

Episode #4: “Speak UP” with Peace Akintade

Targeted Age Group: Grades 8 – Social Issues

A rising star on the Canadian landscape, Peace Akintade is a multidisciplinary artist who blends spoken word, dance, music, and theatre to create powerful and inspiring pieces of work.

Students will create spoken word poems about themselves and the world around them.

What to expect?

Part 1: Meet interdisciplinary artist Peace Akintade, Saskatchewan’s Youth Poet Laureate for 2020-21. Peace talks about her practice and discusses where she draws inspiration from. This includes music, observing interactions amongst people, and personal experiences as a young black immigrant and refugee who has been living in Canada for eight years.

Part 2: Students will use their senses, draw upon imagery, and explore ways to create their own, personalized poems. Peace will introduce students to four different techniques/exercises to experiment with as they explore creating images with words.

Part 3: Peace presents two of her poems and shares techniques that will help students get grounded as they prepare to present their poems to an audience.

Part 4: Peace takes students on an inspirational journey of her own growth and different opportunities that helped her realize who she is and what she likes. She provides insight to fears she had when she was starting out and reminds students that they continue to grow with new opportunities as they are presented. This video ends with “10 Things” to remember when you’re creating art.

Episode Highlights

Artistic Skills: Finding inspiration, imagery, metaphor, storytelling, senses and synesthesia, grounding, vocal projection, confidence, perspective, finding artistic heroes, knowing your “comfort zone”

Social Themes: Newcomer, BIPOC, cultural storytelling, Black identity, refugee, immigration, taking care of the audience, responsibility of the artist, dealing with trauma, finding joy, remaining true to yourself despite expectations, connecting to feelings, youth advocacy

Possible Arts Education 8 Curricular Outcomes:

- **CP8.6** Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.
- **CR8.2** Investigate and identify ways that today’s arts expressions often reflect concern for social issues.
- **CR8.3** Investigate and identify how arts expressions can reflect diverse worldviews.
- **CH8.4** Examine and respond to the work of artists who incorporate more than one art form in their work (e.g., combining poetry and music).

Possible ELA 8 Curricular Outcomes:

- **CC8.7** Use oral language to effectively express information and ideas of complexity in formal and informal situations (e.g., to debate a point, to participate in a meeting, to give a dramatic reading of a poem or play excerpt).
- **CC8.9** Experiment with a variety of text forms (e.g., Reader's Theatre, role play, humorous instructions, an electronic presentation, a dramatization, a mini-debate) and techniques (e.g., imagery, music, graphics and statistics in a multimedia presentation).

Run Times:

Part 1: 22:06 Meet the Artist

Part 2: 28:13 Writing with Peace

Part 3: 20:16 Performing with Peace

Part 4: 24:38 Perspective with Peace

Total: 1:35:13

Part One: Meet the Artist

Running Time: 22 minutes. Suggested Class Time: 30-60 minutes (Watch the video and follow-up discussion)

Meet interdisciplinary artist Peace Akintade, Saskatchewan's Youth Poet Laureate for 2020-21. Peace talks about her practice and discusses where she draws inspiration from. This includes music, observing interactions amongst people, and personal experiences as young black immigrant and refugee who has been living in Canada for eight years. Peace considers the importance of her role as an artist that serves two purposes: 1) to create an experience for the audience, and 2) talk about social issues in an accessible way so people can relate. While addressing trauma, Peace also recognizes the importance to discuss the beauty she finds in her culture, skin color, and identity.

Peace addresses the following:

1. Tell us about yourself, please.
2. What inspires you?
3. What's a question you get asked a lot?
4. What's a typical day like for you?
5. What is the artist's role in society?
6. Are there issues you try and explore in your work?

Part Two: Writing with Peace. Suggested Time: 2-3 hours.

Students will use their senses, draw upon imagery, and explore ways to create their own, personalized poems. Peace will introduce students to four different techniques/exercises to experiment with as they explore creating images with words. Many of these are great warm-up exercises and can be used when experiencing writer's block.

Exercise One: Getting Started – Using Imagery and Metaphors to Create Stories.

Suggested Time: 15-30 minutes

- 0:00-4:15: Explanation
- 4:15- 4:53: Activity – Take two or three items and try to relate them with each other (connect them with imagery and metaphor).
- 4:53-6:35: Conclusion – how imagery comes together. Peace provides an example she created by combining from two very different objects (teddy bear and radio station).

Exercise Two: Senses – Using Your Senses to Explore Imagery. Suggested Time: 15-30 minutes.

- 6:35-8:00: Explanation
- 8:00-9:00: Activity – Childhood memories. Describe your childhood by completing the sentences: My childhood sounds like..., My childhood feels like..., My childhood tastes like..., My childhood looks like..., My childhood smells like....
- 9:00-10:52: Conclusion – The beauty of working with this prompt and how it is unique to the individual. You will see how it connects and, already, you have a poem.
- 10:52- 12:00: Activity/Explanation – An example of the senses exercise as students consider one object in the room and describe it with the five senses.

