



**Slam! The Art and Action of Spoken Word
Instructional Plan Grades 6-8
AIG/Advanced Learners
Kimberly Holzer-Lane
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Introduction to Unit

Rationale for unit

Slam! The Art and Action of Spoken Word is designed for use in middle grades (6-8) English/language arts classes, and could well be adapted for use or collaboration with elective courses in *theatre arts, forensics, creative writing* or *public speaking*. This unit provides the structure and resources for students to enjoy both expanded content (via contemporary spoken-word poetry) and relevant practice in both writing, speaking and performance of their original work. It provides experiences in reading of poetry, literary analysis and evaluation, writing, and performance--robustly touching on all ELA strands of the Common Core Curriculum Standards (literature, nonfiction, writing, language, and speaking and listening.)

The rationale for this unit is manifold and vigorously connects skills acquisition and practice with content in each lesson. A primary motivation for creating this unit was active, authentic inclusion of diverse voices in its content and the audience that it serves. While circumstance may place this unit in the hands of teachers who teach in a relatively homogenous environment; the focus and discussion throughout the unit maintains its commitment to inclusivity. Diverse learners are fully represented, versus tokenized, from the outset to the conclusion of this unit; their work is invited and valued, and all forms of diversity are represented, celebrated, and discussed in the content. Moreover, "diversity" is boldly implied beyond stereotypical representations, to include people of size, inclusion of other languages, diversity along the gender continuum, the disabled, and the LGBTQI community.

Intended audience and further discussion of important instructional foci

This unit is intended, then, for a diverse population of academically/intellectually advanced or gifted students who would benefit from a robust, contemporary, and relevant writing and performance workshop experience that strongly reflects the literary zeitgeist over the past thirty years. Specifically, the unit as written is ideal for advanced sixth through eighth graders (11-14 years old); care has been taken to assemble work that is thematically and linguistically appropriate. However, teachers will want to ensure that the rare instances of “light” language will meet with approval in their learning communities; it is always a good idea to ensure that both parents and students are invited into the learning. While it began and once existed very much as an American grassroots literary movement, Poetry Slam has since evolved into a worldwide phenomenon with:

- multiple successful Broadway performances
- at least two movies focused on the art form
- hundreds of successful practitioners who have co-opted Poetry Slam into successful careers in the arts and education
- widespread acceptance of slam poetry and performance in formal academic poetry studies
- the establishment of organizations such as Youthspeaks: Brave New Voices, a national poetry slam movement focused on cultivating and celebrating teen voices.

The experiences and background of poetry slam artists are best described as authentic, even raw--much like the lives of many of our students. Slam is to

poetry what “outsider art” was to the visual arts movement (often associated with people such as Howard Finster and Sam McMillan.) Many of them were self-taught and perfected their craft outside of the academic mainstream. As a result, the early days of slam were marked with notable tension with “the Academy”.

It cannot be emphasized enough how strongly diversity should be an instructional focus of this unit, which *needs diverse students and diverse students need it*. This unit was designed with diverse learners in mind, especially those whose voices are not traditionally represented in the English language “canon.” *Slam* is ideal and, it could be argued, *imperative* for gifted students who may otherwise be considered “at risk” due to socioeconomic circumstances, trauma, and inequitable opportunities to experience literature and art of experts who have walked in their shoes. The experiences and voices of minorities are highlighted as cornerstone moments in the history of poetry slam. From the outset, National Poetry Slam champions and its most successful practitioners have consistently been people of color, women, and other underrepresented minorities in the English-language literary canon. This unit is also ideal for students who enjoy relative mainstream privilege, and who may be unaware of communities different than their own; it invites learners to walk in the shoes, understand, and practice the voices of people quite different than themselves. If we as teachers are committed to developing students’ authoritative voices and helping them to shape life legacies of which they are proud; there are few better examples than what takes place in a well-crafted Poetry Slam workshop and performance community. It is a place that, well-curated, insists upon courage,

tenacity, intelligence (emotional and intellectual), humility, and interpersonal resilience. It goes without saying that this workshop will also develop sophisticated, curious, bold writers, speakers, and performers. Ideally, students will have demonstrated advanced linguistic and/or performance capabilities, and the maturity to engage with the themes inherent through the unit.

