



PRESENTS

MAYHEM POETS



2017-18 Field Trip Educator Guide

Dear Educators,

Welcome to ArtsBridge’s 2017-18 Field Trip Season! We are thrilled to present **Mayhem Poets** as the first of several exciting field trips throughout the school year!

The Mayhem Poets are a troupe of theatre-trained, comedically-gifted, lyrical virtuosos that seamlessly blend raw elements of hip hop, theatre, improv and stand-up comedy to tell gut wrenching truths that leave audiences forever changed. With a mind-boggling show dubbed “an amazing ride” by the New York Times and described as “The Simpsons meets Malcolm X at a Notorious B.I.G. concert”, the poets tour internationally and spread their mission to reshape society’s view of poetry.

Thank you for sharing this special experience with your students. We hope this field trip guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will see guidelines regarding your field trip, background on slam poetry, and applicable ways to incorporate spoken word poetry into your classroom. Please “pick and choose” materials and ideas from the guide to meet your class’ unique needs.

We look forward to inspiring and educating your students through the arts on **October 2, 2017** at the world-class Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre!

See you at the theatre,

The ArtsBridge Team

*Content created by Mayhem Poets and ArtsBridge Foundation
Designed by Gibbs Creative and Laura Gronek*

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About Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre



The landmark Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is a cultural, entertainment and special events venue of a national significance. Atlanta's first major performing arts facility in four decades, Cobb Energy Centre boasts state-of-the-art systems, amenities and design features that allow the expression of any artistic idea and captivate performers, patrons and event planners. The Centre's strong suit is versatility. It can accommodate events as diverse as Broadway, concerts, corporate functions, private parties and family entertainment.

The Centre's distinctive façade and three-story lobby – highlighted by a 65-foot, floor-to-ceiling glass curtain wall – offer visitors a grand welcome and stunning introduction to a venue of great warmth, elegance and possibilities. Nothing speaks "special occasion" like the majestic lobby – a gathering space and promenade with two grand staircases, specially designed colored-glass chandeliers and walls of Venetian plaster.

The Centre's 2,750-seat John A. Williams Theatre captures the richness and intimacy of vintage theaters. Yet it incorporates modern touches and technology – including advanced sound, lighting and acoustical elements – that allow fine-tuning for each performance. With equal poise, the Theatre can host concerts, opera, drama, comedy, lectures, dance and spoken word.

For special occasions and events – from wedding receptions and themed parties to corporate banquets and black-tie galas – the Centre's flexible spaces include a 9,500-square foot Courtyard, 3,100-square-foot Terrace and 10,000-square-foot Ballroom – divisible into three independent spaces, each with autonomous sound and lighting controls. The Ballroom's pre-function area is ideally suited for pre- and post-event gatherings.

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 250,000 patrons visit the Cobb Energy Centre each year.
- The Cobb Energy Centre opened in 2007.
- The Cobb Energy Centre has two main spaces:
 - John A. Williams Theatre, 2750 seats
 - Kessel D. Stelling Ballroom, 10,000 square feet
- No seat is more than 160 feet from center stage in the John A. Williams Theatre.
- There are 1,000 parking spaces on site.
- The Centre is located one mile from the new Braves stadium and only 15 minutes from downtown Atlanta.
- ArtsBridge programs began in 2007 and reach 30,000 – 40,000 students each year.

Field Trip Guidelines

Below are some simple guidelines for your ArtsBridge Field Trip to the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Please read carefully and contact us at (770) 916-2805 if you have questions or require additional information.

Reservations: All field trip admissions are to be made in advance. Please do not bring more than the number of seats reserved. Performances are expected to sell out and we will not be able to accommodate an increase in numbers at the last minute. All patrons, including teachers and chaperones, must have a reservation in order to attend these performances. Children under the age of three are not permitted to attend.

Payment: Payments must be made in full, 3 weeks prior to the day of show or we will not be able to accommodate your reservation. An invoice will be given to you at the time your reservation is made. Once you have paid in full, we will send a confirmation, which will serve as your school's ticket into the performance. ArtsBridge reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.

Transportation: The Centre can accommodate school buses, vans and cars. Please be aware that vans and cars will incur an \$8 per vehicle parking fee. A third party contractor runs the Centre's garage and charges this fee. There is no charge for parking school buses. All buses, vans and cars must comply with directions provided by on-site staff.

Arrival: All vehicles should approach the Cobb energy Performing Arts Centre from AKERS MILL ROAD. ((See map herein.) Upon entering the driveway, buses will be directed to the circular drive where they will temporarily pull up to the curb for unloading. A Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre representative will board the bus and check-in your school. Classes will be immediately unloaded and buses will be directed to their designated parking areas.

Seating: Classes are seated as they arrive, starting with the floor level, first row. The exception to this is for programs with older and younger students in attendance at the same time. In this case, students in kindergarten and first-grade will be seated in the first few rows of the theatre. There are three levels of seating, with the back row of the top level no more than 160 feet from the stage.

Restrooms: Please seat your entire group, before taking restroom breaks, so that you can be easily found. Students MUST be accompanied by adult chaperones when going to the restroom. We encourage that you take groups so that there are fewer trips.

Chaperones: Chaperones have a job to perform while at the Centre. Please make sure that your chaperones are interspersed among students and that they are prepared for the day's responsibilities. Please discuss restroom visits, emergencies, behavior, etc. with your chaperones prior to arrival.

