

Clark University Master of Arts in Teaching Program
Learning Activity Plan

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8th Grade English
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From the Page to the Stage: How do Poets Perform Spoken-Word Poetry?

- I. Content: Describe **what** it is you will teach. What is the content? - This lesson focuses on getting the students to better understand how the performance of a spoken word poem affects the poem's meaning. My students and I will be taking poetry "from the page to the stage" by looking at some examples of spoken word poetry, and seeing how a poem can be just read out loud, or actually performed.

- II. Learning Goal(s): Describe what specifically students will **know** and **be able to do** after the experience of this class.
 - a. Students will know and be able to recognize the different elements of performance that spoken-word poets often use when performing their poems (such as eye-contact, repetition, tone, facial expressions, body movement, etc.)
 - b. Students will be able to apply elements of performance and perform a poem in their own style.
 - c. Students will understand that performing a poem can change and/or emphasize the themes or meaning of the poem.

- III. Rationale: Explain how the content and learning goal(s) relate to your Curriculum Unit Plan learning goals. - My students have just finished up their Poetry Anthology, and the release party for this anthology will be an open mic and poetry slam. The goals of this lesson are to get my students to understand how performing a poem can affect the meaning of that poem, and thus help them prepare to perform their own poems in either a competitive or non-competitive setting.

- IV. Assessment: Describe **how** you and your students will know they have reached your learning goals. - Students will fill out an exit slip at the end of class on how poets perform poetry, and I will be able to see what they have learned based on their own poetry performances.

- V. Personalization and equity: Describe how you will provide for individual student strengths and needs. How will you and your lesson consider the needs of each

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student and scaffold learning? How specifically will ELL students and students with learning disabilities gain access and be supported? - Based on my experiences with my students, the interactivensess of this lesson will help ensure that everyone is engaged. More outgoing students will want to participate in actually acting out the poem themselves, but all students will be watching and paying attention to the ways that the poems are performed. I have created a graphic organizer for students to fill out and take their notes in to make the note-taking more accessible for all levels. I have also made the pairs strategically, making sure that students with higher needs are paired with students that can help support them.

VI. Activity description and agenda

- a. Describe the activities that will help your students understand the content of your class lesson by creating an agenda with time frames for your class. Be prepared to explain why you think each activity will help students on the path toward understanding.
 - i. 0-5 Mindful Minute and transition into class.
 - ii. 5-20 Examples of Spoken Word Poetry - Last class, we started watching videos of spoken word poetry, and students in pairs were asked specifically to look for examples of one certain performance aspect (e.g. eye contact or repetition) as they were watching. We will watch two more videos in the beginning of class today, and then students will share what they came up with.
 - iii. 20-45 My Poetry Reading - I will read a poem for the students twice, once with a total flat affect and absolutely no performance or expression, and then again fully and dramatically performed. Students will be asked to take notes about each performance and then we will discuss these differences.
 - iv. 45-53 Students will have the opportunity to try reading this same poem as dramatically as possible. I'll give them a minute or two to read the poem silently to themselves, and then will take volunteers to perform the poem.
 - v. 53-60 Exit slip - Students will answer a short question on how poets perform poetry before they leave for the day.

- b. What particular challenges, in terms of student learning or implementing planned activity, do you anticipate and how will you address them? - The main challenges that I anticipate in implementing this activity are transitioning into class at the start of the period and transitioning from one activity to the next. I plan on using the Mindful Minute to help the class focus and start their day. On Monday, we had a Mindful Monday that focused

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on how students can build themselves up without bringing others down, and that activity was really successful in hooking the class for the rest of the lesson. I plan on calling back to what we did on Monday by asking the students to think of one thing that they did this week that they are proud of during the Mindful Minute today. This should help them calm down, re-focus, and begin our class with a positive attitude.

- VII. List the Massachusetts Learning Standards this lesson addresses.
1. SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. (mini-discussions and small group discussions on students' responses to poetry)
 2. L.8.3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
 3. SL.8.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (dramatic reading of a poem)