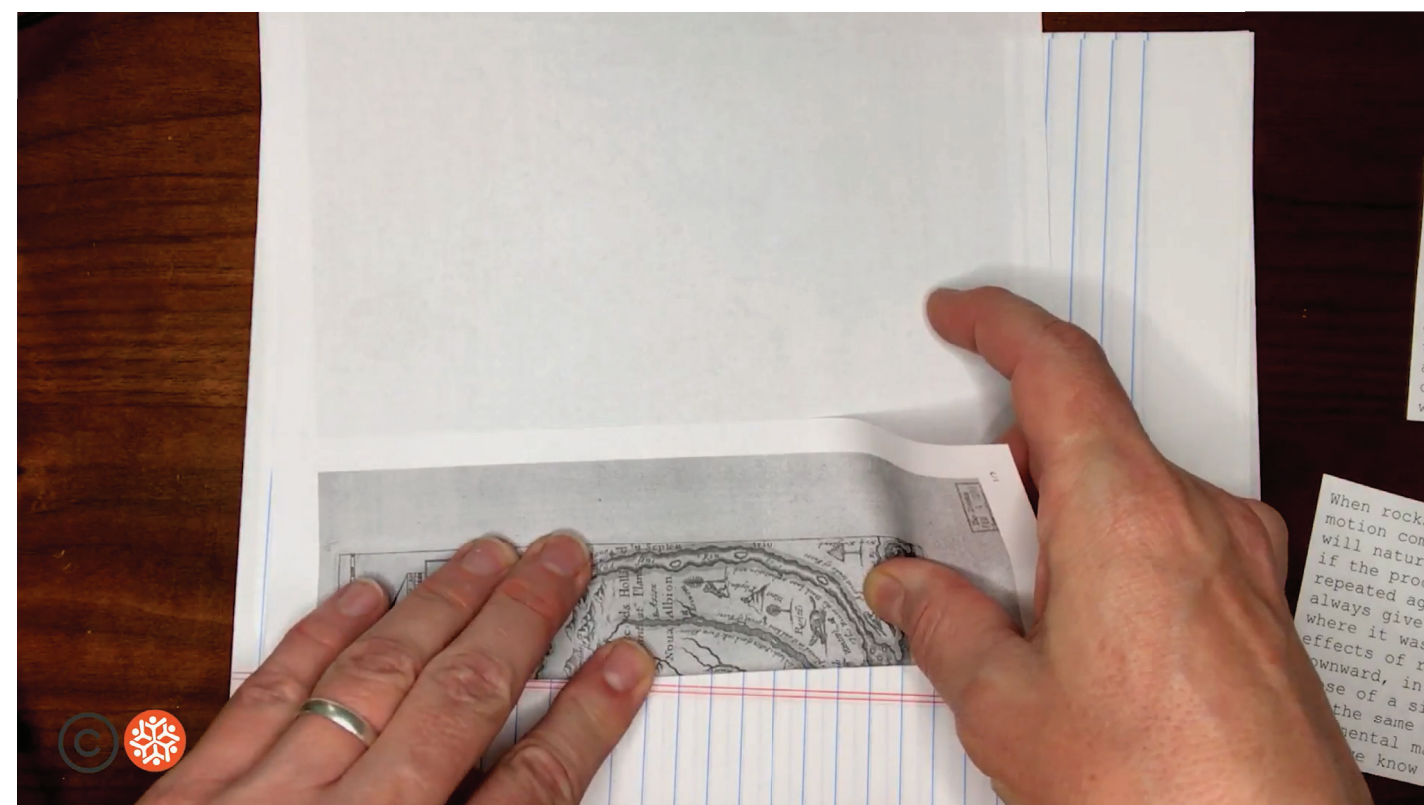
Fold your paper along the lines you have drawn, making sure to crease it well. You may