



Students learn about how practicing spoken word poets write, rehearse, and perform their work.

**WOW!:** Students create a performance poem designed to engage, entertain, and affect an audience and a poets' statements in which they describe the purpose and source(s) of their poetry

## 10-Week Plan

- 1 Shout Out! Engaging, Entertaining, and Affecting an Audience
- 2 Action! Using Active Verbs to Engage Your Audience
- 3 Paint a Portrait: Using Concrete Language
- 4 Give me Attitude: Conveying Tone
- 5 Code Switching: Managing Register
- 6 Cracking the Egg: Revision
- 7 Body Language: Using Gesture to Enhance your Message
- 8 Total Recall: Memorizing Your Piece
- 9 Stand and Deliver: Posture and Relaxation
- 10 Step Up to the Mic: Preparing for Performance



## Step Up to the Mic: The Art of Spoken Word Poetry

Using a workshop approach, as many practicing poets do, this unit builds students' communication skills holistically: reading, writing, and performance are interwoven in a challenging, collaborative and supportive environment. Each day, students will read and discuss a mentor text that models particular skills or elements of poetry, then use it as a springboard to write or revise their own texts designed to engage, entertain, and affect an audience. The WOW!, in which students will perform an original poem, frames communication skills authentically, using the essentials of rhetorical awareness that apply to any communicative task: situation, purpose and audience. Students will gain facility with the kind of writing, rehearsing, and performing that will help them prepare for a wide variety of presentations in academic and professional settings. It will also empower them to communicate in a personal capacity by building an awareness of audience and how to adjust their message to get an audience--be it a family member, teacher, or friend--to listen to them. Ultimately, this apprenticeship is about teaching students how to speak so that people listen.

### Unit Standards and Objectives 21st Century Standard: Oral Communication

#### 21st Century Standard: Citizen Schools students will make an effective oral presentation

##### Lesson Objectives:

- You draw on preparation, reasoning, and reflection to form and clearly express your own ideas
  - Write poems for various purposes based on models (i.e. shout out)
  - Memorize your text
  - Follow a rehearsal regimen
  - Use techniques to prepare for performance (tongue twisters, breathing techniques, vocal warm ups, turn fear to excitement)
- You make appropriate eye contact, speak at an adequate volume, and use clear pronunciation (SL6.4)
  - Speak slowly enough to be able to articulate clearly so an audience can understand your words.
  - Vary tempo by speeding up or slowing down during performance.
  - Vary tempo to enhance meaning and engage an audience
  - Articulate words clearly while reading a poem
  - Speak at an appropriate volume so that an audience can hear
  - Vary volume while performing a poem to emphasize several words or phrases.
  - Use dramatic pauses before key words or phrases to add emphasis while performing a poem.
  - You make appropriate eye contact by applying one of three strategies (wall focus, foreheads, or direct).
- Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) (SL6.2)
  - Write poems for various purposes based on models (shout out, to address a specific person, to stake a claim about an issue)
- You include multimedia components (in the case of

#### Common Core State Standards

##### Standards and Objectives

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
  - Describe the purposes of spoken word poetry.
  - Write poems for various purposes based on models (shout out, to address a specific person, to stake a claim about an issue)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
  - Make appropriate eye contact.
  - Use adequate volume
  - Clearly pronounce all words
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
  - Use a mixture of formal and informal language in a poem
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
  - Use repetition (hook) to create rhythm.
  - Use more active than passive phrasing in a poem.
  - Use more concrete than abstract language in a poem.
  - Choose a tone to develop in a poem, and use language that contributes to that tone.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5 With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.



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spoken word poetry, gestures and posture) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information. (SL.6.5)

- Use gestures and movements to enhance meaning and engage an audience
- Stand with posture that conveys confidence
- Demonstrate command of formal English when appropriate (SL.6.6)
  - Use a mixture of formal and informal language in a poem, identifying two examples of each.

- Revise a poem by adding descriptive details, sensory language, and/or vivid comparisons.

### Essential Questions

- What is the purpose/point of (spoken word) poetry?
- How do I speak so that people want to listen?
- What makes a spoken word poem good?
- What makes a spoken word performance effective?

### Performance Task Assessment (WOW!)

Spoken word poetry night: Each student will perform an original poem to engage, entertain, and affect their audience. They will make eye contact, speak with adequate and varied volume and tempo, and enunciate clearly enough for the audience to easily understand; they will make an original and compelling statement; and they will employ a purposeful and context-appropriate language.