Behavior: Students and teachers are encouraged to enjoy performances, applaud and express enthusiasm in a manner that is appropriate for the performance, yet not disruptive for others. We request that all phones, tablets and any other electronic devices be completely turned off or on silent mode during the performance. We ask that chaperones on upper levels watch for students tossing or throwing items to lower levels and prevent students from climbing or leaning on railings. No student can leave the audience chamber without an accompanying chaperone. Students/classes that are disruptive may be asked to leave the performance with no refund. (See Theatre Etiquette on Page 7.)

Departure: Performances last approximately one hour. Upon conclusion of the performance, classes will be dismissed to the designated parking area to board their buses and return to school.

Lunch: There is no facility for classes to eat lunch in the Cobb Energy Centre. We recommend classes eat lunch at the Galleria Specialty Mall, Cumberland Mall, or a park on the route to/from the venue or on their bus.



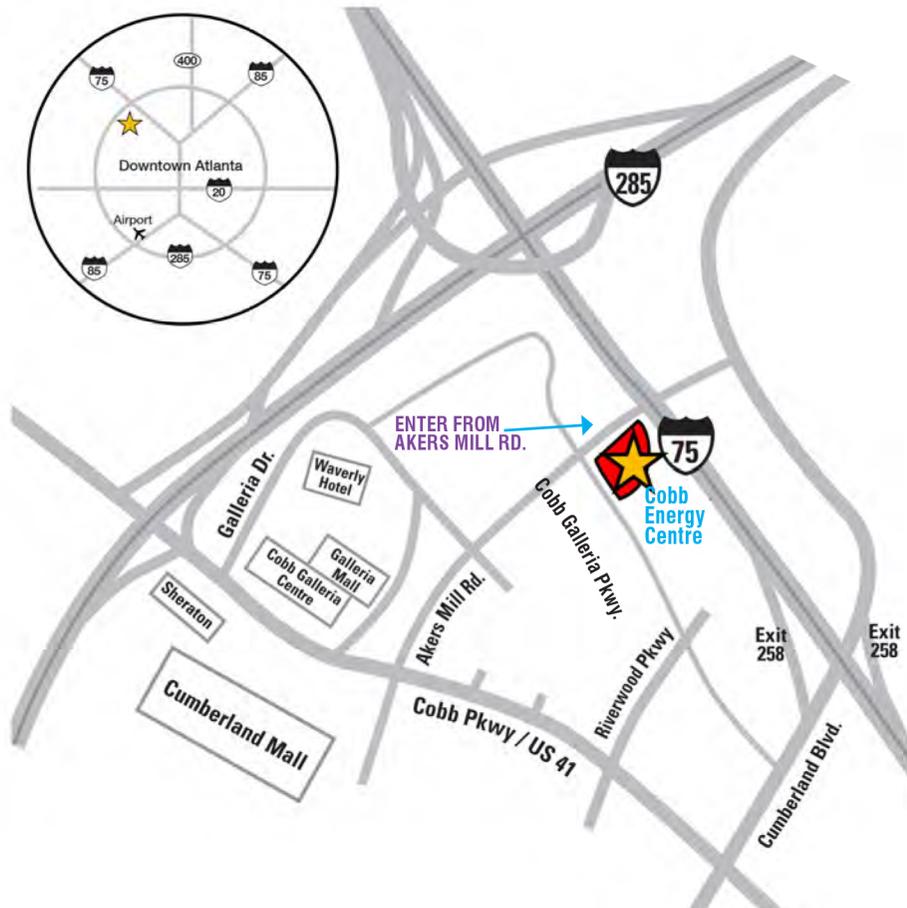
Transportation Information

Buses: All school buses must approach the building from AKERS MILL ROAD on the North side of the building. This will be crucial in assuring a fairly smooth flow of traffic. There will be Centre representatives guiding you. Buses will pull onto the site from behind the building and then drive to the front. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR DRIVERS USE THE MAP BELOW. There is no charge to park school buses on-site.

Checking In: When you arrive at the front of the building, a representative from the Centre will board your bus to check-in your school. You and your bus driver will be given a large number that will be taped to the bus windows. Please remember your number, as it will help you find your bus after the performance.

After the Show: After the performance, buses will be parked in the Centre's surface lot in numerical order and representatives will assist you in locating your bus(es). We encourage everyone to board their buses as quickly and safely as possible. For safety reasons, we are going to try and hold all buses until everyone has boarded, so please make your way directly to the surface parking lot following the performance. (see map below)

Cars/Vans/SUVs: You will still approach the building in the same manner, but will park in our parking deck. Please note there is an \$8 vehicle parking fee for cars/vans/SUVs. After you have parked, make your way to level 2 of the deck and to the west side (theater side) of the building. When you emerge from the parking deck, there will be a Centre representative to check you in and direct you to your seats.



Additional Map for All Vehicles Attending



2800 Cobb Galleria Pkwy, Atlanta, GA 30339

Theater Etiquette

A live performance is a unique experience shared between performers and audience members. Unlike television or movies, audience distractions can disrupt the performers, production and audience. Before you arrive at the Cobb Energy Centre, please review the following information with your students and chaperones, and help ArtsBridge create a meaningful experience for all.

- Arrive early. Groups are seated on a first come, first serve basis. Seats are not assigned for ArtsBridge events.
- Food, drink, candy, gum, etc. is not permitted in the theater.
- Silence or turn off all electronic devices. We encourage you to share your ArtsBridge experience at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre via social media, but please refrain from doing so or texting during performances; the glow from your device is distracting.
- Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not allowed in the theater during the performance.
- Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- Talk only before and after the performance only. Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage – they will let you know what is appropriate.
- If you need assistance during the show, please find your nearest volunteer usher.
- As you enter and exit the theater, remember to walk and stay with your group.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!



