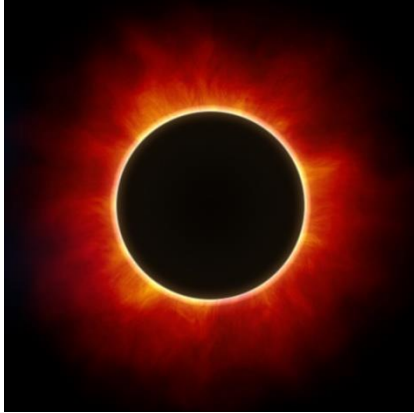


The Great North American Eclipse

The Great North American Eclipse will take place on April 8, 2024, with the path of totality to include Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Put on your eclipse glasses and get ready for a spectacular sight!



Eclipses occur when the sun, moon and Earth all come into straight line with each other. If you view a solar eclipse (or an eclipse of the Sun from Earth), the moon and sun look to be exactly the same size. They are not– this illusion happens because the sun is 400 times the diameter of the moon and the Sun is 400 times farther away than the moon.

While eclipses aren't necessarily rare events (in fact, as many as 5 solar eclipses can occur on Earth in a year), eclipses are typically only visible for a fraction of the Earth, and if you're in the path of totality, it's likely your specific location won't experience a total solar eclipse again for about 375 years! With that in mind, here are some eclipse-themed activities and resources to make the most of this once in a lifetime event.

Great North American Eclipse Resource Pack

Mensa For Kids has created a printable resource pack filled with eclipse facts, vocabulary words, and more. Download your eclipse resource pack [here](#).

Create a Photo Essay

Photo essays are a great way to document a moment in history and tell a story. Whether you attend an eclipse viewing event or are watching the eclipse from your neighborhood, you can photograph how you experienced the eclipse in your corner of the world. For this activity, you'll need a camera or smartphone, and you may want access to photo editing software. As you photograph the event, keep in mind the following:

- **Your photos should tell a story** – this can be a narrative story (here is how a particular subject experienced the eclipse) or a thematic story (say, the intersection of life on Earth with a celestial event as demonstrated by an eclipse). Knowing what kind of



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story you want to tell will determine what sort of photos you should focus on.

- **Take candid shots** – a photo essay should document life as-is, so focus on taking pictures of what you observe and not what you pose or direct.
- **Take more photos than you think you need** – aim for at least 100 photos so you have plenty to choose from when finalizing your narrative. Make sure you capture a variety of subjects and change up your angles and lighting to keep things interesting.
- **Edit judiciously** – as you select the photos to include in your photo essay, think critically not just about whether your photos fit your narrative, but whether they are good quality photos as well. It's equally important that your photo essay be visually compelling.
- **Don't take a picture of the sun! – unless you are in the path of totality and the eclipse has entered totality, it is not safe to view the eclipse without ISO-certified eclipse glasses, and you will damage your camera if you photograph the sun without a solar filter.**

After you've selected your favorite photos, you may want to write captions for some or all of them. Thoughtful captions are key to a well-crafted photo essay! Keep your captions brief and don't describe the obvious – instead, use your captions to provide context a viewer might not get from just looking at an image.

Eclipse Observations

A solar eclipse presents an opportunity to make observations about the Earth and sky that might not always be possible under normal conditions. Brainstorm ideas about how a solar eclipse can impact life on Earth and think about how you can observe and/or test your ideas. Here are some ideas to get you started:

Animal behavior – in what way does a solar eclipse change how animals behave? What theories do you have about their behavioral changes? Select an eclipse viewing location that's near a number of animals and arrive at least two hours before the eclipse's first contact so you can document the animals' behavior before the eclipse begins. Then, as the eclipse progresses, make note of their movements and sounds. Are there any changes? If so, are they what you expected?

Temperature differences – solar radiation heats our planet. As the moon's shadow blocks sunlight on Earth, you could notice a drop in temperature, especially if you're in the path of totality. Record the temperature prior to the eclipse's first contact, check the temperature periodically throughout the event and make note of the changes you observe. You can also compare your findings with someone who observed the eclipse from a different location.



Cloud changes – temperature plays an important role in cloud formation, and you may notice a solar eclipse can affect clouds in the sky. As the atmospheric temperature lowers, low-level clouds can begin to dissipate. [Read up on different types of clouds](#), and before the eclipse begins, take note of any clouds you see. Throughout the eclipse, pay attention to the low-level cloud types and document whether or not they dissipate.