Differentiation for gifted and advanced learners

The literary and multimedia **content** has been carefully selected to balance providing age-appropriate yet sophisticated, advanced, and nuanced explorations in the concept of diverse *legacy*, and how voice builds one's legacy. More than simply presenting concept-focused content to students to read for basic understanding, students from the outset engage in a **complex, intersectional process** of inquiry and practice through diversified readings (in style, language, and content), analysis, authentic engagement through writing, peer collaboration, writing workshop, and performance of original writing (of a challenging final **product** requiring courage, practice, and appropriate support). The unit's **depth** of both content and practice are evident in both the resources provided, and the opportunities for further exploration using technology and available poetry libraries. The nature of learning literature has traditionally been a straightforward and sedentary venture; this unit can be an important addition to any teacher's library of practice, especially those who are intentional in **advancing** their students through experiential literary, language, and performance-based learning. Because students lead their own creative and sociopsychological journeys, their advancement is very much a team effort between peer and teacher coaches who invite struggle and work collaboratively toward maximizing its

lessons. Students will clearly “see” and experience the concept of legacy through an entire life cycle, from learning to break through writer's' block, to a final **creative** performance task. They will further experience and must fully engage in a necessarily **student-led workshop environment** from the multiple inter- and intrapersonal perspectives of creator, peer coach, performer, audience member, and participant in self and peer reflection. Intrapersonal work drives the act of writing; performance draws students outward interpersonally, but the necessarily personal nature of their creative products is notable because it draws them away from egocentrism to engage others in greater dialogue with issues they may raise in their work. **The instructor's role in this environment** is to differentiate--ideally, individualize--instruction in a coaching role. Far from leading didactic instruction, the teacher is present to ensure that students are successfully moving between myriad roles as needed to support theirs and their peers' learning. This requires a deft touch, and can be supported through advance planning for classroom volunteers, instructional coaching, or parent assistants.

Goals and Outcomes

Content goals and outcomes

Goal 1: To develop deep understanding of the writing process, and the power of developing an authentic voice that can translate into powerful published and performed original creative work.

Students will be able to:

- A. Analyze how text and style elements influence narrative, lyrical, or evocative aspects of a piece of literature.
- B. Examine how diverse points of view and life experiences can be reinterpreted to create authentic, creative, contemporary written work.
- C. Understand, analyze, and evaluate the dynamic relationship between written and performed creative work, and how creative people make choices regarding text and performance.
- D. Compare and contrast the texts and performances of multiple texts and analyze how differing language and structure contribute to its meaning and style.

Adapted and informed by the [Common Core ELA standards](#).

Process goals and outcomes

Goal 2: To develop writing and performance skills with application to diverse contemporary literature.

Students will be able to:

- A. Shift their perspective to encompass and internalize diversity in all its forms, not the least of which is ideological.
- B. Clarify and demonstrate intent in their own writing and performance, and draw conclusions about the writing and performance of other people.
- C. Apply creative problem solving skills to best represent their original voice.
- D. Write and perform original creative products that are authentic to their voice.
- E. Evaluate how a written product and its performance intersect for maximum effect.
- F. Collaborate positively and productively with peers as a coach, performer, and audience member.

Adapted and informed by the [Common Core ELA standards](#).

Concept goals and outcomes

Goal 3: To understand the concept of legacy

Students will be able to:

- A. Understand and analyze the intrapersonal implications of creating a legacy.
- B. Make generalizations about the short- and long-term legacies left by authors.
- C. Craft an original voice that successfully secures creative legacy through advocacy, cultural or social identity, or courage.
- D. Analyze and articulate how their voice helps to build their personal legacy.
- E. Transfer their knowledge of legacy to multiple creative writing exercises.