- Goal: To engage, entertain, and affect an audience by performing a poem.
- Role: Performance poet
- Audience: Friends, family, and community members who attend the performance.
- Situation: You and your classmates are a poetry ensemble staging a public performance.
- Product: You will perform a poem that you wrote for a public audience.
- Standards (Measures of Success): A performance is engaging, entertaining and effective when it is delivered...
  1. From memory
  2. Clearly and loudly enough for the audience to easily hear and understand
  3. Standing with a confident posture
  4. Using eye contact
  5. Modulating tempo
  6. Varying volume
  7. Including dramatic pauses
  8. Using gestures planned in advance



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**Lesson Plans At-A-Glance**

Lesson Plans are available [here](#)

Week	Lesson Objectives	Agenda	Outcomes & Work Products
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use repetition to create rhythm.</li> <li>● Write a shout out poem based on Sundiata’s model.</li> <li>● Describe the purposes of spoken word poetry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: What We Do</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: Why We Do It)</li> <li>● Activity 1: A Poet’s Tools</li> <li>● Activity 2: Shout Out</li> <li>● Activity 3: Your Turn</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	Shout out poem in notebook
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Articulate words clearly while reading a poem</li> <li>● Address a poem to a specific person</li> <li>● Use more active than passive phrasing in a poem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Maestro, Please!</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: “Legacies” by Nikki Giovanni</li> <li>● Activity 1: Using Action Words</li> <li>● Activity 2: Writing Workshop: I Can’t Tell You...</li> <li>● Activity 3: Speak Like a Poet</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	I can’t tell you... poem Observations checklist: articulation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use dramatic pauses before key words or phrases to add emphasis while performing a poem.</li> <li>● Use techniques to prepare for performance (tongue twisters)</li> <li>● Use more concrete than abstract language in a poem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Memory and Emotion</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: “Brother” by Sarah Kaye</li> <li>● Activity 1: Pouring Concrete: Portrait Poem</li> <li>● Activity 2: Creating Drama: The Dramatic Pause</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	Portrait poem using more concrete than abstract language Observation checklist: dramatic pauses
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Speak at an appropriate volume so that an audience can hear</li> <li>● Vary volume while performing a poem to emphasize several words or phrases</li> <li>● Use techniques to prepare for performance (tongue twisters)</li> <li>● Choose a tone to develop in a poem, and use language that contributes to that tone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Louder and Louder</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: Jaco, “Baba Says Cool for Thought”</li> <li>● Activity 1: Give Me Some Attitude</li> <li>● Activity 2: Set the Tone</li> <li>● Activity 3: Speak Up!</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	Revised poem (tone) Observation checklist
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use a mixture of formal and informal language in a poem, identifying two examples of each.</li> <li>● Review               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Articulate words clearly while reading a poem</li> <li>○ Speak at an appropriate volume so that an audience can hear</li> <li>○ Vary volume while performing a poem to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Dress for the Occasion</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: Code Switching</li> <li>● Activity 1: Lysicott “Broken English”</li> <li>● Activity 2: My Linguistic Celebration</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	Code switch poem



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	<p>emphasize several words or phrases</p> <p>○ Use dramatic pauses before key words or phrases to add emphasis while performing a poem.</p>		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Speak slowly enough to be able to articulate clearly so an audience can understand your words.</li> <li>● Vary tempo by speeding up or slowing down during performance.</li> <li>● Revise a poem by adding descriptive details, sensory language, and/or vivid comparisons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Accelerate/Decelerate</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: Cracking it Open</li> <li>● Activity 1: Battle Scars</li> <li>● Activity 2: The Speed Limit: Tempo</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Revised poem of students' choice</p> <p>Observation checklist</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use gestures and movements to enhance meaning and engage an audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Imagine a Stone</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: Keys, "P.O.W."</li> <li>● Activity 1: Body Language</li> <li>● Activity 2: Laban's Eight Efforts</li> <li>● Activity 3: Choreograph your Poem</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Poem for WOW! annotated for gestures</p> <p>Observation checklist</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make appropriate eye contact</li> <li>● Memorize the first twenty-five words of performance poem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: I Like to Move it!</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: The Eyes Have it</li> <li>● Activity 1: Look at Me</li> <li>● Activity 2: Total Recall</li> <li>● Activity 3: Good Lookin' Out</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Observation checklist</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use techniques to prepare for performance (breathing)</li> <li>● Stand with posture that conveys confidence</li> <li>● Memorize your text</li> <li>● Synthesize previously learned performance skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Relax!</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: WOW! Time</li> <li>● Activity 1: Stand tall</li> <li>● Activity 2: Memory Challenge</li> <li>● Activity 3: Rehearsal</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Observation checklist</p>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage in a rehearsal regimen</li> <li>● Use techniques to prepare for performance (vocal warm ups, turn fear to excitement)</li> <li>● Synthesize previously learned performance skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Warm Up: Vocal Warm Ups</li> <li>● Introduction to New Material: The Secret of Great Performers</li> <li>● Activity 1: Partner Rehearsal</li> <li>● Activity 2: Full Run Through</li> <li>● Closure and Assessment</li> </ul>	<p>Observation checklist</p>

