

**LIVE** Arts

**2022/23**

# Explore Your Voice

With Zhe the Free

Date: September 21

**Grades: 7 & 8**

**Artistic Discipline:**

Hip Hop/Rap

## Overview

Explore Your Voice aims to inspire youth to explore their unique talents and speak their truth. ZHE the Free shares her personal journey alongside a basic overview of hip hop and song creation. This interactive workshop brings together elements of freestyle and creative writing in rap and poetry. Students will learn about song structure, 4 bar counts for writing raps, call and response and the significance of storytelling in hip hop. ZHE utilizes the Cypher as a playful space to celebrate the bravery it takes to express one's creativity.

## Artist Biography

ZHE the FREE (Zoe Slusar) is a multi-disciplinary artist, youth mentor and community builder. Growing up on Treaty 7 Land, she extends her fire from mountains to prairies. ZHE ignites the crowd with her skilled flow, vulnerable poetic eloquence and explosive stage presence. With her music, she explores emotions and addresses social issues while hyping the crowd. In her work with youth, ZHE brings incredible enthusiasm to her engaging teaching style. "Hip hop saved my life, and I aim to inspire others to use creativity as a positive outlet". ZHE strives to inspire her audience to engage in artistic expression and foster meaningful relationships because she believes in knowledge sharing, healing through art, interconnection and resiliency formed in community.



## Materials

- Paper
- Writing utensil
- Speaker
- Projector

## Classroom Setup

- Students will be set up in a semi circle
- White board or black board to write on at the front

# Curriculum Outcomes and Indicators

## Grade 7

### **Creative/Productive**

7.8 i. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate with others to improve the quality of compositions and performances

### **Critical/Responsive**

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

### **Cultural/Historical**

7.1 c. Analyze and describe contributions that artistic work makes to the individual and his or her place/community (e.g., commercial value, cultural value, functional value, expressive value)

## Grade 8

### **Creative/Productive**

8.7 a. Examine and apply the technique of vocal improvisation in song and speech.

8.9 b. Create and perform own music compositions, improvisations, or song lyrics in response to a social issue of importance to students

### **Critical/Responsive**

8.2 a. Reflect on and analyze the intentions, development, and interpretations of own and peers' arts expressions in relation to social contexts (e.g., Is the work influenced by pop culture or local community issues?).

### **Cultural/Historical**

# Workshop Vocabulary

## Cypher

A hip hop circle where artists listen and watch one another perform raps/poetry. Music or beat boxing usually plays.

## Rap

Rhythm And Poetry

## Beat

Music that plays while someone raps or shares poetry.

## Bars

The lines of raps/poetry that are being written. You can think of it as one bar = one sentence.

## Flow

The rhythmical motion a rapper or poet uses to sound on beat. This is the way an artist performs their raps/poetry in a pleasing way for the listener.

## 4 count

An easy way to "catch the beat" is finding the 4 count of 1, 2, 3, 4 within music that is playing. This helps rappers have good flow

## Hook

The repeating part of a hip hop song is called a hook, also known as a chorus

# Pre Workshop Activity

**Name: Intro to the Cypher, writing raps & poetry with music!**

## Duration

50 minutes

## Materials

- White board/chalk board
- Projector to play videos from Youtube

## ACTIVITY 1

### Part I

- Watch this short video from a cypher with the hip hop legend Mos Def:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmqXKbxDoj0>

This video is very short so we will watch it three times to complete this activity.

- **For the first play through** - Ask students to watch they observed. Ask: "what do you see happening in this video?"
- **For the second play through** - Introduce the vocabulary words of 'Beat' and 'Cypher' from the vocabulary listed on page 3, Ask the students to listen to the video and ask: "what do you hear in this video?"
- **For the third play through** - Ask the students to listen to the beat/rhythm in the video and see if they can clap along to the rhythm of the music.

### Exercise II

As a class, make a list of things that students noticed about the 'Cypher, paying attention to how it made them feel.

- Did it make you feel curious? Nervous? Excited?
  - Would you want to try something like that or be there live in person?
- They will get a chance to experience a cypher at the in-person workshop.

## ACTIVITY 2

### Exercise I

Rap stands for Rhythm And Poetry. Words are important when we Rap.

For this activity, consider a topic that the students are learning about in school as an overarching theme (for example, a topic in science or a social issue). As a class, write a list of vocabulary words about that topic.

- Write down the words somewhere all the students can see them! No limits, just any words they can think of!



# Pre Workshop Activity

## Name: Intro to the Cypher, writing raps & poetry with music!

- Introduce the idea of rhyming. Show the students the cypher video again and ask them to listen and see if the rapper is saying any words that sounds similar (rhyming words).
- Go through your list of words as a class and write down some words that rhyme.

### Exercise II

Songs and music often have a lot of emotion. People feel emotions everyday. An emotion can be experienced as powerful/strong or it might be a more gentle feeling. We feel emotions about everything in life: people, places, things we love, etc. Engage students in a discussion on emotions.

- Ask the students to think about something they love and write a list of vocabulary words about that topic.
- Next have students check if any of the words they already wrote down rhyme. They will now make a list of rhyming vocabulary words to do with the topic they love.

**Note:** Both of these exercises encourage students to explore words and ideas as they connect to something outside of themselves (through the topic they're learning about in class) and to something more personal or inside themselves (through a topic on something that they love).