Pre-Show Activities

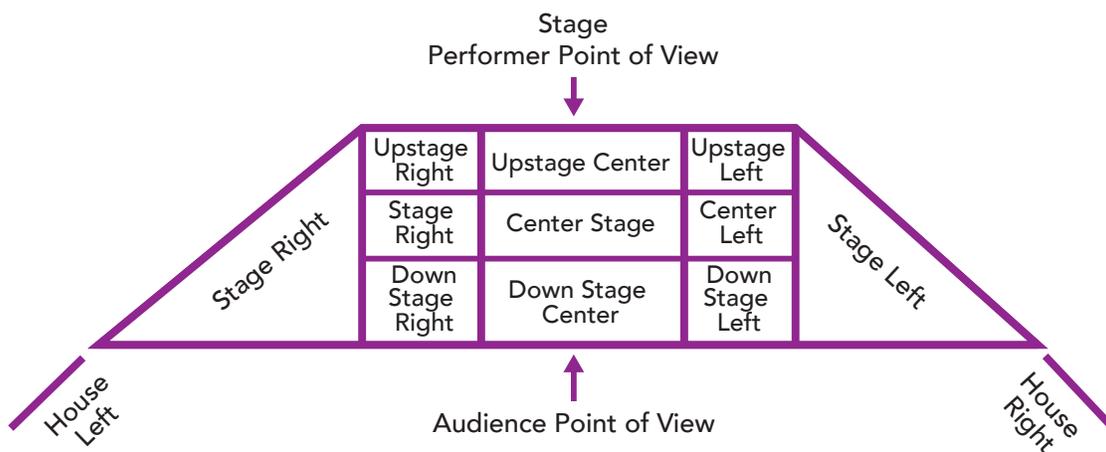
Before attending an ArtsBridge Field Trip, review the following questions and vocabulary with your students:

1. How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What did you see?
2. What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?
3. The BAD Audience Member! A fun way to review theater etiquette with your students is to have them point out bad audience behavior during a show. Here's one way to illustrate this concept:



- a. Have students present something to the class. The key is they are “actors” and the class is the audience.
- b. Once they are into the activity, you (the teacher) leave the room and then re-enter. Enter loudly, chew gum, step on people’s feet, talk to them, etc. Be the worst audience member. Find a seat and continue to talk to others, ask what’s going on in the performance, take pictures, talk on your cell phone, etc.
- c. Ask the class to list all the bad behavior. Write these on the board.
- d. Ask the audience members how they felt when the bad audience member came into the theater. Could they hear the actors? Were they distracted?
- e. Ask the actors how they felt. Could they concentrate on their performance?

4. Review the stage diagram below with the students. Draw the diagram on the whiteboard and have students come up and write in each part of the stage.



THEATRICAL VOCABULARY

Review the following theatrical terms with your students before attending the performance! This will help them better understand all of the elements of a production.

Author – the writer of a script; also called the book

Audition – to perform to get a role for the production; usually includes singing, dancing and reading scenes from the show; usually takes place in front of the Director & Creative Team

Ballad – a slow song for actors to showcase vocal clarity

Blocking – the specific movement of actors on stage; usually given by the Director

Box Office – a booth inside the theatre where tickets are sold

“Calling the Show” – the process of calling out the lighting, sound and scene-change cues during a performance; usually done by the stage manager

Casting – the process through which actors are chosen for roles in the production

Casting Agent – one who chooses actors for roles in the production

Choreographer – one who designs dance sequences and teaches them to the cast of the production

Composer – one who writes the music

Conductor – one who directs the orchestra

Costumes – a set of clothes in a style typically of a particular country or historical period

Curtain Call – the appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience’s applause

Director – one who supervises the creative aspects and guides the artistic vision of the production

Dress Rehearsal – rehearsal in which performers practice with costumes, props, lights and microphones

Dresser – one who assists performers with their costumes during dress rehearsals and shows

Electrician – one who works with the lighting designer to adjust and operate lighting instruments

Ensemble / Chorus – typically singers, dancers or actors who perform in group numbers

Head Carpenter – one who builds the sets for the production

House Left – the left side of the theatre, when facing the stage (audience’s point of view)

House Manager – one who oversees all aspects of the audiences; responsible for ushers and audience safety

House Right – the right side of the theatre, when facing the stage (audiences point of view)

Lighting Designer – one who decides where the lighting instruments should go, how they should be colored and which ones should be on at any particular time to affect mood, visibility and to showcase costumes and sets

Lyricist – one who writes the words to a song

Makeup Artist – one who applies cosmetics to a performer’s face and body

Music Director – one who teaches and rehearses the music with the orchestra

Orchestra Pit – the lowered area in front of a stage where the orchestra (musicians) sit and play during the performance

Overture – an orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition

Producer – a person responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of staging a play, opera, musical, ballet, etc.