Assessment Plan

The age-old struggle with ELA-based writing instruction has perpetually been, “grading”. How is a teacher to balance providing quality feedback to all students in a timely manner for their summative products? This unit answers that question by challenging instructors to restructure the manner that they assess writing to better fit the way in which students learn it: gradually, throughout the learning journey, with a writing coach by their side for the entire season instead of for the final game. Writing is, by its nature, a formative process. It is therefore imperative that teachers embrace formative assessment within a workshop model to create a safe, reflective community of learners for this unit. To foster such an environment from the outset virtually ensures a summative performance task that is fueled by courageous, empowered, and mutually supportive students who have become active agents in their own learning. Moreover, *Slam*’s assessment plan insists that students actively participate in ongoing self-assessment and reflection, work as peer coaches, and as active and thoughtful agents through their final performance task. In fact, it could be argued that the teacher has very little say in a student’s success within the context of a Poetry Slam. Of course, teachers will want to (and should) provide objective, holistic rubric-based feedback to students based on their demonstrated understanding of conceptual understanding, knowledge, and skills achievement. The complete assessment plan for this unit is outlined on the following page.

Assessment Plan: Detail

Assessment type (Formative/summative)	Assessment Description	Assessment Purpose
Formative	<i>Organizing and subsuming (Taba concept learning activity, lesson 1); carousel brainstorming</i>	Students work toward forming generalizations by summarizing and synthesizing their initial learning about the history, purpose, and topics within Poetry Slam.
Formative	<i>Day book reflective writing (daily)</i>	Students reflect on their current learning and build a foundation for the next lesson by connecting the relationship between <i>creative output</i> and <i>legacy</i> .
Formative	<p><i>Collaborative, Accountable Talk discussions driven by essential questions (lesson 2)</i></p> <p>Example: students are asked, after reading and engaging with text and media, “How do Slam poets do what they do?”</p>	<p>Students use new knowledge and continue to explore its implications.</p> <p>Students expand on concepts they have learned, make connections to other concepts, and apply understandings to world around them in new ways.</p>
Formative	<i>Original write-likes, flash poems, persona poems, collaborative poems (lesson 2)</i>	<p>Students practice like an expert in the written, analytical, and intrapersonal skills required for successful performance poetry.</p> <p>Within the workshop model, assessment provides opportunity for teacher to actively differentiate student grouping, troubleshoot with students who may struggle, and coach the writing process “where it’s at” for each respective student.</p> <p>Students are empowered to consistently move between roles of writer, peer editor, and peer coach for ongoing self and peer assessment.</p>
Formative	<i>Charting (Envisioning, lesson 3)</i>	Students actively, individually, and collaboratively discuss two divergent poetry performances and connect their respective shaping of voice and legacy.

Formative	<i>Mess finding: drafting original poem from myriad writing prompts (lesson 3)</i>	<p>Students use convergent thinking to determine the best prompt to define their narrative voice, crafting work that is cohesive and authentic.</p> <p>Assessment, in this case, is the teacher- and peer-coach-provided feedback throughout the writing process. It is assessment through dialogue, on which teachers and peers can easily document observation notes, and by which students will authentically grow in their writing.</p>
Formative	<i>Pairs- and group-based performances (“Acceptance Finding,” , lesson 4)</i>	<p>Students use convergent thinking to make confident performance decisions that will support the legacy of their written work. They begin to converge written and performance work to create a powerful, authentic product for the live audience.</p> <p>Assessment, in this case, is the teacher- and peer-coach-provided feedback throughout the performance process. It is assessment through dialogue, on which teachers and peers can easily document observation notes, and by which students will authentically grow.</p>
Summative	<i>Poetry slam performance</i>	<p>Students will perform up to three original poems for a live audience in the context of a Poetry Slam.</p> <p>Teacher assessment is rubric-based and, based on teacher discretion, may consider elements of self-and peer-reflection.</p>

Performance Task:
Slam! The Art and Action of Spoken Word
or The points are not the point; the point is poetry!

Writing and performance coach: Kimberly Holzer-Lane

* * *

How do writers leave a legacy? Is a legacy intentional or does it “just happen”? How can you take an active role in crafting your own legacy?

