

# TEACHER GUIDE



## The Art of Performance Poetry

With: Eric Gabriel

Grade: 5/6

Date: Feb 12th

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts



### OVERVIEW

What is it that makes us so nervous to be seen performing in front of other people? Join Eric Gabriel, a seasoned performance poet, as he brings out your inner performer and walks your students through the art of performance. Grow your ability to engage with an audience and have your story be heard.

### CLASSROOM SETUP

Arrange your students in a large semi-circle facing the board/projector screen

### MATERIALS

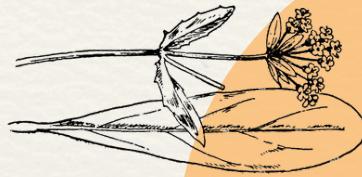
- Projector/HDMI Cable
- Pencil
- Paper to write on

### ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

With a unique poetry style described by many as celestial, Gabriel 'ArchAngel' Ehijie, is a Pan-human writer, poet, and interdisciplinary artist. A passionate student of the human experience, Ehijie believes in the psycho-social healing properties of art, and constantly seeks new ways to aid that healing process.



# Curriculum Outcomes & Indicators



## Grade Five

CP5.3 Demonstrate how various roles, strategies, and elements (e.g., tension, contrast, symbols) function within a drama.	<i>c. Use language expressively when speaking and writing in role.</i>
CP5.3 Demonstrate how various roles, strategies, and elements (e.g., tension, contrast, symbols) function within a drama.	<i>h. Demonstrate how symbols may serve specific functions in drama work (e.g., a character or object represents a particular idea or concept such as envy or greed).</i>
CR5.1 Examine the influence of pop culture on own lives and societies, and investigate the work of selected pop culture artists (e.g., Andy Warhol).	<i>b. Investigate arts expressions that are currently part of mainstream popular culture, and research historical influences on these expressions (e.g., the influence of James Brown or Elvis Presley on contemporary music).</i>

## Grade Six

CP6.4 Initiate and develop roles in selected drama forms (e.g., contextual, improv, puppetry, radio drama).	<i>c. Assume different types of roles and fictional identities in drama work.</i>
CP6.5 Select and use focus, tension, conflict, and symbol to convey ideas.	<i>c. Suggest various ways to use symbols in the drama work.</i>
CR6.1 Create personal responses to a variety of arts expressions (e.g., respond to music using poetry, or respond to visual art using music).	<i>a. Demonstrate critical and creative thinking when responding to the work of Saskatchewan and other Canadian dance, drama, music, and visual artists (e.g., composers, graphic artists, architects, actors, filmmakers).</i>

# Workshop Vocabulary

## Tone

How loud/hard or soft we say something.

## Gesture

A way we move our hands to tell someone something.

## Emotion

What we feel in our hearts

## Improvise

When we make something up that we've never thought of before.

## Beatbox

When we use our mouth to make drum sounds

# Pre Workshop Exercises

Name:

Duration:

Materials:

## EXERCISE 1 - Today's Poetry

- Discuss with your students about what places they most commonly hear poetry. Talk about songwriting as poetry. Ask them what their favorite musicians are. Have a vote as a class to see what genre of music is the most popular in your classroom.
- Ask your students if any of them know the history of any of the musical genres that they like.
- Watch some of the following videos (of varying depth) to demonstrate some of the links between these musical genres:  
<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/YbVynUMGEpQ>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Caxwob1iKX4>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYy-6ltraVQ>
- Have each student choose a modern song that has some of their favorite (appropriate) lyrics in it. Play show in tell in groups of 4 and have each student present their lyrics to the group.

## EXERCISE 2 - Persona Poetry

- Have your students practice perspective taking by writing a poem from the perspective of an object.
- Read them a persona poem written by some students in Chicago:  
<https://www.poetrycenter.org/poems/persona-poems/>

Or show them some of the persona poems in this video (poem at 1:23 is very accessible)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS-S87D-G4s>

- Ask each student to think about an object that they see in their every day life



# Pre Workshop Exercises



- Put the following questions on the board and have the students write their answers on a piece of paper:

1. What is something that your object sees every day? Use at least 2 words to describe what they see.
2. What is something that your object smells every day? Describe that smell in at least 2 words.
3. How does your object feel when you touch it? Soft? Smooth? Fuzzy? Heavy?
4. Does your object ever get moved around? What moves it around? Where does it go?
5. If your object had a friend that was another object? What other object would be their friend?
6. What makes your object feel happy? Is it something that it was made to do? Is it a certain color or sound?