**Lesson Elements**

<b>Warm Up</b>	<p>This will serve the same purpose as a hook--getting students ready and engaged--but we call it a warm up in order to build a workshop culture. Warm ups consist of quick vocal or movement exercises or games and should be conducted with students standing up!</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Student writing and observation checklists.</p> <p>Criteria on which writing should be assessed is listed in each lesson, under "closure and assessment."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Observation checklists: student mastery will be rated "M" for full mastery, "P" for partial</li> </ul>



	<p>mastery, and “N” for no evidence of mastery,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The designations “mastery,” “partial mastery” and “no evidence of mastery” are somewhat subjective, but will be useful in identifying individual students’ strengths and targeting areas needing improvement.</li> </ul> <p>1. Formative checklist: attached here will be used throughout the unit, during times designated in the lesson plans, to assess students’ skills as you go. “M” should be marked only if the student seems to have fully mastered the skill as described in the lesson plan, and “N” should be marked if s/he demonstrated no understanding of the skill. Most students will likely earn “P” for partial mastery on most skills. Throughout the unit, students will have opportunities to practice these skills in an effort to truly master them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This checklist can be updated if students move from “N” to “P” or from “P” to “M,” but the summative checklist described below will be the “final” assessment of their skills.</li> <li>○ You may want to indicate degrees of partial mastery using pluses and minuses (i.e. P+ is almost complete mastery)</li> </ul> <p>2. Summative checklist: completed during dress rehearsal in Lesson 10, and, if necessary, can be completed during the WOW!</p>
<p><b>Structure</b></p>	<p>Lessons will begin with a physical or vocal warm up that is designed to get students relaxed and focused and to introduce or practice a performance-related skill or technique. The body of the lessons will consist of various combinations of writing workshops, in which students will read, discuss, and emulate a mentor text; and performance workshops, in which they will learn and practice specific skills.</p>
<p><b>Procedure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Desk arrangement and rearrangement: Each class will consist of movement, for which you’ll need an open space, and reading/writing time, for which you’ll need a circle of desks. You will need a procedure for arranging desks at the beginning of class and, if necessary, rearranging them during the transition between activities. If space permits, it would be ideal to find an arrangement that won’t require rearrangement during the lesson (i.e. a large circle of desks with enough room in the middle for the movement activities).</li> <li>● Writer’s notebooks: You will need to keep students’ writing notebooks during the week (so you can assess their learning and comment, and also to avoid the plague of lost notebooks).       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Taking work home: Students may want to be able to practice reading their work, or revising, at home during the week. You might make a plan for snapping a picture of their draft and emailing it to them at the end of class (if they happen to have smart phones, they can do this themselves). For some students, this might mean helping them set up an email account. They should have access to email at school and at the public library if they don’t have it at home.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Writing implements: Inkless pens, broken pencils, and forgotten materials are frequent occurrences that can really disrupt a writer’s flow! A specific procedure for students to obtain these from you will save valuable time. A quick trade for a new pencil or pen is quicker and less disruptive than struggling with a pencil sharpener, so come to each session armed with plenty of these.</li> </ul>

