

LIVE Arts

2022/23

**Erasure Poetry &
Environmental Writes**

With Cooper Skjeie

Date: April 6th

Grades: 7 & 8

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

- CBC article "Stumped" by Pratyush Dayal
- "Dream 17" by Canisia Lubrin (CBC Arts)
- Pencils
- Paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Cameras

Classroom Setup

- SmartBoard Access
- No special arrangement needed for desks

Curriculum Outcomes and Indicators

Grade 7

Creative/Productive

CP 7.10 Create visual art works that express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationship to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural landscapes, and environment)

e. Demonstrate awareness that artists are observant of their environment and often express ideas about the role and representation of place in their work.

Creative/Productive

CP 7.11 Investigate and use various visual art forms, images, and art-making processes to express ideas about place

a. Select various visual art forms (e.g., comics, photography, sculpture, film) to express ideas about the students' place (e.g., neighbourhood, the prairie, inner city).

Critical/Responsive

CR 7.3 Examine and describe how arts expressions of various times and places reflect diverse experience, values, and beliefs.

b. Examine own and peers' work as expressions of unique experiences, and personal values and beliefs, created within a particular time and place.

Grade 8

Creative/Productive

CP 8.11 Select and use appropriate forms, technologies, images, and art-making processes to express student perspectives on social issues.

a. Select visual art forms (e.g., print-making, installations, animation) to express ideas about social issues

Cultural/Historical

CH 8.4 Examine and respond to the work of artists who incorporate more than one art form in their work (e.g., combining poetry and music).

b. Collaborate with others to create interdisciplinary work that addresses issues of social justice and/or other topics of interest to youth (e.g., relationships, body image, racism, sustainability).

Critical/Responsive

CR 8.1 Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works through the creation of own arts expressions

d. Create own work (e.g., visual or performing arts) in response to a professional arts expression, and describe how own work is inspired or influenced by the original work

Workshop Vocabulary

Poetry

Literary work in which special intensity is given to the expression of feelings and ideas by the use of distinctive style and rhythm.

Ecopoetics

Ecopoetics is poetry that stems from an awareness of ecology and concerns over environmental disaster.

Erasure Poetry

Erasure poetry is where a poet takes an existing text and erases, blacks out, or otherwise obscures a large portion of the text, creating a new work from what remains.

Intertextuality

A feature of a text that references another text, using it as a reference for the new written work.

Mixed-media

The use of a variety of media in a work of art.

Place-based writing

Writing from an awareness of and connection to the local heritage, landscape, and culture of the place one lives or lived.

Environmental justice

Environmental justice is a social movement to address the unfair exposure of poor and marginalized communities to harms from hazardous waste, resource extraction, and other land uses.

Pre Workshop Activity

Name: Read to Write: A Jigsaw

Duration

50 minutes

Materials

- Printed copies of "Stumped" by Pratyush Dayal - <https://www.cbc.ca/newsinteractives/features/stumped>
- Pencils
- Papers

- Ask students what they already know about poetry. What is poetry? What are things they think poets write about? (ask for specific examples) What inspires a poet's work?
- Share how poets often write about lived experiences, social issues, and the places they came from. Poetry often emerges in response to reading, listening, and being attentive to what is happening in the world.
- Watch animated YouTube video of Canisia Lubrin reading her poem "Dream 17" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tyj0lerCoO8&t=89s>
- Bring attention to the lines "I have seen the long days ... I have seen them, as forests turned brown & flat for remembering themselves, wishing that we had not factored into their algorithms" How do students interpret these lines? What issue is the poet talking about?
- Ask what they know about the health of our environment. What is happening to the earth? What does scientific research say about the environmental conditions in Saskatchewan?
- Give students a copy of CBC article "Stumped" by Pratyush Dayal, published in July 2022. Tell the students that this article is going to be the same material used for the workshop.
- Read the introduction to the article together as a class (up to the 'Clearcutting and burns are different like night and day' section). From there, do a jigsaw activity where you can group students according to one of the five sections in the article. Groups can be predetermined or students can sign up during the lesson. Write the sections on the board and have students sign up to read and report back to the group.
 - 1. Clearcutting and burns are different like night and day
 - 2. State of forest management plans
 - 3. Pushback efforts
 - 4. Climate change not being factored in
 - 5. IPCAs a possible solution
- While they are reading, asking each student to jot two things they notice, and one thing they wonder about the section they read.
- To close the lesson, one group member from each of the group will share what their section was about, and their "notices" and "wonders."

Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:

- Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:10:

- Activate prior knowledge and ask students what they know about what can inspire a poet's work, and if they can name any different forms of poetry. Have they heard of erasure poetry or ever tried it?
- From here, Cooper will talk about the erasure poetry of Cree poet Billy-Ray Belcourt and Nis'ga poet Jordan Abel, including why both poets chose to use the source material they did for their poems.
- A preview of Belcourt's "Treaty 8" to stay on display while students work.

00:10 - 00:20:

- Students are to bring out the "Stumped" articles they read in the pre-broadcast activity. We are going to use the introduction as a warm-up where students use markers to start crossing out many words. The more that are crossed out, the more interesting their work will be. Two students will have an opportunity to share their work.

00:20 - 00:45:

- Students now focus on the section they read in jigsaw groups.
- Each student is to create another erasure poem and strive to uncover a story, using only the words that are in the section they read closely in the pre-workshop activity. If they finish, before our time is up, they can work on another section, or do a new draft using the same section.

00:45 - 00:50:

- Students have an opportunity to recite their work aloud.

Post Workshop Activity

Name: Poetry in Place

Duration

50 minutes

Materials

- Cameras
- Prints of student photographs
- "Stumped" article
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

- In this activity, students will go for a walk in their communities and take photographs of the landscape. The photograph can be of a natural landscape or a cityscape, as long as the photograph is taken outside.
- Students are to have printed copies of one or two of the photographs they took.
- Working with the erasure poem they crafted in the broadcast activity, students use a fresh copy of the article, this time cutting out the words from their erasure poem.
- Students arrange the words on top of the photograph, trying different forms and line breaks before they commit the poem to the page.
- When they are happy with their poem, carefully glue the words to the photograph using glue sticks.
- Display on a bulletin board and celebrate their work.

NOTE: If teachers would like to show their students an example of this type of art, feel free to show them the following link:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2012/02/from-snow-city>

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>