Let's uncover these questions together, hm?

* * *

Your mission, should you choose to accept it:

SPARK Camp has established a Poetry Slam, and you are going to be a part of this exciting, engaging live performance! You are a *competitive Slam poet* who will *perform up to three pieces of original work* before an *enthusiastic, live audience*. To accomplish this mission, you will *write and develop for performance* at least three poems that *communicate your legacy, resonate with your audience and evoke reactions and active responses*.

How do we measure our success?

As an *individual*, you will know that you are successful in a few ways:

- In Slam, we say, “The points are not the point; the point is poetry!” In reality, though, if you happen to be the last one standing (with the most points,) that feels pretty great!
- You will evoke active responses from your audience; they may laugh, sigh, snap, clap, or yell, “GO ON, NOW!” You’re doing something right if that happens.
- Your slam comrades, your audience, and your coach will approach you to say things like, “I really felt that poem” or “It was brave of you to say what you said.” You may get hugs and high fives. That’s good stuff.
- People ask for copies of your work, your website, your social media. They want to say, they “knew you *when!*”

As a *group*, we know that our collective show (the Slam) is successful when:

- We support one another as writers, coaches, and listeners. We become friends in art.
- The audience is continuously engaged and responsive. They are hanging on each person’s next words. They are present in mind and body.
- The audience reacts to the judges’ scores; do not be surprised if the audience boos a judge who dishes out low scores. Audiences tend to be on your side!
- People hang out to meet and speak with performers afterward, ask about your work and your process.

Performance Task: Rubric

Scoring element	Not Yet	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Advances and/or Exceeds Expectations
Demonstrated understanding of concept of “legacy”	Attempts to communicate purpose, but lacks clarity or sustained effort.	Establishes or communicates legacy in either writing or performance, but purpose is weak, with some communication lapses.	Establishes and communicates legacy in both writing and performance with a well-developed purpose carried through the poems.	Establishes and communicates a compelling legacy in both writing and performance, with a well developed purpose carried through the poems through skillful use of writing and performance techniques.
Narrative or lyrical development	Poem is incomplete, and/or overly simplified with notable lack of details.	Poem describes moment(s), self/characters, and/or ideas with some detail but communicates ideas at a surface level.	Poem capably develops narrative or description of moment(s), self/characters and/or ideas with sufficient detail to add depth and complexity to the final product.	Poem creates exceptional experience of moment(s), self/characters, and/or ideas with comprehensive detail to add depth and complexity to the final product.
Performance of original work	Work is incompletely or inadequately presented such that audience cannot understand and/or engage with presenter.	Work is unevenly presented such that audience can periodically understand and/or engage with presenter.	Work is capably presented such that audience can fully engage with presenter and the ideas in their original text.	Work is exceptionally presented such that audience is highly engaged with presenter and the ideas in their original text.
Language (Note: “language” in this case is the effectiveness of language needed to achieve the goals of the performance. Standard American English is NOT being evaluated here, but rather effective styling of performative language)	Lacks control of effective vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics; little or ineffective use of transitions.	Demonstrates an uneven command of effective language strategies; inconsistently uses effective vocabulary, grammar, rhythm, mechanics, or transition between ideas.	Demonstrates a solid effective language strategies; consistently uses transitions between ideas, and capably communicates with effective vocabulary, rhythm, grammar, and mechanics.	Demonstrates a well-developed or creative use of language strategies. Creatively transitions between ideas, creatively spins grammar or mechanics to create new effects, reinterprets common idioms to create new ideas. Creatively engages rhythm to create pleasing or musical effects.

