

How to make a photo poem

Stories and poetry

30 minutes

You will need:

A photograph

Print-outs of sample words and phrases that relate to the photo

Optional:

Pen and paper, scissors, newspapers, glue

One-to-one

Dementia-friendly



Calming
Conversational
Absorbing

Photo poems were first devised by poet Paul Eluard and photographer Man Ray. The technique is a simple blending of poetic words or phrases with an arresting, evocative photograph to create an entirely new work of art: a photo poem.

To prepare:

Before the session you will need to build activity packs, choosing the image and creating the words that will go along with it. For example, for a beach scene, you might print out words like: 'waves', 'seaside', 'seaweed', 'children playing', 'paddling', 'deckchairs', 'sunhat', 'sand', 'ice cream', 'holiday', etc.

It can be helpful for the image and the words to be laminated for extra strength and cleanliness.

To begin:

Share the picture that you will be using with your participants – it is good to have a copy for each participant so that they can have a good look at it. Once everyone has had a chance to look, begin talking about the picture.

Can the group describe what they see: *do they recognise the scene? What is happening in the picture? Does it remind them of somewhere or of someone?* Take time to talk so that everybody has the chance to share their own feelings and responses.

Next:

Lay out the words that you have provided and have a look at them. Talk about the words and choose the ones that stand out and make a connection.

Then work together as a group to create a poem – move the words around to find the way that the group feels they fit together best. When the poem is finished, you can read it to the group or invite a member of the group to read it.

After you have worked together, you may also want to work individually or in small groups to create your own poems. If you do this, you could spend time creating before sharing with each other.

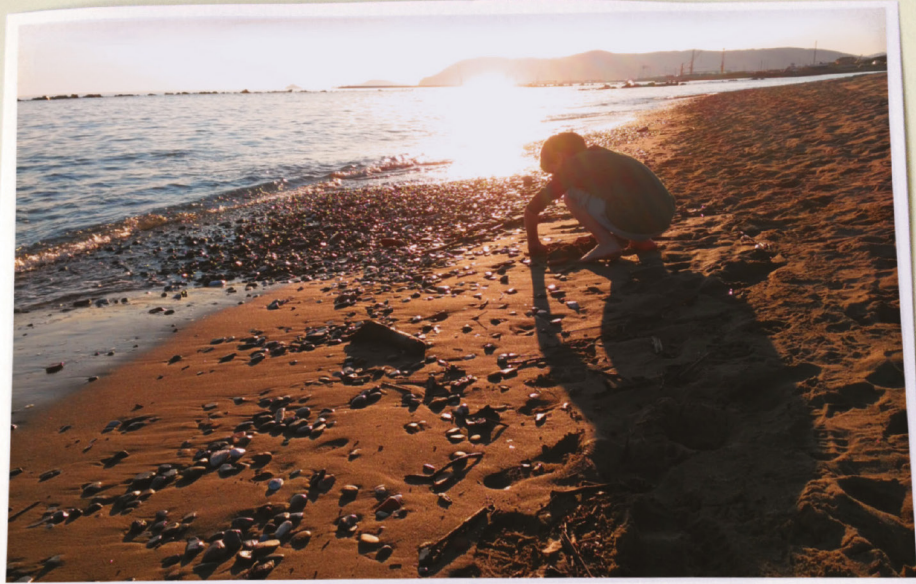
You could also:

Some people may prefer to choose their own words to create their poem – you will need to provide a pen and paper if they want to do this. Or you could provide old papers and magazines for participants to cut out their own words.

Your final poems could be made into a really striking wall display for a communal space or in somebody's room or home.

Credit:

Independent Arts. Developed in partnership with Hazel Lodge, Northbrooke House Care Home.



rock pools

low tide

breeze

waves

wet

sandals

you

see

jellyfish

touch

salty

shells