use your fingernail to strengthen your crease.
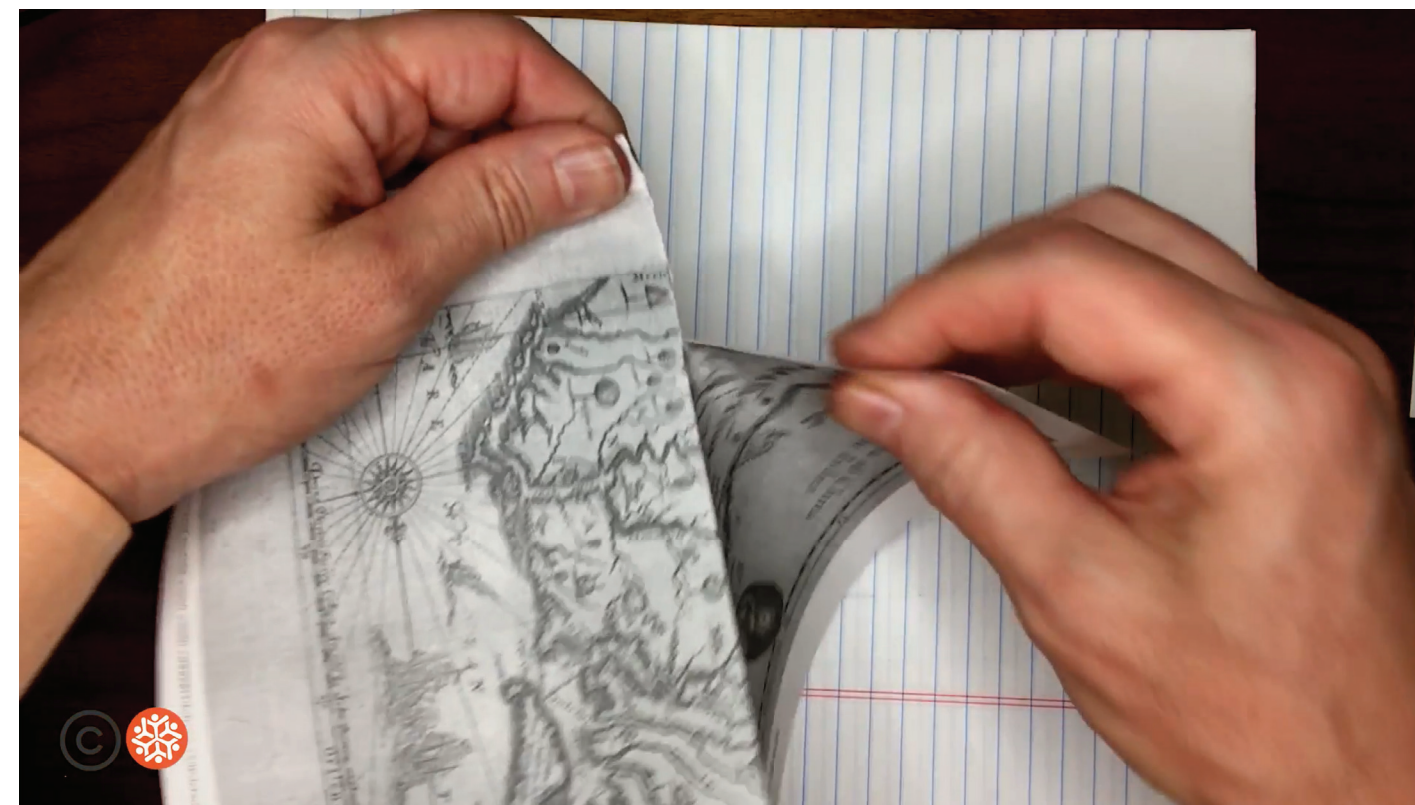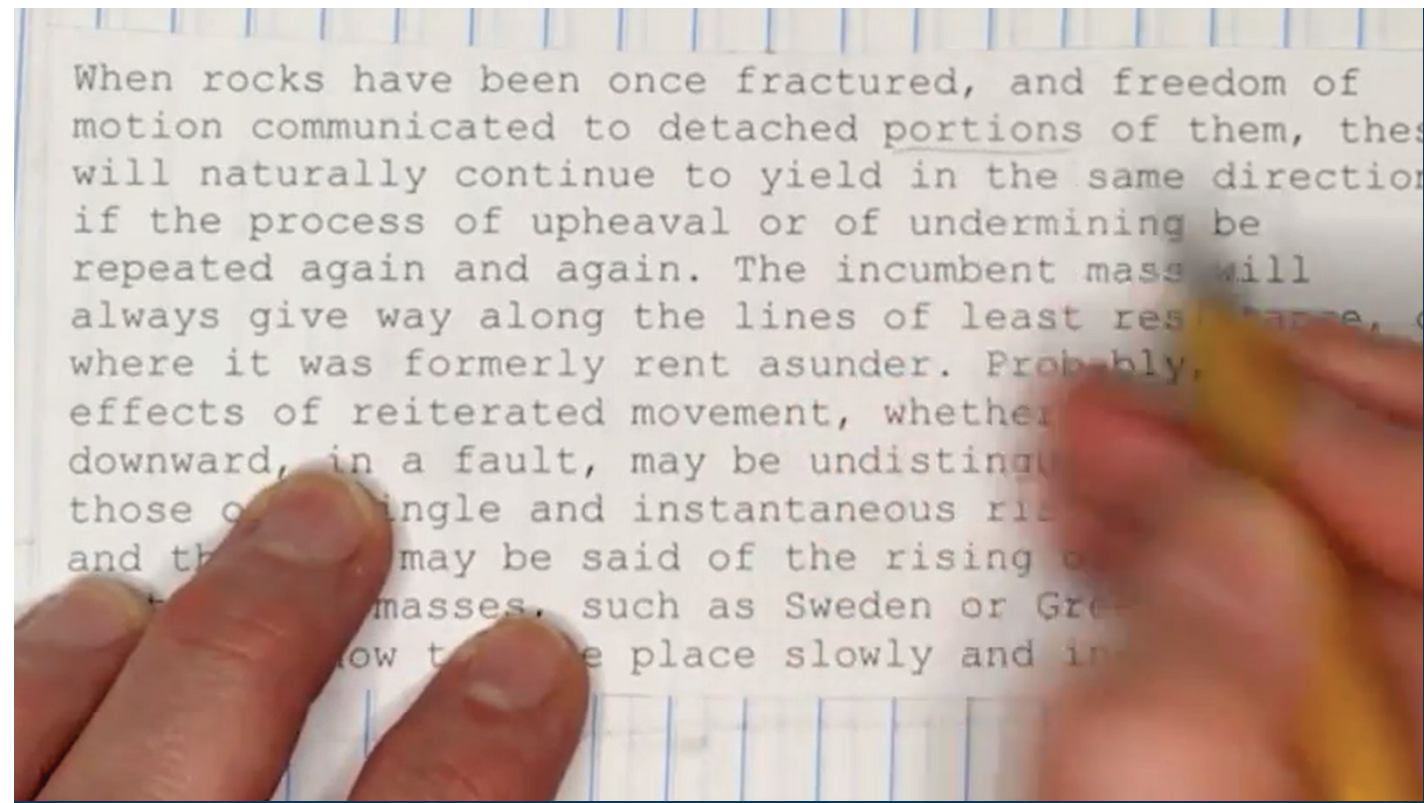