### Exercise III

Allow students to have the opportunity to share what they wrote.

- Go around and give every student the opportunity to share what they wrote. Remind them about the value of hype and encouragement for each other!



# Broadcast Program

0:00-5:00: Intro, Recognizing the Land, ZHE the Free - life through hip hop.

5:00-10:00: Short class introductions, names and one thing that is important to them.

10:00-15:00: Basic overview of hip hop, youth movement, the difference between freestyling and writing songs, what a Cypher is!

15:00-20:00: Freestyle performance and discussion, where else do people freestyle?

20:00-25:00: Find the rhythm, put a beat on for students to try "My name is \_\_\_ and I like \_\_\_" on beat. Call and Response, put the same beat on and get students to try a Call and Response "when I say 'hip', ya'll say 'hop!'"

25:00-30:00: Discuss 4 bar structure, practice counting 4 bars, song content can be about anything!

30:00-35:00: Students turn to collectively or individually write 4 bars about a topic.

1. Words words words \_\_ (rhyme) \_\_
2. Words words words \_\_ (rhyme) \_\_
3. Words words words \_\_ (rhyme) \_\_
4. Words words words \_\_ (rhyme) \_\_

35:00-40:00: Explain song structure and different themes/styles/goals. Value of expression for personal and communal health.

40:00-45:00: Ending Cypher and gratitude. "My name is \_\_, I am grateful for \_\_"

# Post Workshop Activity

**Name: Practice in the Cypher, continue with raps & poetry!**

## Duration

50 minutes

## Materials

- White board/chalk board
- Projector to play videos from Youtube

### ACTIVITY 1

#### Exercise I

- Watch the video featuring ZHE the Free and her Biodiversity Rap!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGD5z3ngF7s>

This video showcases a rap Zhe wrote about the topic of Biodiversity. We will use this video to demonstrate song structure as well as the connections they can make between science and art that can help them memorize information on various science topics!

Play through the video and ask the questions:

- What is happening in this video? (Look for responses around the raps being focused on a topic, the song being used to teach about biodiversity).
- What did you learn from this video?

#### Exercise II

Ask students to identify the various parts of the song they saw in the video:

Short intro

First Verse

Hook

Second Verse

Hook



- Click through the video while the students are identifying the parts of a song. Ask the students to shout out when the song “changes” to a different part.

### ACTIVITY 2

#### Exercise I

As a class, pick a science topic or social issue you are learning about and want to write a rap on. For this activity it is helpful if they pick something they already know about.

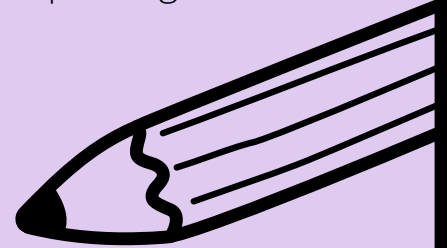
# Post Workshop Activity

**Name: Practice in the Cypher, continue with raps & poetry!**

- Ask students to start with writing out all the vocabulary words they know about that topic.
- Ask the students to individually use those vocabulary words in "explaining sentences", these are sentences which explain something about the topic.

Examples:

- Spiders use webs to catch insects.
- Water evaporates and then returns to Earth as precipitation.



## Exercise II

Once students have some words and sentences about the topic, come back together and as a class, write a 'hook' on your class topic.

**Note:** Remind your students that the hook can be repetitive and catchy. It doesn't necessarily have to teach anything; it can just be fun creating sentences that rhyme!. The verse is where information/knowledge on the topic can be shared as information for the listener.

- Ask the students individually to write their own verse on the topic and then practice out loud what they have written

## Exercise III

Ask the students to stand in a circle and practice some ***call and response***. ***Call and response is a form of interaction between a speaker and an audience in which the speaker's statements ("calls") are punctuated by responses from the listeners.***

- Have one side of the circle read out loud one part of the hook you wrote as a class and have the other side read out the other half in response.
- Then, allowing the students the opportunity to share what they wrote, go around and give each student the opportunity to say what they wrote.
- Remind them about the value of hype and encouragement for each other!



# Additional Information

## Upcoming Workshops - 2022/23

Nov 24-25 - Justice Rain Noon - Beading

Dec 13-14 - Chanz Perry - Theatre/Movement - *French Program*

Jan 26-27- Adreanna Boucher - Improvisational Theatre

Feb 16-17 Esperanza Sanchez Espitia - Digital Photography - *French Program*

March 23-24 - Gabriela Garcia Luna - Visual Art/Cyanotype Prints

April 20th-21st - Cooper Skjeie - Poetry

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

## More Art by the Artist

ZHE the Free's music can be found on all streaming platforms

*Teachers can screen the content ahead of time to see what songs best fit their grade level*

ZHE the Free 'The LOVE EP' is a project exploring all aspects of love, generosity, joy, navigating betrayal, forgiveness and self love.

ZHE the Free can also be found on Youtube for more freestyles and videos!

Link to article interview with ZHE the Free: <https://calgaryherald.com/entertainment/local-arts/roots-and-boundaries-calgary-rapper-zhe-the-free-wants-to-broaden-our-hip-hop-community>

ZHE will be performing a feature poetry set at the Nuit Blanche Spoken Word Stage at the Broadway Theatre in **Saskatoon** on the evening of **September 24th**.