- Have your students write out a simple little poem using the answers to their questions and inserting them into lines that generally start with 'I' statements:

*I see shiny shiny metal and soft paper every day  
I smell fresh, dark ink  
I feel smooth and heavy in your hand  
And when you press my head down I clink and clunk  
I make friends with every single staple  
And we feel happy when we bring paper together*

*(a stapler)*

# Broadcast Program

00:00 - 00:05:

- Artist Bio Video + Introduction

00:05 - 00:10:

- Check In // Ground rules (Listen, Observe, Validate, Empathize)
- Warm Up + Grounding breathing exercise
- Game (Spaghetti)

00:10 - 00:15:

- Watch Video as a class, and discuss observations afterwards
- (1:09) "To Be Or Not To Be" Unsolicited Advice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34ykFlfn1X4>

00:15 - 00:25:

- Three key features of performance poetry:

-Adding emotions to the way you speak:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/gVrR3dGuvL4?si=1oP9NjXk6dQqoSBM>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/UjjSODwM4oM?si=POcYZHzWKy24mcTW>

-Speaking with rhythm

[https://youtu.be/eFnWrj\\_IbuA?si=HP3JjkyZgNPjhonI](https://youtu.be/eFnWrj_IbuA?si=HP3JjkyZgNPjhonI)

[https://youtu.be/tR1ECf4sEpw?si=s\\_4rfFcKSayHIhX9](https://youtu.be/tR1ECf4sEpw?si=s_4rfFcKSayHIhX9) {0:30 - 2:00}

[https://youtu.be/X\\_vl1NwFaLk?si=fskvoUOTfLSnp24f](https://youtu.be/X_vl1NwFaLk?si=fskvoUOTfLSnp24f)

-Improvise as you see fit

00:25 - 00:30:

- Tips to use in performance (Eyes, Body, Voice, Space, Poem, Ending)

00:30 - 00:40:

- Writing Prompt - Write a 5-line poem about your school

00:40 - 00:45:

- Performance Prompt - Perform your poem to the class in the persona of a popular movie/cartoon character or musician (e.g. Batman, SpongeBob, Taylor Swift, etc.)

00:45 - 00:50:

- Artist's Q & A



# Post Workshop Exercises



## EXERCISE 1 - Being In Front Of People

- The art of performance means that we have to get comfortable being in front of people so this exercise will help your students develop their sense of resiliency to the discomfort of being in front of others.
- Have your students all sit in chairs but with room in front of them to stand up quickly. Play a short game of Name Whack-A-Mole. Whenever you say a student's name, have that student stand up and say hello as quick as they can. Then start to point at students while you say the name, but try and throw the students off by point to a different student than the name you're saying. Then have the students jump up and say, 'hello, my name is \_\_\_\_'.
- Next, set up some kind of mark on the ground at the front of the classroom. Have the students taking turns walking up to the mark on the ground, planting their feet, taking a breath and then saying, 'Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_'. Then have the class clap uproariously after each student says their name.

## EXERCISE 2 - Words as Symbols

- Ask your students if they can define the word 'symbol'. Ask them if they've ever heard of the word 'simile'.
- Talk about how a word or image can sometimes be a symbol for another thing.
- 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 choose a new topic as a class (ie: love, friendship, fun) and have them repeat the simile creation process there.
- Feel free to give the students license to write more on the topic and extend this mini poem.

# Additional Information

## Upcoming Workshops

Mar. 18-19	Ray the Nihilist – Music (Making A Hip Hop Beat)
Apr. 15-16	Kamisha Alexson – Visual Arts (Designing the 12 Tipi Teachings)
(French/English) May 5-7	Gabrielle Dufresne – Theatre (Puppetry)

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