

LIVE Arts

TEACHER GUIDE

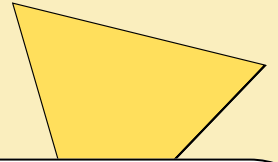
SLAM POETRY / SPOKEN WORD

With: Alex Jarrett/Axis

Date: Oct 26th 2023

Grade: 7/8

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts



OVERVIEW

Join Axis as she takes your class through an introduction to spoken word poetry. This Teacher Guide and workshop will walk your students through the basics of body language, breath and poetry itself.



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Axis has a spoken word style that's rhythmic, thought-provoking, and non-conforming. From a young age, Axis experimented with creative writing and poetry styles. She aims for her body of work to remain consistently about deeper issues and taboos that plague society. Having struggled to let her poetry meet her voice for many years. Axis is ready to share her soul with those willing to listen in the hope that we can all be inspired to give voice to our passions. Axis has a mixture of European and Indigenous Ancestry. She has roots in her Eagles Lake First Nation rural community in Saskatchewan. Her maternal Indigenous roots run deeper north to Treaty 10 Canoe Lake Cree First Nation and Metis Community Isle a la Crosse.

MATERIALS

- Pencil
- Paper

CLASSROOM SETUP

Have your students sit in small groups.

Curriculum Outcomes & Indicators

GRADE 7

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP7.6 Express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationships to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural environments) in drama and/or collective creation.

a. Use inquiry in drama to extend understanding about the importance of place in peoples' lives:

- Generate questions to guide inquiry about the concept of place.

CRITICAL RESPONSIVE

CR7.2 Investigate and identify ways that the arts can communicate a sense of place.

b. Research, using the Internet and other sources, to investigate how some professional artists express a sense of place in their work.

CULTURAL HISTORICAL

CH7.2 Investigate how Indigenous artists from around the world reflect the importance of place (e.g., relationship to the land, geology, region, urban/rural environments).

d. Demonstrate awareness of how contemporary Indigenous artists are influenced by place (e.g., hip hop and graffiti artists who use the urban landscape as a space for expressing ideas).

GRADE 8

CREATIVE PRODUCTIVE

CP8.6 Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.

b. Use inquiry in drama to investigate topics of importance to students (e.g., issues of concern to youth or recent news items):

CRITICAL RESPONSIVE

CR8.2 Investigate and identify ways that today's arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.

c. Describe, analyze, and interpret the work (dance, drama, music, visual, film) of a variety of artists whose work incorporates social commentary.

CULTURAL HISTORICAL

CH8.2 Analyze the influence of social issues on the work of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists, and share results.

c. Investigate the work of artists that reflects a concern with historical events including Treaties and the impacts of colonization such as residential schools, racism, and marginalization.

Workshop Vocabulary

SPOKEN WORD

The oral (spoken out loud) art form that involves speaking out a written poem in a performative way (not just reading it). The art form has historical roots across many African and Indigenous oral cultures.

SLAM POETRY

Slam Poetry is a form of spoken word that is performed at a Poetry Slam. Poetry Slams are competitions where poets will perform their poems and be judged by audience members.

RHYTHM

Rhythm is a pattern of sound that repeats over and over again.

SIMILE

A simile is a comparison between two things using 'like' or 'as'. This is a poetic device that can be used to develop the imagery and emotional core of your poem.

RHYME

Rhyme is a repeated sound in the words we speak. The repeated sound/letters are often at the end of our sentences.

IMAGERY

Imagery is the use of an image/physically descriptive words to communicate a deeper meaning

Pre-Workshop Activity

Name: Poetry Performance Basics

Duration:

1 Hour

Materials:

- A Whiteboard
- A Projector and Speaker
- An Open Space in your Classroom

EXERCISE 1

The purpose of this exercise is to have your students experiment with the ways they can use just their bodies to express what they're thinking and feeling.

- Clear a space in the center of your classroom.
- Ask your students to move around slowly in the central space. Encourage them to move about as 'normally' as they can. Make sure to let them know that they're not supposed to bump into each other.
- Start to ask your students to move about as if they are different animals (ie: a lion, an elephant, a giraffe).
- Ask your students to move around as if they are feeling different emotions (ie: scared, frustrated, shy, happy, confused).
- After each emotion, have the students sit down and have a discussion about what kind of movements they did that communicated that emotion.

