

**LIVE** Arts

**2022/23**

# **Acrostic to Concrete Poetry** With Cooper Skjeie

Date: April 5th

**Grades: 3 & 4**

**Artistic Discipline:**  
Poetry

## **Overview**

Step into the vivid words of Saskatchewan poet Cooper Skjeie. Join him as he takes your classes on a poetic exploration of the natural world. He will teach your classes how to write from the perspective of objects outside of themselves and explore the life that exists in the world all around us.

## **Artist Biography**

Cooper Skjeie (/shay/) is a poet, educator, and consultant of mixed settler and Métis ancestry. An MFA candidate at the UBC School of Creative Writing, he is a graduate Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program and an alumnus of the Banff Centre's Emerging Writers' Intensive and Sage Hill Poetry Course. Winner of the 2020 Saskatoon Indigenous Poets Society Slam Invitational and third-place winner in the Short Grain Contest for Poetry, Cooper has been shortlisted for numerous awards and contests, including most recently The Malahat Review Open Season Awards and The Fiddlehead's Ralph Gustafson Prize. His work has been supported by Canada Council for the Arts and SK-Arts, and his poems appear in Grain Magazine, PRISM international, and Prairie Fire, among others. He lives in Saskatoon.



## **Materials**

• Pencils • Paper • Pencil crayons

OPTIONAL: • Mini-whiteboards • Dry-erase markers  
• Permanent markers

## **Classroom Setup**

• SmartBoard access.  
• Whiteboard and dry-erase markers.  
• No special arrangements are needed for desks

# Curriculum Outcomes and Indicators

## Grade 3

### Creative/Productive

**CP 3.7** Create visual art works that express ideas about the natural, constructed, and imagined environments

e. Explore inquiry questions visually (e.g., What are some unique characteristics of plant growth? How could we create our own representations of plant growth using different styles of art?).

### Creative/Productive

**CP 3.8** Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts (e.g., contour lines), forms (e.g., drawing, sculpture), and media (e.g., pencils, pastels, found objects)

b. Apply understanding of contour lines to form the outline of an object.

### Critical/Reflective

**CR 3.2** Respond to arts expressions that use the environment (natural, constructed, imagined) as inspiration.

d. Create an arts expression in response to, or in the same style as, a professional artist and identify connections to the original work

## Grade 4

### Creative/Productive

**CP 4.7** Create visual art works that express own ideas and draw on sources of inspiration from Saskatchewan.

d. Discuss how artists are often influenced by cultural and artistic traditions, and consider incorporating heritage or artistic conventions in own work

### Creative/Productive

**CP 4.8** Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts (e.g., organic shapes), forms (e.g., kinetic sculpture, mural), and media (e.g., wood, wire, and found objects)

a. Demonstrate imaginative use of the elements of art including line, colour, texture, shape, form, and space

### Critical/Responsive

**CR 4.1** Analyze how dance, drama, music, and visual art works represent unique ideas and perspectives

b. Analyze and describe how various arts elements and techniques are applied in own and others' arts expressions.

# Workshop Vocabulary

## Poetry

A type of creative writing that touches our emotions, stirs imaginations, and captures a moment, feeling, or idea.

## Acrostic Poem

A poem in which the first letter of each line spells out a word or phrase when those letters are read vertically from top to bottom.

## Identity

The qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person or group.

## Hobby

An activity done regularly in one's leisure time for pleasure.

## Connection

A relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked with something else.

## Memory

Something remembered from the past; a recollection.

## Concrete Poem

A poetic form that combines image and poetry to portray the meaning of the text.

# Pre Workshop Activity

## Name: "Your Name" Acrostic Poem

### Duration

50 minutes

### Materials

- Pencils
- Paper
- Pencil crayons or markers
- Optional: Mini-whiteboards and dry erase markers

- Introduce the concept of Acrostic Poetry to the students: *An acrostic poem uses the letters in a word to begin each line of the poem. All lines of the poem relate to or describe the main topic word.*
- This activity's topic is going to use our names as the main topic word.
- To begin, the teacher is to model a "Your Name" poem using their name, and describing themselves. Sample poem:
  - J is for joyful, fun to be with
  - O is for outgoing, a friend to all
  - H is for honest, a person to trust
  - N is for nice, a heartwarming soul
- Now, students are to write their first draft poems about who they are using the letters of their name.
- When they finish their first drafts, they are to write a polished piece using bubble or block letters (or different kinds of text), and use colour.
- In the white space around the poem, students can draw images that reflect who they are.
- To close the activity, invite students to recite their poems and celebrate their work.

# Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:

- Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:10:

- Cooper will initiate a conversation about acrostic poems, inviting a student to share their acrostic poem. Cooper will then display and read his own acrostic poem.

00:10 - 00:15:

- Cooper will invite students to brainstorm a list of their favourite things to do that speak to who they are as young people.
- Students will personalize their brainstorming.
- Students are to share some of their responses with the class and Cooper will add them to a collective word wall.

00:15 - 00:25:

- Students will select and focus on one of the things they wrote down. What they choose becomes the subject of the poem.
- A Graphic organizer will be distributed and students are to brainstorm specifically about their subject.
- Students will write, in their own words, a description about the topic. Students are encouraged to reflect on any memories, feelings, and experiences they have with the subject.

00:25 - 00:45:

- Students will now write an acrostic poem on the subject they selected. While students write their work, Cooper will write an acrostic poem about the Grade 3/4 class at Pinehouse. If the students finish writing early, they can draw associated images in the white space around the poem.

00:45 - 00:50:

- Share poems and celebrate their work

# Post Workshop Activity

## Name: Acrostic to Concrete Poetry

### Duration

50 minutes

### Materials

- Pencils
- Paper
- Permanent markers
- Optional: Mini-whiteboards and dry erase markers
- Pencil crayons

- In this activity, students will evolve their acrostic poems into concrete poems, where students are challenged to make the visual appearance of the poem match the topic of the poem (i.e. a poem about baseball takes on the shape of a baseball, a baseball bat, etc.)
- Students will first draw a few shapes related to the topic of their acrostic poem (i.e. draw some shapes connected to baseball)
- They will then decide on which shape they would like to write their concrete poem in.
- Students will work through rough copies on draft paper, or alternatively, they may use a mini-whiteboard and dry-erase markers. They can craft the poem in various shapes before they commit to one for their final draft.
- Once students are satisfied with their rough draft, they can begin their final copies on art paper (cardstock, poster board, etc.).
- Students will start with pencils. Encourage them to fill most of the page. When they are done, trace the letters with permanent markers.
- As students complete their poems, pose a self-reflective question, "How does this poem reflect who I am?"
- When finished, hang up their poems and do a gallery walk, spending time reading one another's poems and celebrating the work.

**Note to students** that if their poem is difficult to read, it is a good thing if poetry challenges those who encounter the poem.

# Additional Information

## Upcoming Workshops - 2022/23

May 31st-June 1st - Amanda Murray - Hip Hop Dance

Keep an eye on the Live Arts websites for announcements on next school year's list of workshops!

## More Art by the Artist

*Find out more about Cooper at the following links:*

<https://themamawiproject.medium.com/celebrating-cooper-skjeie-4751a628265f>

<https://us18.campaign-archive.com/?u=918a32a30ee6e0184eeb51bcf&id=85532cbb13>

<https://poetryinvoice.ca/about/who-we-are>