### Implementation Notes

<p><b>Supplies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student notebooks (1 composition book per student)</li> <li>● Tape (students may bring in writing from home to add to their notebooks)</li> <li>● Pens and/or pencils</li> <li>● Poster paper</li> <li>● Copies of mentor poems</li> <li>● Computer with projector and internet</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Copies of program for performance</li> <li>● Audio/video equipment connected to the internet</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<p>Total cost of apprenticeship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Total cost of items above: \$75 (not including the computer/projector, which hopefully can be borrowed on site)</li> <li>● Prizes for week 9: \$50</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Days 1-7: Classroom with both desks/tables for writing and open space for group movement</p> <p>Days 9-10: Auditorium or performance space where WOW! will take place (if possible).</p>
<b>Choice and Voice</b>	<p>Students will write their own poems for performance, as well as writing poets' statements for the program. The last three sessions will be spent in rehearsals, which should be tailored to students' choices of text and performance techniques. They can also collectively determine a title for the performance and design related graphics if time allows.</p>
<b>Modifications for Student Needs</b>	<p>All mentor poems will be read as a class; students who struggle with reading should be allowed to read during the second or third run-through of the poem so that they hear it modeled first.</p> <p>If students are particularly reluctant to write during the writing workshop, even after encouragement and prompting, CT and TL can act as scribes, recording the students' ideas or answers to questions; the student can then use those notes in drafting his or her poem.</p> <p>Some students may need additional practice time and support to memorize their poems. CT and TL can provide one-on-one sessions for these students with additional opportunities to rehearse.</p> <p>Additional volunteers could also help with this, and students could also be encouraged to do this at home via daily check-ins with CT or TL. Some students may be allowed to take their printed poem onstage with them if they are unable to do so (although this should be avoided unless absolutely necessary).</p> <p>Students who are English language learners should be have the choice of reading and writing work in their home language, in English, or in both.</p> <p>Some students may have particularly acute feelings of stage fright or last-minute nerves prior to the performance. CT and TL can try to identify potentially nervous students early, and spend additional time teaching and practicing relaxation and visualization techniques with them. These students may also benefit from additional practice time and encouragement.</p>
<b>Student Background Knowledge and Skills Needed</b>	<p>Students are likely to struggle and need extra support if they have articulation/expression difficulties or are unable to write fluently. Neither precludes them from successful participation.</p>
<b>College and Career Readiness</b>	<p>College Connection: spoken word/slam poetry is an extracurricular club at most college campuses, which have clubs and teams, organize writer's conferences, and send poets to national slam competitions.</p> <p>Career Connections: almost any business or academic career involves making oral presentations about projects or products that you're working on. Spoken word poetry is a valuable skill for teachers and activists. Compelling public speaking is an essential skill for many careers, including public service and politics.</p>
<b>Co-Teaching Roles</b>	<p>Co-teachers should meet to plan for their roles before each lesson. It might be most effective to meet immediately after teaching in order to debrief and assign roles for the next lesson. A list of decisions to be made can be found under "preparation" each week.</p> <p>As one teacher leads the group, the other should help students who are stuck or reluctant and monitor time. If no students need help, they should participate in the activity.</p>



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	<p>Come up with a signal to tell each other that you're running out of time for a given activity.</p>
<p><b>Special Resources</b></p>	<p>Guest poets can add excitement and diversity to this apprenticeship! A guest poet's performance could be given the "introduction to new material" time slot in any lesson, and guests might also be asked to teach students a specific technique during the performance workshops.</p> <p>If no potentially great guest poets come to mind, you might seek volunteers them locally at places such as...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A youth spoken word organization (New York's Urban Word, Boston's Mass LEAP collective, etc)</li> <li>● Al university's slam team or spoken word club</li> <li>● Open mic nights or slam</li> </ul> <p>Guests may be particularly impactful during the second half of the apprenticeship, in which they could share their strategies for preparing for a performance--memorizing their poems, dealing with nerves/stage fright, etc.</p> <p>You could request that the guest chooses a poem that highlights the target skill(s) for the day on which she visits.</p> <p>Questions to ask guest poets to consider in advance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do you use (insert chosen technique) in the poem you performed?</li> <li>● What are your favorite ways to engage and entertain your audience?</li> <li>● What effect do you strive to have on listeners?</li> <li>● How do you memorize your poems?</li> <li>● How do you deal with anxiety before a performance?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Road Map to WOW!</b></p>	<p>Note to CT/TL: Create a poster-sized visual of the information listed below, display and reference weekly in your classroom.</p> <p>Road Map to WOW!</p> <p>Week 1: See what it looks like to ENGAGE, ENTERTAIN, and AFFECT an audience.</p> <p>Week 2: Speak CLEARLY and write ACTIVE, exciting poetry.</p> <p>Week 3: Use CONCRETE LANGUAGE and PAUSES to add some drama.</p> <p>Week 4: Use VOLUME and ATTITUDE to show your passion.</p> <p>Week 5: Use a mix of FORMAL and INFORMAL language to keep it real.</p> <p>Week 6: Improve your poem with REVISION and read it at the right SPEED.</p> <p>Week 7: Emphasize your message using BODY LANGUAGE.</p> <p>Week 8: MEMORIZE your poem so you can use EYE CONTACT.</p> <p>Week 9: Stand at the mic looking CONFIDENT.</p> <p>Week 10: REHEARSE to get your performance just right.</p> <p>WOW!</p>





### The Pitch

The most persuasive pitch will be your own spellbinding performance.