Looking for more inspiration? [Read about the experiments NASA is conducting during the 2024 eclipse.](#)

Write an Eclipse Myth

Myths are foundational stories that are told over generations as a way to explain the seemingly unexplainable parts of the world around us. Myths are sometimes supernatural or fantastical, and they aren't rooted in science or fact. Still, they're an important part of their culture of origin, and they can tell us a lot about how a given group of people understood their place in the universe.

Cultures from around the world have all sorts of myths associated with eclipses. Ancient Greeks, for example, thought an eclipse meant the gods were unhappy with the king. Siberian folklore tells that a vampire is eating the sun. The Inuits believed an eclipse represented a reunion of the moon god Annigan and his sister, the sun goddess Malina. Trickster stories from across the globe have fairies blocking out the sun for fun or little boys catching the sun in a net.



Get into the celestial spirit by creating your very own eclipse myth. Imagine you exist in a time and place where the scientific explanation of how and why an eclipse occurs is unknown to you. What story could you create to explain the eclipse? As you create your story, keep in mind that a myth should:

- **Be connected to a belief system** – usually myths reflect the cultural beliefs of a group of people.
- **Be spiritual in nature** – myths often involve a religious or heavenly explanation for phenomena that are not easily understood by most people.
- **Teach you something** – myths tend to contain morals or lessons about how people should behave or interact with the natural world around them.

Don't forget to identify key figures in your eclipse mythology, and your myth should tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Need a little more background information before getting started? Check out Mensa For Kids' lesson plans, [An Introduction to Greek Mythology](#) and [The Art of Storytelling](#).

Eclipse Blackout Poetry

Blackout poetry is a form of poetry that's created by taking an existing written work and covering, or blacking out, words. The uncovered words and phrases that remain create a poem that has an entirely new meaning. Blackout poetry seems especially fitting for an eclipse – here's what you'll need to do to create your own:

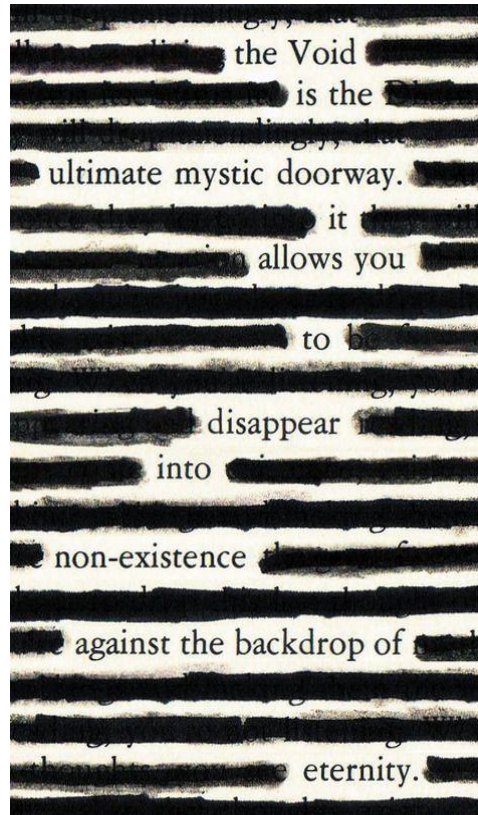
1. Select a written work to use as your starting piece. This can be a page from a book, another poem, song lyrics, a news article, essay ... as long as it has enough words, you can probably use it. Whatever you select may be related to eclipses, but it's not a requirement.

2. Pick out the key words and phrases to keep uncovered. As you read through your piece, think about what you'd like your poem to be about and what themes you'd like it to have, and identify the words and phrases you know you will be using. You might keep some things just because you like the way they sound, or because the word may come in handy.

It's okay to leave more than you think you'll need and cross it out later. Draw boxes around your selected words.

3. Review your selected words. Now you'll need to read the words you selected and see how they flow together. Consider whether they fit the idea you had in mind and change course, if necessary.

If something doesn't sound quite right, give your full piece another read and look for words you may have passed over that might improve your poem. This is also where you can fine-tune any additional words you kept around just in case.



- 4. Black out the words you don't want to use.** Once you have finalized your word choices, cover up the rest of the words. You can use marker, paint, black strips of paper or tape – this is a good chance to get creative and channel your inner visual artist!