Tear the paper along the creases you've created. You should be left with an image that is the same size as your printed paragraph.
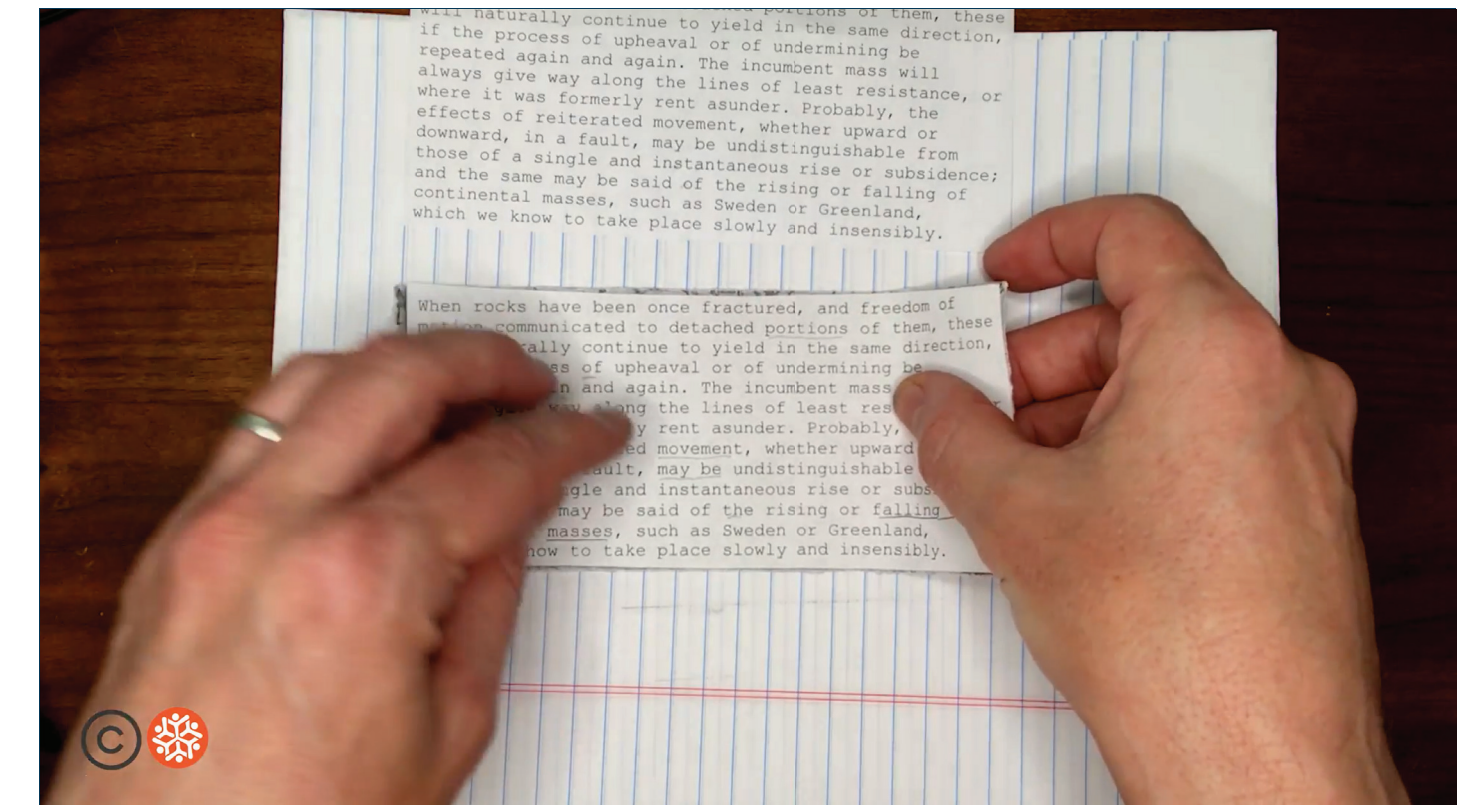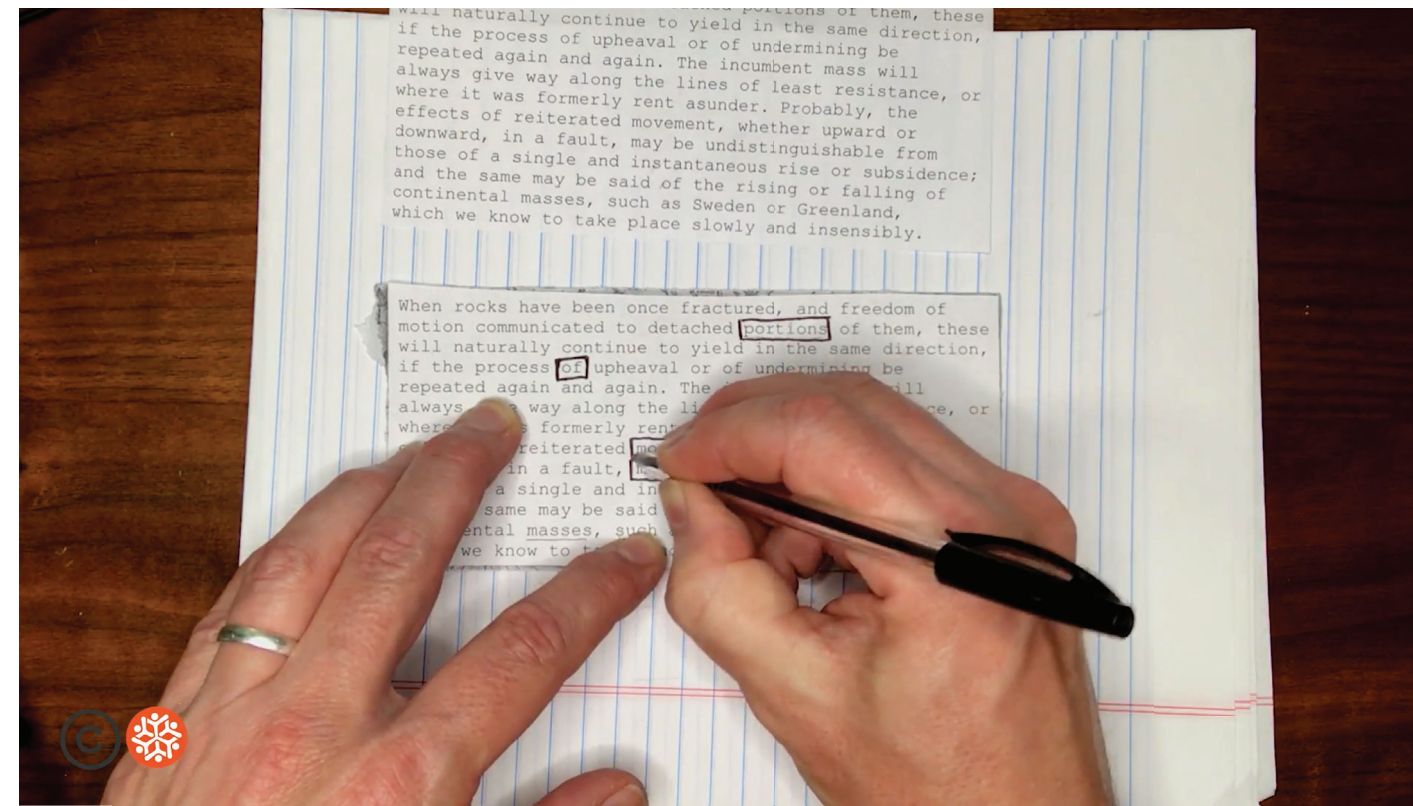