- Perform a very brief poem using some of the techniques that student will learn in the apprenticeship.
- Tell students that it can be hard to get people's attention and that learning the techniques of spoken word poetry is a great way to learn how to get people to listen to us.
- By the end of the apprenticeship, students will be able to perform a poem of their own that will engage and affect an audience.
- CT: share a relevant experience of your own, if applicable: perhaps ways you used spoken word to get people to listen to some message that is important to you, or how it has impacted your ability to communicate with people in your life, or how it has increased your confidence.
- At the end of the apprenticeship, we will host our community in a poetry reading. You'll perform a poem that you've written, and you will use techniques like I did in order to make people want to listen.
- This skill, making your point while also entertaining an audience, will help you in almost any career. After all, if people listen to you, you are going to go far. You can use your spoken word skills to make A+ presentations in your classes, to give campaign speeches when you run for president of your class (or of the country), to sell whatever amazing device you've invented, and most certainly when you interview for your dream job!
- If you have something to say to the world, this would be a great apprenticeship for you. If you have stage fright or are shy, but want to work past it, this is a great way to do that, too! On the other hand, if you never, ever want to get on a stage and tell the world what you think, this might not be the apprenticeship to sign up for.

### Materials Needed for Pitch Day

1. Performance (CT performance of her/his own piece--very brief or perhaps excerpted).



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**Apprenticeship in Action**

Coming Soon!

**Apprenticeship Description for WOW! Communications**

This apprenticeship in spoken word poetry will teach students the skills they need to prepare and deliver a clear and engaging presentation to a large audience. In doing so, they will develop their reading, writing and thinking skills as they encounter and analyze the work of a number of accomplished poets. After writing a series of pieces in which they tell stories and take a stand on issues they care about, students will revise and prepare one poem for performance. They will learn how to adjust their volume and tempo, enunciate clearly, stand confidently, and maintain eye contact in order to deliver a professional performance. They will also learn techniques to overcome pre-performance anxiety and to build their confidence. Ultimately, families and guests who attend the WOW! performance will see their students address important issues in a way that makes people sit up and listen.



## Formative Observation Checklist

Complete rows during lessons indicated in parentheses

M = full mastery      P = partial mastery      N = no evidence of mastery

For a description of each criteria, see the "Closure and Assessment" section on the corresponding lesson.

student names>																
1. Articulation (L2)																
2. Dramatic pauses (L3)																
3. Appropriate volume (L4)																
4. Varied volume (L4)																
5. Appropriate tempo (L6)																
6. Varied tempo (L6)																
7. Uses gestures (L7)																
8. Appropriate gestures (L7)																
9. Eye contact (L8)																
10. Appropriate posture (L9)																
11. Recites from memory (L9)																



## Summative Observation Checklist

Complete during final rehearsal

M = full mastery

P = partial mastery

N = no evidence of mastery

1. Memorized																		
2. Clearly, slowly and loudly enough to be understood																		
3. Confident posture																		
4. Making eye contact																		
5. Modulating tempo																		
6. Modulating volume																		
7. Using dramatic pauses																		
8. Using gestures as planned																		



### Essential Question

Which of the several universal or debatable questions for this unit will students consider in this lesson?

- What is the purpose of spoken word poetry?
- What makes a spoken word performance effective?

### Lesson Overview

Students will be introduced to spoken word poetry and its purposes by watching/listening to two performances, one by their mentor. They will write and read aloud from their own shout out poem, and they will experiment with tempo and the ways in which performers use it to enhance meaning and audience engagement.

### Lesson Objectives

21st Century Skills Standard:  
 Citizen Schools students will make an effective oral presentation.

Content Standard: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

Lesson Objectives:

- Use repetition (anaphora or a hook) to create rhythm.
- Write a shout out poem based on Sundiata’s model.

Lesson Objectives:

- Describe the purposes of spoken word poetry.

### Lesson Agenda

10 Minutes	Warm Up: What We Do
15 Minutes	Introduction to New Material: Why We Do It
20 Minutes	Activity 1: A Poet’s Tools
15 Minutes	Activity 2: Shout Out
25 Minutes	Activity 3: Your Turn
5 Minutes	Closure and Assessment

### Lesson Preparation

*Preparation Note: Today’s prep is quite heavy, as you’re setting up systems that will run throughout the unit.*

*Although subsequent lessons will require slightly less prep time, they will all require substantial preparation.*

Prior to day of teaching:

- Prepare a short (2-3) minute performance of one of your own poems for the class.
- Read and listen to Sundiata’s poem “Shout Out” enough to be prepared to lead discussion and address



student questions.