Program – a listing of the order of events, names of the cast and crew and other relevant information for the production

Property (Props) Manager – one who manages all items used on stage that cannot be classified as scenery, electrics or wardrobe

Proscenium arch – the arch opening between the stage and auditorium; the frame of the stage

Read-through – the cast reads through the script without movement or music; typically done at the first rehearsal

Set Designer – one who designs the scenery for the stage

Sitzprobe – the first rehearsal with both the performers and the orchestra, with no staging or dancing

Sound Designer – one who plans and executes the layout of all sound playbook and equipment for the show

Sound Operator – one who handles the sound playbook and mixing equipment for the show; works with Sound Designer

Sound Board – a desk comprising a number of input channels where each sound source is provided with its own control channel through which sound signals are routed into two or more outputs; controls all microphones and music

Spotlights – a lamp projecting a narrow, intense beam of light directly onto a place or person, especially a performer on stage

Standby / Understudy – one who studies a role and is prepared to substitute a performer when needed

Stage Left – the left side of the stage, when facing the audience (performer’s point of view)

Stage Manager – one who is responsible for the quality of the show’s production, assists the director and oversees the show at each performance

Stage Right – the right side of the stage, when facing the audiences (performer’s point of view)

Technical Rehearsal – rehearsal incorporating the technical elements of a show such as the scene and property shifts, lighting, sound and special effects

Uptempo Song – a fast, upbeat song for actors to showcase dancing and acting ability

Usher – one who guides audience members to their seats

Wig Master / Mistress – one who obtains and customizes wigs for performers to wear

ABOUT THE MAYHEM POETS

“Let’s go see a poetry show.” That is a sentence rarely proclaimed and usually responded to with cringes and excuses. The **Mayhem Poets** are on a mission to change that. Having been dubbed “an amazing ride” by the New York Times, this mind-boggling performance has been described as “The Simpsons meets Malcolm X at a Notorious B.I.G. concert”. These theatre-trained, comedically-gifted, lyrical virtuosos seamlessly blend raw elements of hip hop, theatre, improv and stand-up comedy to tell gut wrenching truths that leave audiences forever changed. Since then they’ve been touring internationally and spreading their mission to reshape society’s view of poetry.

A graduate of Rutgers University with a double degree in Theater and Journalism, **Scott Raven** co-founded The Mayhem Poets. His performance work has been featured by Fiat, Purina, CNN, and The Today Show. His written work has appeared in the New York Times and New York Post. He is the author of *Sconnettts*, a collection of Shakespearean sonnets based on all of his past romantic relationships; and the upcoming “6 Piece Chicken (performable poems and stories from on tour).” He’s also a proud member of the Spoken Word Almanac Project (SWAP) and Poetic People Power (P3).

Originally from Philly, raised in Willingboro, and currently living in Queens, NYC, **Mason Granger** has been a full-time member of the performance poetry trio The Mayhem Poets since 2005. With a style that’s equal parts smart & smile, Mason gets his points across in a way that leaves audiences hopefully a little more knowledgeable and feeling a little better than when they arrived. Mason is also the creator of SlamFind, the world’s first mobile app dedicated to performance poetry that allows poetry fans to discover & connect with live poetry venues and individual poets all over North America. SlamFind poetry videos have been featured by The Huffington Post, Upworthy, BuzzFeed, Cosmo and many more.

Mikumari Caiyhe is an established actor, emcee, spoken word poet, and arts educator. A native of Washington, DC, Mikumari graduated from the distinguished Duke Ellington School for the Arts, with a focus in Theatre. He completed his formal education at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, as Acting major. As an artist, Mikumari has toured internationally. Some credits include being cast as the lead actor in the musical *Revelations* while in London, England, playing the role of God/MC. In the same year, being one of the first emcees/ rappers to ever do a Hip Hop concert at Shakespeare’s Globe. Most recently, he was a member of NYC’s Nuyorican Poets Cafe 2013 Competitive poetry team.

Kyle Rapps is co-founder and producer of Mayhem Poets. His hip-hop styles and theatrical presence have earned him poetry slam victories across the nation, and brought him all the way to the Grand Slam finals at the legendary Nuyorican Poets Cafe in New York City. As a rapper, Kyle has recorded with the likes of Action Bronson, Talib Kweli, KRS-One and Joell Ortiz. After touring for over 10 years with the group, Kyle recently moved to Mexico City to spread the Mayhem Poets message across the border.



SPOKEN WORD & SLAM POETRY



Spoken-word poetry has been around for thousands of years. Before there was written language, oral poets were the keepers of the history and mythology of their people. Epic poems such as Homer’s *Iliad* and the Scandinavian saga *Beowulf* were passed down orally for generations before they were finally written down. West Africa has the griot (pronounced GREE-oh), a storyteller and historian who speaks or sings the history of his people.

William Shakespeare is probably the world’s best-known performance poet; his plays were written in verse and were meant to be performed, not read. It was Shakespeare’s actors who wrote

down the text of his plays; if they hadn’t done so, we would not be studying and performing these works today.

America in the 20th century saw the rise of spoken-word poetry among the writers of the **Harlem Renaissance**, the Beat Generation, and the hip-hop scene. These artists used poetry to interpret and comment on the social upheaval of their day and to encourage ordinary people to tell their stories. Today’s spoken-word poetry is heavily influenced by these earlier movements.

Slam poetry, an interactive poetry competition, is thought to have begun in Chicago 1985 at a jazz club called the Green Mill. A construction worker named Marc Smith, a.k.a. “Papi”, created a lyrical “boxing match,” pitting poets against each other one-on-one. The judges were randomly-chosen audience members, who scored the poets on a scale from 0-10. From there, slam poetry caught on in cities such as New York and San Francisco. In New York’s East Village, the **Nuyorican Poets’ Café** became the mecca of performance poetry. Slam teams sprang up all over the United States and Canada; the best go on to compete in the National Poetry Slam, an annual event occurring every summer since 1990.

Slam poetry uses elements of theater, hip-hop, music, and stand-up comedy, as poets work to impress the crowd with entertaining, imaginative poetry. Poets sometimes wear costumes, incorporate songs, music, or chants in their poetry, and can have a funny, serious, or political message. Official slam rules require a poem to be no more than three minutes in length. In competition, props, costumes, and music are not allowed.