Exercise Three: Synesthesia – Relating one sense with another. Suggested Time: 15-30 minutes

- 12:00-13:45: Explanation – relating how you visualize one sense with another sense
- 13:45-14:00: Activity – Describe an object using mix-and-match senses: the object sounds like music/the object smells like smoke.
- 14:00-16:30: Conclusion – Great for whimsical poetry or poetry that does not make sense but has a feeling behind it. If the intention is there, it doesn't have to make sense- it can be as whimsical as you like. This is the beauty of poetry.

Exercise Four: Using Lists. Suggested Time:15-30 minutes.

- 16:30-17:45: Explanation
- 17:45-18:00: Activity – Start with one word and write down a list of other words that come to you. Consider a time limit of three minutes.
- 18:00- Conclusion: Explanation – Expand on your list. A great prompt to use when you're having writer's block.

Intention with Reception: How much do you share with your audience?

- 20:15-24:26: Explanation/Discussion – Does it matter that a reader interprets a poem differently than you intended?

What does it mean to you to be a Youth Poet Laureate for Saskatchewan?

- 24:26-28:17: Peace discusses why poetry is important and her interest in creating a space where poetry is accessible to everyone.

Part Three: Performing with Peace. Suggested Time: 30-60 minutes.

Peace presents two of her poems and shares techniques that will help students get grounded as they prepare to present their poems to an audience.

- 0:00-2:55: Peace performs her poem *Sunflower Grave*.
- 2:55-5:00: Discussion – Finding communities to help you grow
- 5:00-10:00: Explanation – Performance techniques: Getting grounded and preparing to present your poem (relaxation exercises, vocal projection, confidence and perspective)
- 10:00-10:48: Introduction to Two Poems – Connecting all the different prompts to create a story (using the techniques from Part 2, working with imagery in the space you're in)
- 10:48- 12:28: Peace performs *An Artist's Circle*.
- 12:28-13:53: Explanation – *An Artist's Circle* is an example of a whimsical poem.
- 13:53-14:40: Explanation – Peace introduces her poem, *Rainbow*, and discusses how it was created.
- 14:40-17:23: Peace performs *Rainbow*
- 17:23-20:20: Explanation – Peace discusses how this poem began and how it evolved from a manifestation of one line that came to her when she was in bed at the age of 15.

Part Four: Perspective with Peace

Peace takes students on an inspirational journey of her own growth and different opportunities that helped her realize who she is and what she likes. She provides insight to fears she had when she was starting out and reminds students that we continue to grow with new opportunities as they are presented. She also discusses a project she was invited to participate in called the *21 Black Futures Project* (OBSIDIAN Theatre and CBC asked 21 playwrights, 21 directors, and 21 actors to work in partnership to create a play). This video ends with “10 Things” to remember when you're creating art.

- 0:00-3:37: Perspective with Peace: Poetry as Protest and Artist Inspiration – Nisha Patel.
 - 3:37-5:35: Discussion – What advice would you give to young Peace?
 - 5:35-9:35L: Discussion – Tell us about the 21 Black Futures Project.
 - 9:35-14:15: Discussion – Tell us about something you're proud of.
- Peace discusses the influx of new immigrants and refugees in Saskatoon in 2018 (the hotspot in Canada at the time) and outlines a mentorship project she was involved in that was about bridging newcomers to Saskatoon with the community. Peace discusses what she discovered about herself: that she really loves organizing and bringing different artistic mediums together into her process.
- 14:15-24:59: 10 Things to Remember

Biography

Peace Akintade (She/Her)

Peace Akintade is an African Canadian interdisciplinary poet, public speaker, and thespian residing in Saskatoon. She has been Forestry Farm's “Artist-in Residence”, 2020-2021 Saskatchewan Youth Poet Laureate, co-coordinator of Write Out Loud, a Saskatoon-based Youth Poetry Community, and board member of the Tonight It's Poetry community, part of the

Youth Speaker's Bureau for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, and one of the 21 Black playwrights chosen for Obsidian Theatre's 21 Black Future Project. Her play, *Madness with Rocks,* can be found on CBC Arts and CBC Gem. Her other works can be found in the History Folklore Society, Kindred Cities, CBC, Global News, SK Arts, the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, the Voices of Today Anthology, *Birthday Party*' Anthology, *The Leader-Post*, *TOAST*, and SaskCulture. Her poems touch on the impact of slavery in her village, colorism, growing up in Kuwait, Nigeria, and Canada, and relearning her culture in the face of colonization.

“Write like no one is watching.”