- Make copies:
  - "Shout Out" Handout (for today)
  - "Legacies" (for lesson #2--so you can give a copy to 1-2 students to practice reading for the next lesson).
- Gather blank writer's notebooks (one for each student) and writing implements
  - Determine the plan for storing notebooks and writing supplies
  - Consider bringing in your own notebook as a model, or creating a model to share with students and to use during writing workshop.
- Create three posters
  1. Roadmap to WOW! (see unit overview)
  2. A "toolbox" poster (aside from the title, it will be blank for now).
  3. Expectations for writer's workshop (or "poets' rules," or something along those lines).

You can revise the language below, but make sure it is specific and clear.

○ WRITING TIME

1. Protect the silence: We know that many people need silence to concentrate, so we don't speak during writing time except softly to a mentor.
2. Write every minute: Don't stop writing until time is up!
3. Never tear out a page: What seems like a mistake now might look like a brilliant idea next a week.

○ PERFORMANCE

1. Respect the mic: We listen to the person who is talking or performing.
2. Snap! The only sound we make during a performance is snapping, when we hear something we like.\*\*
3. Share the love: We praise fellow poets all the time, especially after they read.
4. Echoes: After we hear a poem, we repeat back a line or two that we really loved.

\*\*we know and love how spoken word audiences often shout encouragement during performances. However, we recommend that you start with only snapping until the tone of respect is firmly established (for at least a few weeks). After that, you can show students how audience members sometimes shout affirmations and amend the poster.

Day of teaching:

- Set up computer: open link below and test it with the speakers:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-2hmmUMICc>
- Room set up: a circle is recommended.
- Write on the board
  - Your names and the title of your poem
  - Sekou Sundiata, "Shout Out"
  - Engage – get your attention at the beginning
  - Entertain – make it interesting and pleasant to listen to
  - Affect – cause you to think and feel deeply
  - A blank two-column chart: "people and things to shout out to | shout out hooks"



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- Co-teaching plan:
  - How will you efficiently distribute materials?
  - Who will be responsible for media?
  - Who will ask questions/facilitate discussion for each part of the lesson?
  - How will you monitor time, and what signals will you give each other if you need to pick up the pace? This is necessary not only during timed writing, but for each activity, as it's easy to lose track of time during discussions.
  - Who will act as scribe, adding terms to the toolbox poster and recording student-generated ideas on the board?
  - Note: Both TL and CT should plan, during writing time, to (a) circulate and help stuck students get unstuck and then (b) write in their own notebooks.
    - Ideally, both TL and CT will participate in writing, readarounds and performance exercises. The more you model sharing, the more comfortable students will be doing the same.

### Materials

- Writer's notebooks
- Pens and pencils
- Tape
- Posters:
  - Roadmap to WOW! poster
  - Writer's workshop expectations
  - Toolbox
- Audio or video set up with internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-2hmmUMICc>
- Copies (1 for each student): Handout Sundiata, "Shout Out"



Warm Up:  
What We Do  
(10 Minutes)

Why begin this way? Sharing your own piece will allow you to (a) capture students' attention (b) establish yourself as a mentor, a master of the craft (c) establish an environment of trust and openness in which everyone is willing to take risks and share their own thoughts and work.

- **Introduce** yourself and tell students you'd like to start by showing them what you do, and what you're going to teach them to do.
- **Demonstrate:** perform a 2-4 minute poem for the class.
- **Ask** students for their initial reactions: what the poem offered or what jumped out at them.
- **Ask** students to introduce themselves and tell the group how they are feeling about writing and performing like you just did (nervous, excited, curious, shy, etc).
  - Since this is the first time students will speak in the apprenticeship, it's crucial that they get a warm, positive reaction from you and the group. After each student speaks, give him or her a response and encourage the rest of the class to echo you ("Well, Darren, I can't wait to hear the poems you have in your head. Poets, let's all say 'speak it, Darren!'"). Be over the top giving and soliciting encouragement and praise here--students may roll their eyes, but the message they are receiving is that this is a safe place to take risks.