This American-born art form has spread all over the world. You can find poetry slams in such diverse countries as Australia, Austria, Bosnia, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Singapore, and Macedonia. In this country, performance poetry can be seen on television and even on Broadway, where Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam won a 2003 Tony® Award for Best Special Theatrical Event.

SLAM POETRY:

poetry in performance, merging theatre, hip-hop, music, and stand-up comedy

Shakespeare wrote over 100 sonnets with Sonnet 18 as the most recognizable.

Slam Poetry isn’t the first time artists have used word play to get a message across to their audiences. Rap musicians do it all the time, but even they weren’t the first. Singer-songwriters Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen have been using wordplay for years, and they are only some of the latest in a long line of that tradition. The next time you listen to your favorite song, see if you can pick out some of the techniques discussed in this guide.

PRACTICE: Take one of Shakespeare’s sonnets and rewrite it as a spoken word piece using some of the tools on the following pages.

SLAM—

1. *v.* - to shut with force and noise.
2. *v.* - to strike, knock, throw, slap down, etc., with violent and noisy impact.
3. *v.* - to criticize harshly; attack verbally.
4. *adj.* - excellent, good. (slang)
5. *n.* - a poetry competition where the participants perform their work aloud and are judged by the audience.

Q. Why do you think a poetry competition is called a “slam”?

WRITING YOUR OWN POETRY

When the Mayhem Poets begin writing a new piece, the poem doesn't just magically appear. They have a process that they use to work out their ideas and then put them into creative, powerful language. The exercises outlined on the next couple of pages were developed by the Mayhem Poets to help students get their creative juices flowing and begin to think like poets.

HERE are the basic steps:



-  1 Warm Up Your Imagination
-  2 Find Your Words and Rhymes
-  3 Make a Personal Connection
-  4 Use the Poet Tree
-  5 Get Ready to Perform
-  6 Hold Your Own Poetry Slam!



1 IMAGINATION WARMUP

1. Standing in a circle, toss a ball to someone across the circle. As you throw the ball, say a random word out loud. The person catching the ball then throws it to someone else, saying a word completely unrelated to the initial word. Keep tossing the ball around the circle and saying your words until your group has mastered the exercise.

2. Each time the ball is thrown, the words must be within a specific ENVIRONMENT (for example: circus, bowling alley, aquarium, beach, baseball game, classroom). As the words are spoken, your teacher writes them down on the board. Keep this as a vocabulary list for writing your own slam poems.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

TIME FOR RHYME

Did you know there are all kinds of rhymes? Using different types of rhymes will make your poems more interesting to the listener. Varying your rhymes will also give you the freedom to pick the best words for the lines instead of choosing a word only because it fits a particular kind of rhyme. Here are some different types of rhymes:

- >>There are **normal rhymes**, words like *gutter / butter / stutter*
- >>There are **slant rhymes**, where either the vowels or the consonants of stressed syllables are identical. Slant rhymes look like this: *Hellman’s mustard / General Custard / Mother Hubbard*
- >>There are **multi-syllabic rhymes**, used most often in hip-hop with a background beat: *I’m here to melt your ears with hot sounds / To grab the kids with adjectives and spit-on-the-spot nouns*
- >>Here’s an example of multi-syllabic rhyme in spoken word poetry that also that uses **alliteration** (repeating the same beginning consonant sound in two or more words in the same line), **onomatopoeia** (where a word or phrase imitates the sound it is describing), and **internal rhyme** (rhyming words within a single line):

*I’m a blend of my friends, N’sync with their idiosyncrasies
Merely mimicking their ticks and tocks
like Timberlake shaking and talking
while moon-walking like Michael.*

Here are some additional suggestions for using rhyme in spoken word poetry:

- >>Don’t stick to using only end rhymes (couplets).
- >>Vary the rhyme scheme and rhythm to keep your poetry from becoming “singsongy.”
- >>Don’t settle for a particular word just because it rhymes. Choose the word or phrase that best expresses what you want to say.
- >>Remember: absence of rhyme is not an absence of rhythm. Pay attention to crafting a good rhythm for your poetry.
- >>Listen to hip-hop (mainly for rhythmic pattern).
- >>Memorize lyrics.
- >>Read aloud whenever possible.



2 FIND YOUR RHYMES

Using the word list you created in the ball-toss exercise on the previous page, create some different types of rhymes.

THE POET'S TOOLBOX

Spoken word poetry uses lots of other tools besides rhyme to play with words. Here are some literary devices and alternate ways of putting words together outside of rhyme or in conjunction with rhyme.

>>**Acronyms** are letter abbreviations for proper names and common phrases. (Text messaging has made acronyms a big part of our language!) Spoken word poets sometimes create their own versions of existing acronyms. For example: *KFC* meant to me that I'd *Kill For Chicken*.

>>**Cliches** and popular phrases are a great way for a poet to get creative. The best part about playing with these well-known sayings is that your audience will recognize them immediately. There are lots of creative ways to play with clichés:

>>You can **ADD YOUR OWN ENDING** to them.

A stich in time saves nine...

pair of pants from embarrassing a group of 13-year-olds at the school dance.

>>You can **CHANGE** parts of them.

Stink bombs bursting in air giving proof through the school that the drag is still there...

>>You can **USE ONLY PARTS** of them.

Oh say can you see, by the dawn's early light,

that the chronically late have a date for Saturday detention while the honors student will never get suspension.