TEACHER NAME		Lesson #
Kimberly R. Holzer-Lane		1
MODEL	CONTENT AREA	GRADE LEVEL
Taba Concept Development	Language Arts	6-8
CONCEPTUAL LENS		LESSON TOPIC
Legacy		Poetic voice
LEARNING OBJECTIVES (from State/Local Curriculum)		
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6: Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7</p> <p>Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2</p> <p>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.</p>		
THE ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING <i>(What is the overarching idea students will understand as a result of this lesson?)</i>		THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION <i>(What question will be asked to lead students to “uncover” the Essential Understanding)</i>
Legacies inspire voice		How does legacy inspire voice?
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE <i>(What factual information will students learn in this lesson?)</i>		PROCESS SKILLS <i>(What will students be able to do as a result of this lesson?)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the meaning of the word “legacy”. Understand the intrapersonal implications of creating a legacy. Performance, or Slam poetry is a continually evolving contemporary written and performance art with a discrete history, notable and groundbreaking practitioners, and growing opportunities for new artists. Poetic Voice—(aka <i>speaker, mask, or persona</i>) refers to the narrative voice of a poem. It may differ from the speaker that people see onstage. Official poetry slams follow a particular set of rules and a defined structure. The voice of a performance poem is often one that seeks to secure creative 		<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin visualizing themselves as writers and performers. Evaluate voice for diversity of content and character. Understand and analyze an author’s purpose Make generalizations about the short- and long-term legacies left by authors. Collaborate positively and productively with peers. Categorize, analyze, and discuss topics and ideas within an art form

<p>legacy through advocacy, cultural or social identity, or courage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Slam poetry is a diverse, democratic art form that is open to people of all languages, nationalities and backgrounds, abilities, and cultures. It is largely regarded as the Poetry for the People. 	
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GUIDING QUESTIONS
What questions will be asked to support instruction?
Include both “lesson plan level” questions as well as questions designed to guide students to the essential understanding

Pre-Lesson Questions:	During Lesson Questions:	Post Lesson Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is a legacy? What does it mean to leave one (for ourselves or for others)? ● What is <i>performance</i> or <i>Slam</i> poetry? How do you think it may be different than poetry published on the page? ● What are some examples of effective spoken word or storytelling that you have previously experienced? ● How would you characterize the voice, or persona, that you assume when you write? How does it align with, or differ from, your everyday self? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What sorts of legacies do writers and spoken words artists leave? ● How does spoken word poetry affect its audience differently than poetry on the page? ● What sort of subject matter is best conveyed through spoken word poetry? What sort of poetry may not translate as well to the stage? ● Why did your group poem organize themes in the way that you did? ● In what theme categories do you feel your poetic voice is most ready to communicate? ● Why do certain themes feel more authentic to you than do others? ● How does a person’s identity inform and shape their poetic voice? ● What makes a poetry slam? ● Is slam poetry “real” poetry? Defend your assertion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do performance artists leave a legacy? ● What is the impact of a writer’s body of work on their legacy? ● How can a legacy change over time? ● For what reasons should a writer either edit their work over time, or allow the voice of their youth to stand on its own merits? ● Why are creative legacies necessary for future generations? ● How does the effect of narrative free verse poetry differ from that of form poetry? ● What does your perfect persona poem sound like, say, and feel like to you? ● What do you want your ideal creative piece to feel like for your audience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is there such a thing as slam poetry? Defend your assertion. ● Are you a Bob poet or a Marc poet? Tell us why.

DIFFERENTIATION
(Describe how the planned learning experience has been modified to meet the needs of gifted learners. Note: Modifications may be in one or more of the areas below. Only provide details for the area(s) that have been differentiated for this lesson.

Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment
<p>The readings and media presentations convey robust emotional and sociocultural themes and advanced vocabulary.</p>	<p>Students will engage in analysis of the highly abstract concept of legacy, through higher-order critical, open-ended questions that lead them toward analysis of complex</p>		<p>Students are supported through the process of intellectual, personal and sociocultural inquiry as they independently and courageously explore their relationship of art to the concept of legacy.</p>

PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

(What will the teacher input? What will the students be asked to do? For clarity, please provide detailed instructions)

Engage and Connect - *This phase focuses on piquing students' interest and helping them access prior knowledge. This is the introduction to the lesson that motivates or hooks the students.*

Students will watch the teacher perform one introductory slam poem in the theme of "identity" (3-4 minutes). They will then watch age-appropriate video selections from the movie "SlamNation," featuring a diverse variety of performance poets and their works (to include group pieces). (20 minutes)

- The **primary intent** of these presentations is to introduce students to the art of performance poetry and provide them with an idea of its look, sound, and potential effect on an audience.
- The **secondary intent** is to allow students to see and understand that Slam poetry is meant to be a democratic and accessible art form that has become its own institution by operating outside of conventional literary institutions.