Intro to New Material:  
Why We Do It  
(15 Minutes)

- **Tell** students that the first thing they need to know is how to make an audience want to listen. That's one important goal of performance poets: to ENGAGE, ENTERTAIN, and AFFECT our listeners.
- **Tell** students you're going to perform your poem again, and this time you want them to think about what you do in order to reach this goal (write these on the board and briefly define them)
  - Engage – get your attention at the beginning
  - Entertain – make it interesting and pleasant to listen to
  - Affect – cause you to think and feel deeply.
- **Perform** the poem again.
- **Discuss** students' thoughts.
  - Sample questions:
    - What did I do at the beginning to try to catch your attention?
    - Sometimes it's hard to stay focused on someone who's talking—was it hard this time? (Be honest!) If not, did I do anything that made it easier?
    - Did any ideas pop into your head as you were listening?
    - Did you feel any emotions as you were listening?
  - Consider mentioning specific techniques you used (i.e. varied volume or tempo, repetition, gestures) and asking students about the effect they had.
    - Sample: Did you notice the way I took an extra long pause in between the words \_\_\_ and \_\_\_? What did that make you notice, think or feel? (CT: You could ask questions about your volume, tempo, pauses, articulation, repeated words, etc.--but focus on one for now).





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- Tell students that they are going to learn how to do many of these things over the next ten weeks.
- Point to the Roadmap to WOW! poster and have students read each lesson's goal in turn (start with a volunteer and then have students read each in turn).
- Tell students that they are going to learn these skills by studying poems by masters of the craft, and then writing a few of their own. They'll choose one to revise, memorize, and then perform at the WOW!
  - Ask students what their three goals will be at the WOW! (To engage, entertain, and affect the audience).

**Activity One:  
A Poet's Tools  
(20 Minutes)**

- Transition: tell students that one of a poet's most important tools is their notebook.
  - Before handing out notebooks, set expectations
    - They'll leave the notebooks with you each week, so that you can give them feedback.
    - They can and should write poems at home if they get inspired, and they can bring them and tape them into their notebooks. They'll get to keep these at the end
  - Optional: show them your own notebook to give them a sense of what it can look like and be used for.
  - Review the system for supplies: Where notebooks will be found each week, how pens/pencils will be handled, what to do if their pen runs out/pencil breaks, etc.
    - NOTE: the more specific and systematic you are about supplies, the more time you'll have to read, write and talk about poetry. Try to anticipate student needs and address them now!
    - Spend a few minutes walking through scenarios to give students "muscle memory" of how it works. For example, choose a volunteer and say "it's the middle of writing workshop and your pencil broke! Show us what you're going to do!"
    - Have the class re-enter the classroom and pick up their notebooks just like they will each week.
- Tell students that there's only one thing more important to writing workshop than pencils and notebooks: RESPECT. Tell them that poets have a very deep respect for each other, and that they treat each other in a very specific way
  - Pointing to poster, Expectations for Writing Workshop, have students chorally read each expectation. Ham it up with them (Read this one LOUD! Read this one SLOW!) to keep it fun.
  - Emphasize that these are non-negotiable. Firmly tell students that poets take these norms of respect very seriously.
- Transition: ask students if they're ready to hear another poem!

**Activity Two:  
Shout Out  
(25 Minutes)**

- Introduce "[Shout Out,](#)" by [Sekou Sundiata](#): Tell students that they will listen to it, talk about it, then write their own shout out poem.
  - **Ask:** What do you expect from a poem called "Shout Out?" What do shout outs usually do?
  - **Hand out** a printed copy of the poem; encourage them to keep all handouts in their writer's notebook (they can fold them and tape them to pages).



- Tell them to mark words or phrases that jump out at them as they listen.
- **First reading: Play** the poem and model reading along/marketing phrases.
- **Discussion: Ask** students:
  - What words or phrases did you mark?
  - Did Sundiata engage, entertain, and affect you? How?
- **Prewriting**
  - **Ask** students what kinds of people/things does Sundiata shout out to (Not just good things or specific people!) Why do you think he chooses these particular people/things? Let's use this to generate our own ideas of things we can shout out to.
    - **Write student answers** on the board under "Things to shout out to."
    - If they stall, give them examples, remembering it can be anything you see or think about in the course of your day.
  - **Ask** students if they noticed how Sundiata starts each line. **Tell** them that repetition is a tool that poets love to use: when you repeat an opening phrase, it's called a hook, like in a song (write "hook" in the toolbox). Making a poem sound like a song is a great way to engage your audience.
    - Ask what other phrases might be used to recognize somebody? (*This is for, this goes out to, big ups to, I see, I want to recognize* )
    - Write answers under "hooks for shout outs"
  - **Model** choosing a phrase to repeat from the first list and combining it with items from the second list to generate a line of a shout out poem, i.e. "This is for my bland oatmeal and the bowl I put it in..."
    - Have students suggest a few more lines. Emphasize that you're starting with the same hook "This is for..."
- **Emphasize** that students can write anything, and that rhyme, structure, etc. are not important. Remind them that their purpose is to recognize things—both good and bad—that are usually overlooked.