>>**Puns** are another technique for playing with words. For example: *Lord of the Ringmaster*



2 FIND YOUR WORDS

1. Redefine these familiar acronyms:

LOL: _____

CIA: _____

BFF: _____

2. Add your own ending to these clichés:

People in glass houses: _____

Don't put all your eggs: _____

Sticks and stones: _____

3. Now try changing around the clichés above or use your own: _____

4. Take your own cliché, popular song, or phrase, and reinvent it: _____

MORE TOOLS

Pop-culture references are another tool for connecting with your audience. Take several well-known names, characters, titles, etc. and put them together by free association.

- >> Daniel Day Lewis and Clark Gable
- >> Wheel of Fortune Cookie Monster Mash with Alan Alda
- >> Imagine U R Kelly...Clarkson on MTV, BET VH1 o6 and Park.

Similes and **metaphors** find ways to relate seemingly different words and phrases. You can use the following template to create your own similes: *Life is like a _____, which is like a _____, which is like a _____.*

- >> Life is like a nose, which is like a downward ski slope, which is like the Batman franchise of movies thus far.
- >> Life is like a remote control, which is like replaying of events, which is like a dream, which is like becoming a movie star. which is like passing a kidney stone, which is like fitting into a mouse hole.

Breaking down words is a type of punning. Pick two words at random and look for alternate meanings of each word or some part of the word. For example, the sentence below plays on the word “parent” that is contained inside “apparent.”

It was apparent that the relationship between my father and me was sinking.

Want to take it a step further? Here are some other literary devices you can use:

- Alliteration
- Antithesis
- Hyperbole
- Onomatopoeia
- Oxymoron
- Personification



2 FIND YOUR WORDS

1. Take a pop-culture icon, TV show, song title, etc. and free associate: _____

2. Write your own “Life is like a...” word association:

Life is like a : _____

Which is like a: _____

Which is like a: _____

3. Pick two of the words from the list below to use on your own in a sentence or two breaking down the words and exploring their alternate meanings:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|---------|----------|
| deceive | demonstrate | goodbye | self-esteem | canteen | in-sync |
| mystery | period | steal | mall | lapse | macaroni |
| righteous | nights | professor | hostile | smile | left |



3 MAKING A PERSONAL CONNECTION

No matter how well you write, the best way for your poetry to resonate with an audience is for it to have a personal meaning for you. By writing about specific ideas, issues, places, and things that matter to you, you are opening yourself up to your audience and connecting with them on a personal level. How do you write about things that have a personal connection for you? Start by making a list of things you feel strongly about, whether they are positive or negative. Use this as a starting point and use the exercises on this page to explore the topic further.

Exploring Your World

Explore your connection to an environment. Pick a specific place that you have something to say about. Free write about home, school, your job, a favorite place you like to hang out and see where that leads you.

The Place You Come From

Fill in this poem about yourself. It does not need to rhyme, it does not have to make literal sense—it just needs to be true. (Think of it as a “Mad Lib”.) When you are finished, you will have a poem that you can draw from to help with your slam poem, or it can be a poem all on its own.

- I am from _____ . (where home is for you)*
- I am from _____ . (where you feel most comfortable)*
- I am from _____ . (your favorite thing to do)*
- I am from _____ . (something from your childhood)*
- I am from _____ . (your plans for the future)*

You can add as many lines as you want and fill them in with whatever you want. This poem is all about **you**.

Group Identity

Working in a group of 3-5, write a “boast rap” about yourselves or a “message rap” about something you strongly believe. Share it with the rest of the class.

Personal Connection + Imagination

Using the worksheet below...

1. Column A: 5 things that hold power in your life. Choose one or two to expand upon if you feel it’s too general.

Example: Family (relationship to my brother, my dad getting remarried).

2. Column B: 5 things you’d find in three different environments (five things total).

Example: ENVIRONMENTS - circus, the shore, a mall / THINGS - cotton candy, seashells, clothing stores, sale

3. Craft a few lines of poetry by using something from B to describe something from A.

Example: Yesterday I went to the GAP and tried to return my brother for a pair of loosefit khakis, but instead I got back these ill-fitting corduroys that annoyed me more than my brother ever did.

Things that hold power in your life	Things you'd find in 3 different environments



4 USING THE POET TREE

1. Pick one word or environment.
2. On a blank Poet Tree (see the next page), list 4 or more words or phrases related to that word.
3. Choose one of those words to generate some related ideas to add to the Poet Tree: clichés and puns, acronyms, pop-culture references, etc.
4. Start a rhyme bank using normal, multi-syllabic and slant rhymes.
5. Find an emotional/personal connection to something in the tree.
6. Write a simple statement about poem’s overall concept. This can be the first line or last line of your poem.
7. Using your tree, begin crafting a few lines of poetry. Keep in mind you can follow this closely or more loosely as a way of generating ideas and making connections. You can start writing full lines, too, throughout the process.

Here’s Scott’s “chicken” Poet Tree to use as a guide.

STATE POEM’S OVERALL CONCEPT
(and begin crafting poem’s first few lines)

I was addicted to chicken.

Boston Market would spark it, Popeye’s would satisfy my late-night cries, KFC meant to me that I would Kill for Chicken. I started reading Chicken Soup for the Chicken Soul. Did you see those breasts? I want to lick those legs. Still salivating over those mesmerizing thighs. Fast food wasn’t enough slowly transform into a chicken...

Personal Connections

Love to eat, eat unhealthy, obsessive. I can make great chicken noises, etc.