Put the image underneath one of your printed paragraphs of text. Make sure that you have a soft surface underneath. I am using a stack of looseleaf paper.
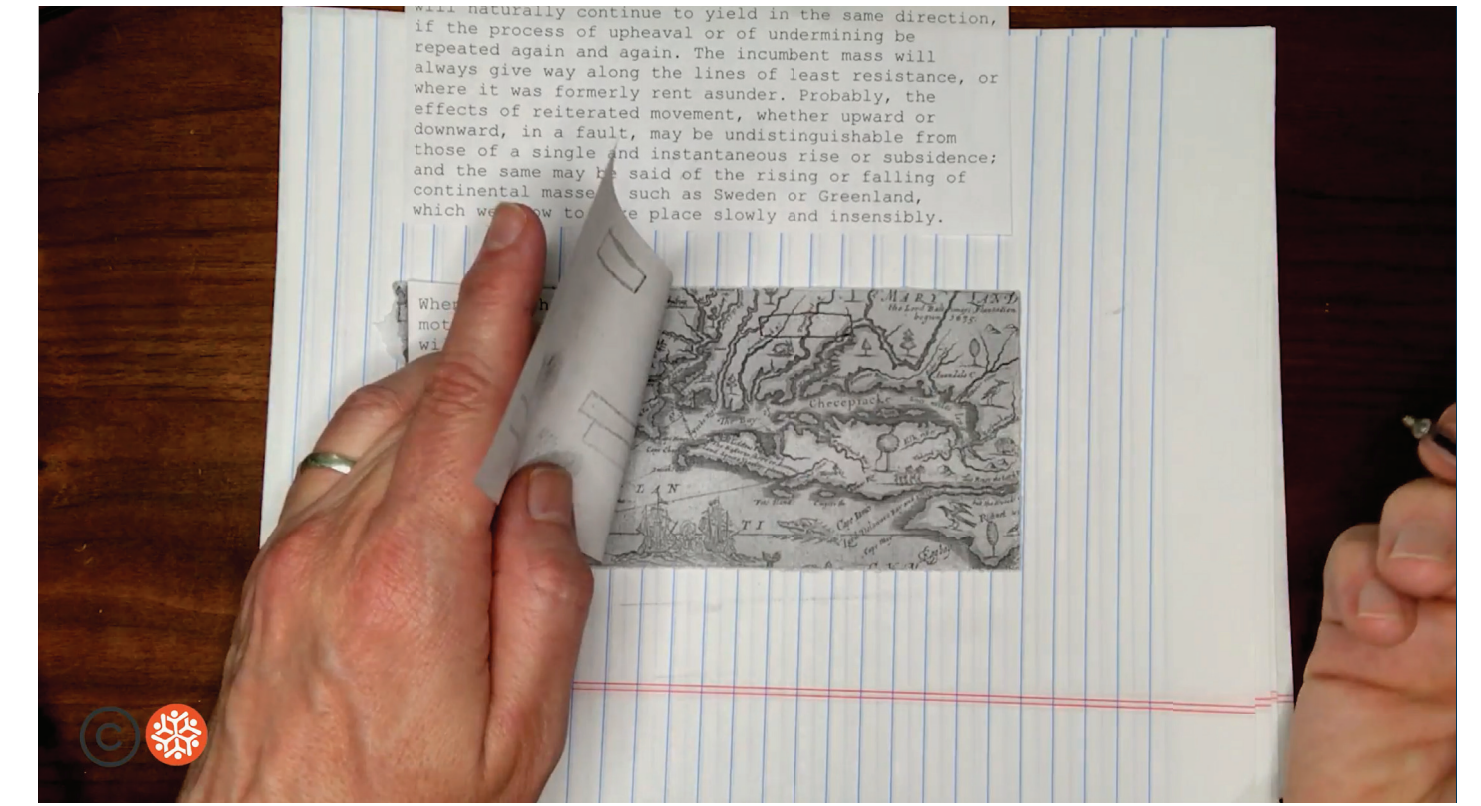
INSTRUCTION CONTINUED:

Use a pencil to plan out your initial choices. Choose words and phrases that are interesting to you.

Using a ballpoint pen, very heavily box off the choices you have made in your text. Use a lot of pressure, so that it makes an indent in the image underneath.

You may have to go over it several times in order to indent the paper below. If you start to tear through your paper, that's okay.
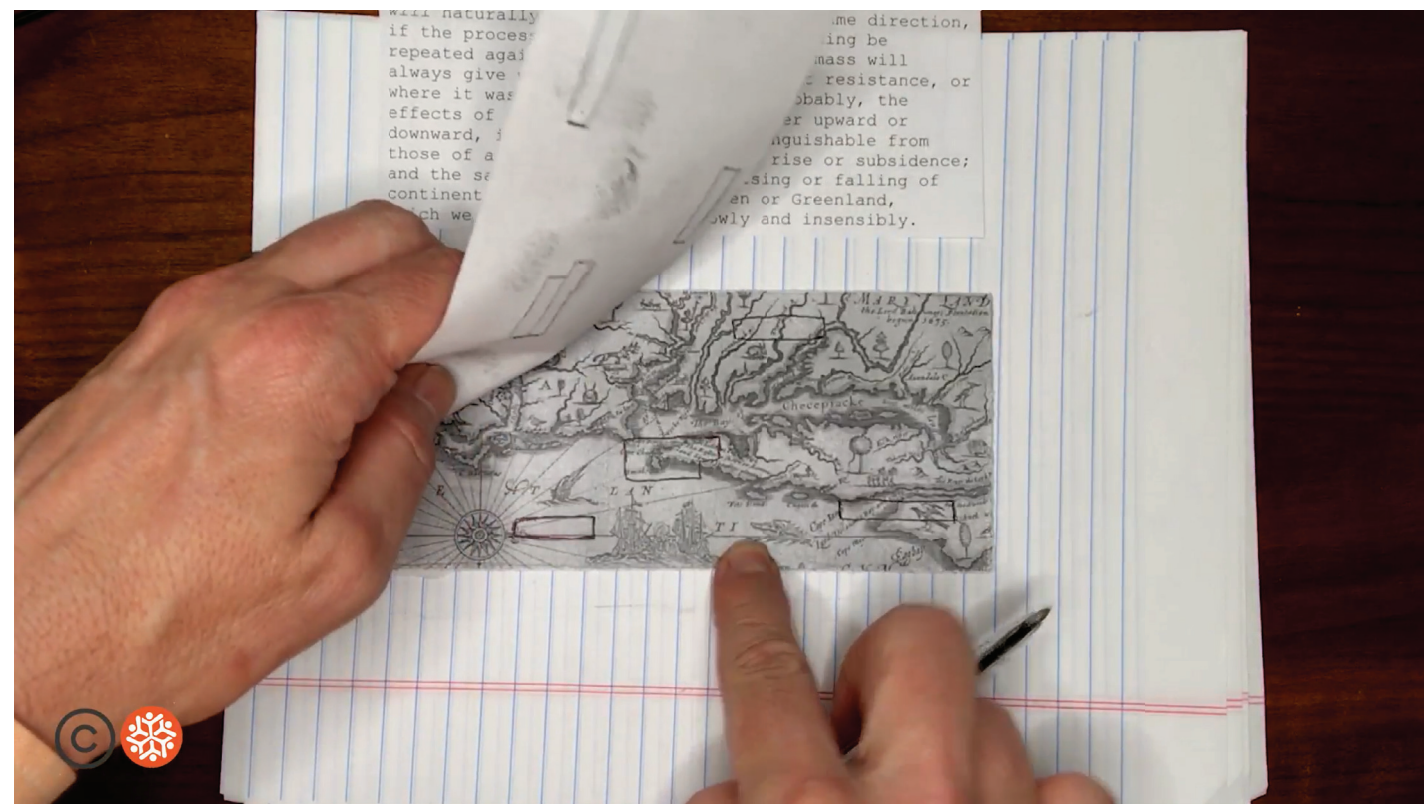
Trace over the indents on the image below with your pen, so that you can see them better.
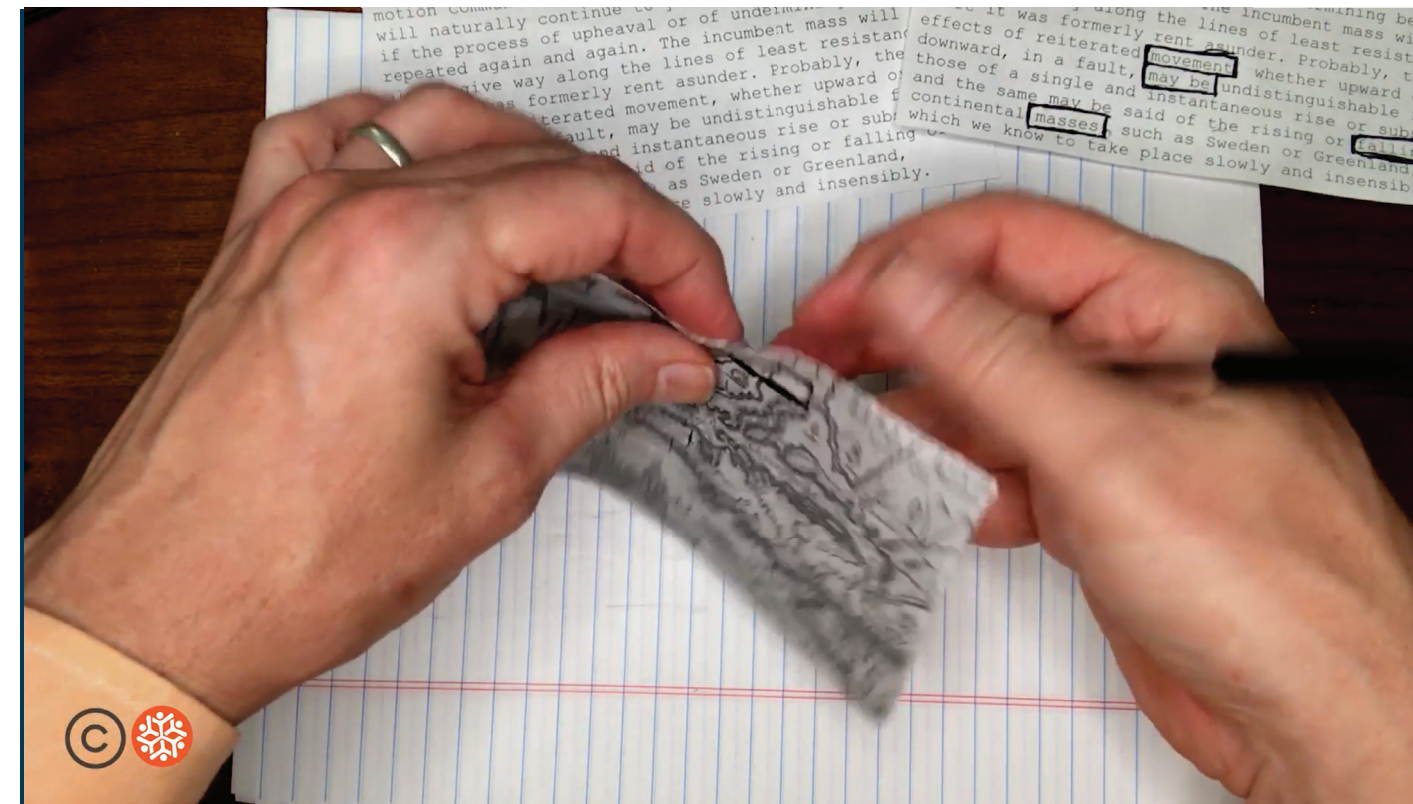
Continue to trace over the boxes you've created on your image with your pen, until you can poke them out.