### Activity Three: Your Turn (25 Minutes)

*The idea here is for poets to be affirmed by hearing their own words repeated. Making this a routine will help build a classroom culture that encourages risk taking!*

- **Writing time**
  - Set a timer for 15 minutes and tell students that they will have 15 minutes to write. Keeping this duration predictable builds a sense of safety for writers.
  - Point to the expectations poster as a reminder.
    - If students forget an expectation (i.e. making noise, saying "I'm done!" before time is up), gently remind them in a whisper of the expectations. If they're stuck, prompt them by pointing to lines or ideas that they could write more about.
  - Go!
- **Readaround**
  - Tell students to choose and underline or star 1-5 lines from their shout out that they want to share with the class.
  - Tell students that, as they listen, they should write a couple of ECHOES in their notebooks: words or lines that they hear and like.
    - Model this during read around by writing echoes on the board.
    - Also model snapping during the performance to nonverbally remind/encourage students to do the same.



- **Echoes**
  - Think time: after the read around, give students 1-2 minutes to record echoes in their notebooks.
  - Have students repeat back echoes from each other's lines.

### Closure and Assessment (5 Minutes)

- **Closure:**
  - Tell students we're off to a great start—you already have a draft of a poem and some tools in your poetry toolbox! Next week we will learn how to tell a story that engages an audience.
- **Assessment:**
  - Ask students to do two things on their poem:
    1. At the top of the page, write the goal of spoken word poets.
    2. Circle their hook in the first line
      - During this time, quietly approach 3 students who have either stood out as leaders or seem reluctant and might need a boost. Ask them if they would be willing to read the poem next week, and give them a copy to practice with.
- **Criteria for assessment**
  - Q1: Answer: Engage/entertain/affect the audience
  - Q2: Answer: They should circle a phrase that is repeated at the beginning of multiple lines.



## Handout - Lesson # 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Shout Out

by Sekou Sundiata

Here's to the best words in the right place at the perfect time to the human mind blown-up and refined.

To long conversations and the philosophical ramifications of a beautiful day.

To the twelve-steppers at the thirteenth step may they never forget the first step.

To the increase, to the decrease, to the do, to the do, to the did to the did, to the do to the did to the done done.

To the lonely.

To the brokenhearted.

To the new, blue haiku.

Here's to all or nothing at all.

Here's to the sick, and the shut-in.

Here's to the was you been to the is you am to what's deep and deep to what's down in down.

To the lost, and the blind, and the almost found.

To the crazy the lazy the bored the ignored the beginners the sinners the losers the winners to the smooth and the cool and even to the fools.

Here's to your ex-best-friend.

To the rule-benders and the repeat offenders.

To the lovers and the troublers. The engaging, the enraging, to the healers and the feelers and the fixers and the tricksters

To a star falling from a dream.

To a dream, when you know what it means.

To the bottom, to the root, to the base, *uh, boom!*

To the drum.

Here's to the was you been to the is you in to what's deep in deep to what's down in down.

To the lost, and the blind, and the almost found.

Here's to somebody within the sound of your voice this morning.

Here's to somebody who can't be within the sound of your voice tonight.

To a low-cholesterol pig sandwich smothered in swine without the pork.

To a light buzz in your head and a soundtrack in your mind going on and on and on and on and on like a good time.

Here's to promises that break by themselves

Here's to the breaks with great promise.

To people who don't wait in the car when you tell them to wait in the car.

Here's to what you forgot and who you've forgotten.



Here's to the unforgettable.

Here's to the was you been to the is you am to what's deep in deep to what's down in down  
To the lost, and the blind, and the almost found.

Here's to the hip-hoppers, the don't stoppers, heads nodding in the digital glow of their  
beloved studios.

To the incredible indelible impressions made by the gazes you gaze in the faces of strangers.

To yourself you ask, "Could this be God?"

Straight up!

Or is it a mask?

Here's to the tribe of the hyper-cyber, trippin' at the virtual-most outpost at the edge on the  
tip, believin' that what they hear is the mother-ship drawing near.

Here's to the was you been, to the is you am, to what's deep in deep, to what's down in down  
To the lost, and the blind, and the almost found.

From *The Blue Oneness of Dreams*

Audio: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-2hmmUMICc>