Rhyme Bank

finger lickin, sicken, satisfy my cries, thighs, quicken, things, onion rings, stings, tender, rocking, bgoocking, side, wide, confide, slide, tide ride, guide

Related Words & Phrases

turkey, salmonella, breasts, legs, thighs, wings, marsala, murphy, fast food, Purdue, skin, golden brown, eggs, chicken comb, buffalo tenders

Acronyms

KFC (Kill for Chicken)

Pop Culture References

Chicken Soup for the Chicken Soul, Stella!!! to get to the other side, Roy’s, KFC, Popeye’s, Kenny Rogers, Chicken Holiday, Foghorn Leghorn, Back to the Future

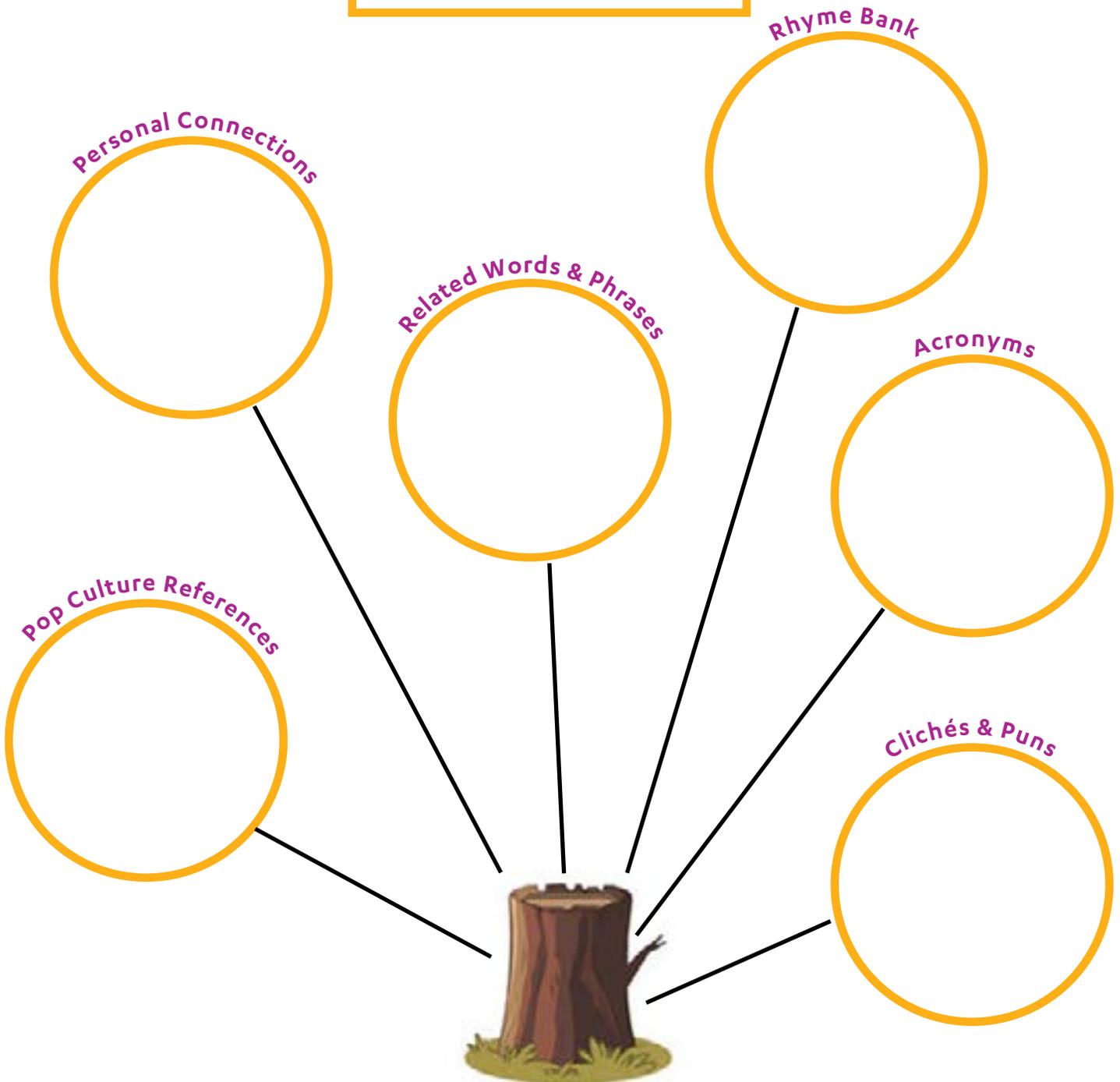
Clichés & Puns

play with drumsticks, cocka-doodle-doo, chicken contender, New York chickerbocker, fowl out, hens and family hatch a plan, sweating grease



USING THE POET TREE

STATE POEM'S OVERALL CONCEPT
(and begin crafting poem's first few lines)





5 GETTING READY TO PERFORM

Here are some activities you can do to help you get your poem ready for performance. They will help you work on: creating an interesting and varied way of speaking your poem; projecting your voice and speaking clearly so that you command the room when you speak; and creating a comfortable physical presence that enhances your performance.

Syllable/Word Stressing

1. Working with a partner, pick a favorite line from one of the poems you have written.
2. You and your partner take turns practicing your lines out loud, emphasizing different syllables and words, using different vocal inflections and stresses. Give each other feedback on your line readings until you each find the best way to present your lines.

All in the Timing

1. Working in groups of four, each person picks a joke out of a hat or comes in with one of their own.
2. Take 30 seconds to think about how you are going to deliver your joke for the best effect.
3. Take turns telling your joke to the rest of the group, rotating so each person tells her or his joke twice. Each time you tell your joke, you should change the way you say it. For example: add pauses, slow down or speed up, change the emphasis on certain words, or add a rhythm.