[Mahogany Brown, "Black Girl Magic"](#)

[Saul Williams, "Ohm"](#)

[Marshall Soulful Jones "Touchscreen"](#)

[Sara Holbrook, "Chicks up Front"](#)

(10 minutes) **Students will then be introduced to [our performance task for the week](#).** There will certainly be questions.

Explore - *In this phase, the students have experiences with the concepts and ideas of the lesson. Students are encouraged to work together without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher acts as a facilitator. Students observe, question, and investigate the concepts to develop fundamental awareness of the nature of the materials and ideas.*

Listing (20-25 minutes--reading and listing)

Students will read an excerpt from Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz's authoritative Slam biography, *Words in Your Face: A Guided Tour Through Twenty Years of the New York City Poetry Slam*, (pp 35-41) which details the contemporary and greatly expanded reach of Slam poetry throughout the world. They will then read pp. 42-43, *The Myth of Slam Poetry: The Poetry Slam Certainly Exists, But Is There Such a Thing as Slam Poetry?*

Differentiation: Very fast readers or curious students will have access to further articles, [Who's Your Daddy](#) and [Can Slam Poetry Matter?](#) These articles provide greater perspective on first- and second-wave Poetry Slam, as well as reflection on controversies and Slam's "place" in the cultural zeitgeist.

Students will also be provided with a [glossary of necessary domain-specific vocabulary words](#) and phrases so that they may better understand these materials.

As students read, they will be asked to list people, places, themes, or events that have created, communicated, or enhanced an artistic legacy in the world of performance poetry.

Explain - *Students communicate what they have learned so far and figure out what it means. This phase also provides an opportunity for teachers to directly introduce a concept, process, or skill to guide students toward a deeper understanding.*

Grouping and Labeling (30 minutes)

- Students will create smaller word lists based on similarities in small groups of 3-4. They will collaborate toward organizing items in the complete list under the umbrella of legacy and its creation or perpetuation.
 - The rules:
 - Group items that share attributes (example: theme, motif, social justice cause, setting, identity marker, etc.)
 - Label the groups and be able to defend those groups.
 - Regroup items or groups into other groups.
 - At least four categories must exist, and at least four items must appear under a category.

Elaborate (20 minutes)—*Allow students to use their new knowledge and continue to explore its implications. At this stage students expand on the concepts they have learned, make connections to other related concepts, and apply their understandings to the world around them in new ways*

- **Students are challenged now to regroup items into new categories, but items may be used again**
- **Carousel brainstorming, preparation:** Groups will now chart their grouping/regrouping categories onto a piece of butcher paper, and share with the group the logic of their organizational structure.
- Students are then asked to form generalizations by summarizing and synthesizing what they have learned thus far.
- Teacher will engage students in dialogue with our “during lesson” questions from Slam’s history.

Evaluate: *This phase assesses both learning and teaching and can use a wide variety of informal and formal assessment strategies.*

1. **Carousel brainstorming, completion:** (25 minutes) Groups will complete their brainstorming sheet by making generalizations from the analysis of their learning thus far. They will write their generalizations at the bottom of their butcher paper, and engage in a gallery walk to view and understand other groups’ work. Then, students will reconvene to reflect on their generalizations thus far, and discuss *the relationship between creative output and legacy* in a circular organic discussion
2. (25 minutes) Students will then build the foundation for the next lesson’s work. Now that students have dealt with the external impact of a creative legacy, they will now begin the work of defining and creating the work that will comprise their own. Before leaving for the day, students will answer an essential question that engages them with legacy, as well as provoke their thinking regarding how their creative output may begin in the next lesson.
3. (15 minutes) Students will close their day by completing their day books, and receiving their [official Poetic Licenses](#).