Make an Eclipse-Themed Time Capsule

The April 8, 2024, eclipse will be the last time a total solar eclipse is visible in most of the United States until August 23, 2044, which makes it a perfect opportunity to create a time capsule. Build your own time capsule, and when the next total solar eclipse comes around in 20 years, you can relive how you experienced the Great North American Eclipse. Think about how old you'll be then, and what kind of message you want to send to your future self.

Things to include:

- A newspaper clipping or social media post, either about the eclipse itself or just about life in 2024 in general.
- A photo of yourself, your family, your class, or other parts of your life that are important to you at this moment in time.
- A letter to your future self
- If you completed any of these other activities, include them here! Make copies of your photo essay, your scientific observations, and your blackout poetry and stash them away for the future.
- Not sure what to do with your eclipse glasses after the big event? Decorate them and put them in your time capsule!



Creative Problem-Solving Prompts, Eclipse Edition

These prompts were designed to mimic Odyssey of the Mind spontaneous verbal problems. Use them to get your kids and students thinking critically and creatively as you prepare for the eclipse. These work best with a group, where each participant has a turn to answer, but you can modify it to fit your needs. Make this activity more challenging by imposing a time limit and/or awarding points for especially creative answers.

- 1. Description Inscription:** You are the first person to ever record your observation of a solar eclipse. The problem? You only have space to carve three words into your clay tablet. What do you write? For example, you might say, "Sun. Dark. Cold."

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2. **Sun Speak:** What would the sun (or moon) say during the eclipse? For example, you might say, "You're blocking my view!"
3. **Too Many Travelers:** Millions of people across the United States are expected to travel to get a better view of the eclipse and experience totality. What unexpected complications may arise from the influx of people? For example, you might say, "The traffic will make me late to school."
4. **Eclipse Escape:** While others might be traveling to see the eclipse, you're using the eclipse as a means of escape. Where are you going, and why do you want to leave? For example, you might say, "I have sciophobia, so I'm going to Australia."
5. **That's No Moon:** A solar eclipse occurs when the moon crosses between the Earth and the sun and casts its shadow on the Earth. But let's pretend this eclipse is different – think of something else that's blocking the light from the sun. For example, you might say, "That's no moon, it's the Death Star."
6. **What a View:** What are some ways you can view the eclipse? For example, you might say, "upside down."
7. **Sunlight:** Roll a die. If it lands on an odd number, you must think of something that includes the word "sun." If it lands on an even number, you must think of something that includes the word "light." For example, you might say "Here Comes the Sun," "SUNken treasure," "flashlight," "fLIGHTs of fancy."
8. **The Great North American Eclipse Costume Party:** You've been invited to a solar eclipse-themed costume party. What themed costume would you wear and why? For example, you might say, "I'm dressed as Albert Einstein because his theory of relativity was tested and proven during the 1919 solar eclipse."
9. **Saros Cycles:** Eclipses occur in 18-year cycles called saros cycles. Eclipses that occur within the same saros cycle are similar to one another, because the Earth, moon, and sun line up in almost the same positions they were in 18 years earlier. Name other things that have cycles. For example, you might say, "the water cycle" or "a recycling bin."



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10. Story Lines: Tell a collaborative story about something strange you saw during the eclipse using the following lines. Lines must be read exactly as written and in the provided order. If a line is blank, the respondent can say anything they wish to add to the story.

- 1. I saw something strange during the eclipse.**
- 2.**
- 3.**
- 4. What do you think that means?**
- 5.**
- 6. I looked it up and here's what I found.**
- 7.**
- 8.**
- 9. I wonder if it will happen again next eclipse.**

When you've finished the story, feel free to repeat the story with the required lines in a different order, or replace some of the required lines with lines you've written.

Recommended Links

For more eclipse-themed reading and activities, check out these resources:

Eclipse2024.org – A one-stop shop for all sorts of eclipse content, including educational material, eclipse simulation videos, eclipse times for cities in North America, and more.

[Young Mensan Magazine](#) – The space-themed winter issue of this magazine for Young Mensans by Young Mensans contains eclipse trivia and quick 'n' easy activities to try at home.

[Math Challenges](#) – A collection of real-world math exercises used by scientists who study eclipses, created by NASA in preparation for the 2017 solar eclipse.

[Recommended Reading: 2024 Eclipse](#) – A reading list created by Baylor University's School of Education to prepare young learners for the Great North American Eclipse.