Enunciation

No matter how well-written your poem, it's no good if your audience can't understand what you're saying when you perform it. Use some of the tongue-twisters below to warm up your mouth before delivering your poem. Start slowly and then build up speed as they get easier.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers?

If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

I am not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's mate.

I am only plucking pheasants 'cause the pheasant plucker's running late.

The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick.

Red leather, yellow leather.

"Tongue-twister Telephone"

1. Work in a group of four people, sitting or standing in a line.
2. The first person in line is given a tongue twister. She or he whispers it into the ear of the next person, who then passes on the message, until it reaches the last person, who says it aloud.
3. Put two groups together and try it again. Then try it with the entire class in one group.

Learn to Project

Choose a line from your poem to deliver to your teacher, who will be standing at the back of the room. While you're performing your line, the rest of your class will be talking at the same time. (Volume levels of conversation can vary to add effect.) Do your best to make your line as coherent as possible to the teacher despite the "heckling."

Get Physical

Having trouble figuring out how to move your body during your poem? Pick one line in your poem—it can be your favorite or the one you're not sure about. Find a pose or motion to get into when you get to this line in your poem so that the line is emphasized. Practice getting into the pose and then try some different ways to get back into your normal stance. If you are doing a motion, decide when would be the best time to start and stop. What this is starting to look like? Pick another line and do the same thing. Don't get too complicated, but don't be afraid to move around and get into your poem. You wrote it, so you get to decide!



6 HOLD YOUR OWN POETRY SLAM

Now that you have written your own poetry, it's time to hold your very own poetry slam. Decide as a group whether or not the slam will be competitive and whether you want to award prizes for winners or all the participants. If you don't think you are ready for a poetry slam involving the whole school, have a slam within your class and have students judge each other.

You will need an M.C. to host the event and a scorekeeper with a calculator. Invite other students, teachers, parents, or staff to serve as audience and judges. All a judge needs is paper and a big marker. Instruct your judges to score on a scale of 1-10, with 10 representing the best poetry performance a judge has ever heard. Contestants should be judged on the poem itself and on how effectively the poem is presented to the audience.

Although the official slam rules say that poems can be no longer than three minutes and can't include props, costumes, or music, your group can have a little more fun with it. Take the time to add in props, costumes, or music to give your poem something extra. How intense can your battle get?

When the slam is over, publish a collection of all the poems that were presented and distribute it to other classes.

OFFICIAL SLAM RULES

1. No more than 3 minutes
2. No props
3. No costumes
4. No music



Self-Assessment Checklist ✓

>>Writing: Rhyming and Rhythm

- Used rhyme where appropriate.
- Varied rhyme scheme and used slant rhymes.
- Used internal rhyme.
- Used alliteration.

>>Writing: Syntax

- Used inventive acronyms.
- Took clichés and changed them around.
- Incorporated pop-culture references.
- Used puns, wordplay, etc.

>>Writing: Personal Connection

- Created personal connections.
- Combined personal connection with imaginative/creative concepts/ideas.

>>Performance: Vocal

- Enunciated entire poem clearly and sustained energy throughout.
- Stressed punchlines when appropriate.
- Projected so everyone could hear.
- Was aware of timing, pacing, and rhythm.

>>Performance: Physicality

- Incorporated gestures and movement.
- Had poem memorized so hands were free and body open.

>>Performance: Audience Connection

- Looked at audience while performing.
- Fed off the audience's energy throughout.
- Stayed focused during disruptions and took in the unexpected.

>>Overall Performance

- Used several performance tactics throughout.
- Used own unique distinct voice.
- Took the audience on a journey from beginning to end.

RESOURCES

Web Sources

Poetry Slam Inc. (<https://poetryslam.com/>)

Power Poetry - Write Your Own Story (<http://www.powerpoetry.org/>)

Georgia Poetry Society (<http://georgiapoetrysociety.org/youth/>)

Education World® Great Sites for Teaching About Poetry (http://www.educationworld.com/a_sites/sites013.shtml)

Every Poet - Every Resource for Every Poet (<http://everypoet.com/>)

Slam Find App (<http://www.slamfind.com/>)



Georgia Standards of Excellence

>>ELACC6RL2-10, ELACC7RL2-10, ELACC8RL2-10, L9-10RH2-10, L11-12RH2-10, ELAGSE9-10RL2-10, ELAGSE9-10SL3, ELAGSE9-10SL4, ELAGSE11-12RL2-10, ELAGSE11-12SL3, ELAGSE11-12SL4

>>M6GM.6-.8, M7GM.6-.8, M8GM.6-.8, M9GM.6-.8, M10GM.6-.8, M11GM.6-.8, M12GM.6-.8, TA6-12.PR.1

>>TA6-12.PR.2, TA6-12.RE.1, TA6-12.RE.2, TA6-12.CN1, TAHSAD.RE1, TAHSAD.RE2, TAHSAD.CN1, TAHSAD.RE.1, TAHSAD.RE.2, TAHSAD.CN.1, TAHSFT.RE.1, TAHSFT.RE.2, TAHSFT.CN.1, TAHSMT.PR.1, TAHSMT.RE.1, TAHSMT.RE.2, TAHSMT.CN.1, TAHSTT.RE.1, TAHSTM.RE.1, TAHSTM.CN.1

>>D6-12FD.2, DK-12FD.3, D6-12CR.2, D6-12CO.4

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