Lesson #1 Resources

Gonna Slam the Slam? You Gotta Talk the Talk

Slamming: performing in a poetry slam

Slammaster: the organizer of the local poetry slam; usually but not always, the host of the slam.

Calibration Poet/Sacrificial Poet/Sacrificial Goat: the first poet of the poetry slam who is not in competition, but whose poems allow the judges an opportunity to figure out how to judge. By abbreviating “sacrificial” to just “sacpo” the word can be used as a verb. *Does anyone know who’s gonna sacpo tonight?*

Open Mic: a noncompetitive reading, frequently held in conjunction with a poetry slam, in which anyone can read; the poets are not judge and costumes, props and musical accompaniment are allowed.

Featured Poet: a poet who is invited to read as part of the poetry slam evening; this poet usually performs a fifteen-to-thirty-minute set to help set the tone of the evening.

Group Piece: an ensemble work in which several poets perform a single poem that is usually the construction of all poets involved, but sometimes is authored by just one of the poets with backup and/or enhancement provided by other poets.

The rules:

- Check your ego at the door.
- 3-minute limit
- No props
- No costumes
- No background music
- No animal acts (put away the dancing hippos)

Judges: 3-5 randomly selected volunteers (often, *voluntold*) people who score a slam.

Thirty: perfect score in a poetry slam.

Feminist hiss: That guy said whaaaaaaat? or GO, GIRL!

Masculine grunt: Emitted by men, when men speak of manly things.

Slampapi: Marc Smith, the man who started Poetry Slam.

“The point is not the point, the point is poetry” a phrase coined by Allan Wolf, longtime Asheville, NC, slammaster and now children’s author.

Score Creep: the (mostly) spot-on theory that contends that, as the slam goes on, the scores get higher and higher, regardless of whether the quality of the poetry improves. Keeping this in mind, poets know that it is nearly always better to slam later in the slam, to benefit from the inevitable “score creep.” An alternate, though less used, definition of “score creep” describes the person whose poems cause a major jump in points during the competition, after which the scores never go lower again. This poet is known as the “score creep”.

Source: Aptowicz, Cristin O’Keefe Aptowicz. Words in Your Face: A Guided Tour Through Twenty Years of the New York City Poetry Slam, Soft Skull Press, New York. 2008. p. 34.

Who's Your Daddy?

The National Poetry Slam sputtered without founder Marc Smith. Now he's back on board and bringing it home to Chicago.

By Deanna Isaacs @deannaisaacs

Slampappy Marc Smith was in his element at the weekly Uptown Poetry Slam last Sunday night at the Green Mill. All blazing eyes and fervor, he wrangled the standing-room-only crowd all the way back to "slime corner"--what Green Mill regulars call the place near the front door, where a wall-mounted TV competes with the live performance, flashing and droning while the poets spill their guts in three-minute segments. As far as Smith's concerned, television is the monster that inspired him to create the slam, and his dread of it is one of the things that separates him from some of his disciples--a gulf that a few years back had him walking away from the national organization he created, Poetry Slam Inc. "A lot of the younger people in the movement were looking at me like the old guy who's an obstacle," he says. "I said OK, if you can take it over, turn it into a thriving nonprofit institution, fine." He announced a three-year sabbatical in '99; by the fall of 2001 he was back. Without him, he says, things had gotten so bad that this year's 14th annual National Poetry Slam--running August 6 through 9 at various Chicago venues and bigger than ever--wouldn't be happening otherwise.

Smith launched the earliest version of the slam at Bucktown's Get Me High Lounge in 1985 and ran various local and national events out of his own pocket for a dozen years. Poetry Slam Inc. didn't become an official nonprofit organization until 1999, and even now, he says, it's "insanely underfunded," unable to afford even one full-time staff member. The annual budget, which everyone seems a little vague about, is around \$100,000, including PSI's major event, the national slam, which usually costs that much to put on. The only time the national event has generated a significant surplus--\$20,000--was in '99, the last time it was held in Chicago.