Once you've poked out your boxes, tape or glue your image onto the second, unmarked copy of your original text.

INSTRUCTION CONTINUED:

You should be able to see your choices through the holes you've created in your image.
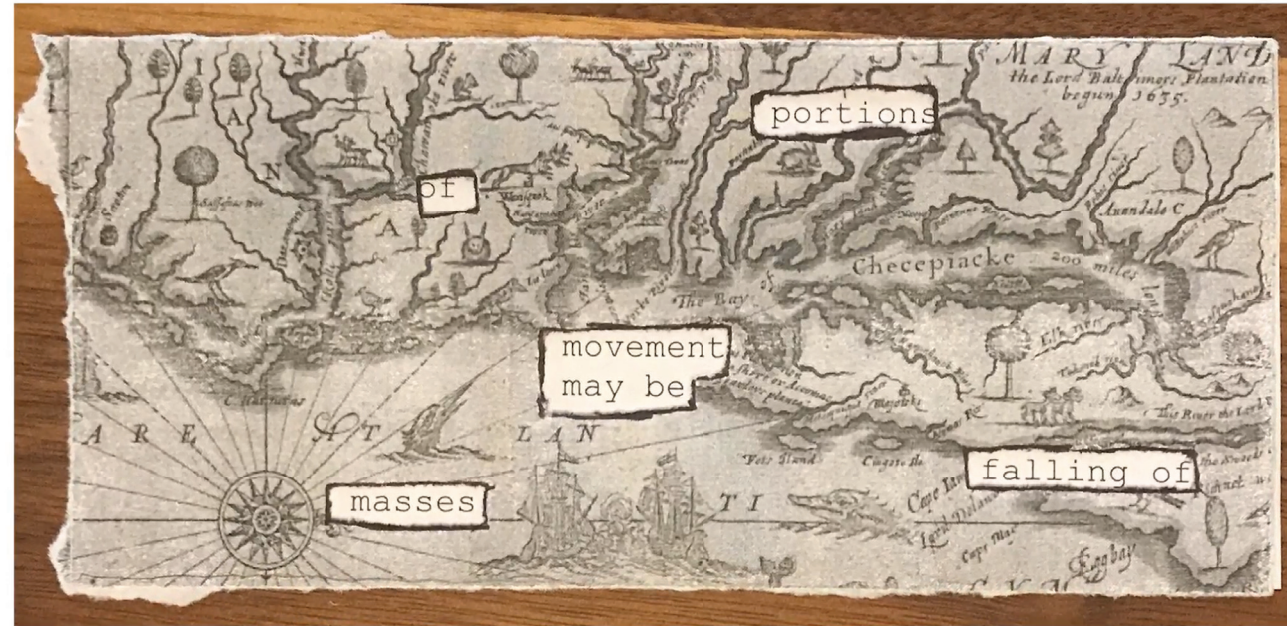
Congratulations! You've made erasure poetry using an image. Thank you for joining me today.

LEARNING STANDARDS

This workshop is aligned to the following state and national anchor standards. It can be differentiated for learners at every grade level. (For arts performance standard alignments at specific grade levels, feel free to email **programs@snowcityarts.org**.)

ILLINOIS ARTS LEARNING STANDARDS

Anchor Standards: Creating

- **CR1.** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- **CR2.** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standards: Connecting

- **CN10.** Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- **CN11.** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

English Language Arts: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

Reading

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4.** Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5.** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7.** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Language

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3.** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5.** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Writing

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3.** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10.** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

If you are interested in **receiving school credit** for the work you have completed in this workshop or if you would like to **have your artwork displayed** in a Snow City Arts exhibition space or virtual gallery, please visit https://snowcityarts.org/consent-releases/

Contact us at programs@snowcityarts.org if you have questions, would like to offer feedback, or would like to continue working with us virtually.

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Snow City Arts inspires and educates children and youth in hospitals through the arts.

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