EXERCISE 2

The purpose of this exercise is to have your students identify ways they can communicate emotion with their voice.

- Have your students memorize a simple sentence or tongue twister (ie: How now brown cow, Betty bought a bit of butter, etc.).
- Remind them that the words don't mean anything but how we say the words can make them meaningful.
- Go through a variety of emotions and have the class say the sentence in that emotion. Say it as a whole class and give individual students chances to say the line alone. Ask the students to reflect and wonder what made the sentence sound 'sad' or 'happy' etc. Was it because their voice was big, or small, or high pitched?

Pre-Workshop Activity

EXERCISE 3

- Ask your students if any of them have heard of 'Spoken Word Poetry' or 'Slam Poetry' before. If none of them have, use the vocab definitions on the previous page to give them a few ideas of what it might be.
- Show your students the following spoken word poetry video (from 0:00-3:40).
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsnNB1yS3IE>
- Ask your students what their first impressions are of spoken word poetry. See if they can come up with a few differences between page poetry and spoken word poetry.

EXERCISE 4

- *At its root, spoken word is all about providing people with a space to share about the things that are important to them. Take some time with your class to brainstorm around the concept of place and what it means to them*
- As a class, make a list of significant locations and places that matter to your students.
- Feel free to prompt this brainstorm using some of the following questions:
 - What is a location that's held some significant memories for you?
 - Where is your favorite place to go when you feel overwhelmed and need rest/a break?
 - What is your favorite season and your favorite place to experience that season?
- Once you have your list on the board, make sure to take a picture or record the answers as they'll be useful for the upcoming spoken word writing activities

Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:

- Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:15:

- Body Language explanation & Warm Ups (Warrior Pose & Affirmations)

00:15 - 00:20:

- Matriarch Performance

00:20-00:30

- Find a theme: Social Justice & Coming of Age (MMIW)
- How to find your inspiration
- Re-writing a rap
- Use a thesaurus

00:30 - 00:40:

- How to plan breaths
- Let the class perform

00:40 - 00:45:

- Artist Q & A

Post-Workshop Activity

Name: Similes and Starting a Poem

Duration:

1 Hour

Materials:

- List of things that matter to them (see Pre-Workshop Exercise)
- Whiteboard

EXERCISE 1

- *When writing a poem it can be incredibly useful to have two things: A slice of inspiration and a few poetic tools. In these next exercises we'll dive into both of those things.*
- Draw your student's attention back to the list they made of things that are important to them.
- Have each student choose a place from the list on the board to make their poem about.
- Ask each student to write one sentence about how they *feel* about the place they chose. Specifically ask them to use emotional language.

EXERCISE 2

- If your students haven't already studied similes, feel free to introduce them to the definition on the vocabulary page.
- Expose your students to some similes we use in common language. (ie: as quiet as a mouse, as strong as an ox, shining like the sun etc).
- Have each student choose an object in the room and have them write down a second object that the first one looks like (ie: That whiteboard looks like a thick snowfall).
- Have the students choose an object that school *feels like* to them. Have them come up with a list of emotions that school (or any other location like home) makes them feel. Have them come up with an image that they strongly associate with that emotion (ie: if the emotion is confusion the image could be a fog). Have them finish the sentence, 'School feels like....'
- Now direct their attention back to their chosen place and have them repeat the simile creation process there.

EXERCISE 3

- Have your students also think about what sort of things would threaten the place that they value (ie: gentrification, deforestation, climate change, moving).
- Have your students create another simile/image to reflect on how they feel about the things that threaten the place that they value.
- Put these two sections together to create a mini poem (encourage students to write more if they want to).

EXERCISE 4

- Practice reading the poem out loud as a class. Use this as an opportunity to try practicing the pre-workshop exercises on body language and emotion. What are some of the ways your students could read the poem (or their specific sentence contribution) as if they were sad or happy or bored etc?

Additional Information

Upcoming Workshops

Nov 22-23 - Melanie Monique Rose - Metis Floral Feltwork

Jan 24-26 - Angela Christie - Theatre/Movement (French & English Program)

Feb 28-29 - Shawn Cuthand - Stand Up Comedy/Storytelling

March 26-28 - Hailey Weber - Painting (French & English Program)

April 10-11 - Greg Orrē - Music

April 24-25 - Katherine Lawrence - Page Poetry

More Art By The Artist

To find out more about our artist check out:

<https://www.axisimagery.ca/>