PSI's only paid employee is part-time executive director Steve Marsh, who agrees that the organization struggled while Smith was gone: "There were people who tried to provide leadership but didn't come to it with the same moral authority. And we were very short on money. Nothing came in from the national event in 2000." According to Smith, "internal rivalries and petty political ambitions" were causing things to "fall apart big-time. The only reason it's in Chicago this year is because nobody [else] wanted to do it. I got called up by organizers in several cities and they told me, it ain't gonna happen. And we had the nationals coming up in Minneapolis and it looked like it was going to be a total disaster."

It used to be that the host city did all the work, but Smith says after problems in Providence and Seattle (in 2000 and 2001, respectively) it was decided that PSI would organize and manage the competition and the host group would provide only venues and audiences. The Minneapolis slam, in spring 2002, turned out to be a success, but it was already late to start planning this year's event, and "none of us was relishing it," says Smith. For the first time, there's some grant money large enough to mention--\$20,000 from the NEA (the result of work done during Smith's absence)--but "in real dollar terms this is a \$300,000 or \$400,000 event," says Smith. "We've existed on the door and products we sell" and a "tremendous" volunteer effort. Now, "coming back in the worst fucking economy...there are people I won't even go to. I've asked them too many times."

Hobbled by its late start and dicey finances, the reluctant Chicago host team was surprised by a flood of applications. When 56 team slots filled in one day this spring, the organizers scrambled for more

venues and still had to turn some teams away. (Next year's slam is slated for Saint Louis, and there's talk of regional preliminaries to keep it manageable.) The 2003 slam is so big that, for the first time, individual and team finals need to be held separately. On Wednesday and Thursday, 63 four-person teams and 21 individual poets will compete in initial bouts at five Wicker Park venues. (See the sidebar in Section Two Performance listings for details.) Then ten individual finalists will face off Friday night at Metro, and four team finalists will meet Saturday night at Navy Pier's Skyline Stage.

After this year, the individual slam will spin off as a completely separate event, the first one to be held in Greenville, North Carolina, in February. PSI is also nailing down details on a contract that'll have it managing the Taos Poetry Circus, a New Mexico festival held every June. Taking it over is "a risk, but I think it can pay off in the long run--generate some income for PSI--if we can just revive it," says Smith. He says some of the people who tried to step in while he was gone were looking to use the slam for personal gain. "This thing that I started and have put so much energy into [but] have never exploited for my own purposes. I was pissed off. That's the same way I feel about the Russell Simmons people." Smith says a few years ago Simmons's HBO show Def Poetry Jam approached PSI looking for some "diverse people." Mike Henry, who served as president in Smith's absence, gave them some names, and slam poets began to appear on the show. "That gave a big boost to their program," says Smith. "We're still waiting for Mr. Simmons to donate something to [PSI], which he's promised for two years now."

This unrewarded contribution to Def Poetry Jam's success is especially galling for Smith since he fought any sort of cooperation with mass media for years--even initially refusing to help with Paul Devlin's 1998 documentary SlamNation, which he now recognizes as a good piece of work. (He says he made Devlin spend two years with the movement so he'd really understand it.) Like all mass media, Smith says, SlamNation and the Saul Williams film Slam, which followed it, created images people want to copy. "Young artists, instead of looking around in their own environment and being inspired to create something out of it, are looking at a mass media product and saying, oh, that's what I should do. The slam was started as a reaction to the television culture--to put people together in a room and have a place where you don't want to watch TV." But the old jouster knows this battle's been lost. Norman Lear will be at the Chicago finals, he says, scouting for a new television show. Letterman's been in touch. And Mike Henry, who's now PSI's development director, is taking a half dozen of the best poets to Los Angeles in September to do a showcase for a national cable company.

Can Slam Poetry Matter?

by Susan B.A. Somers-Willett

It wasn't too long ago that poetry critics were decrying the decline of American poetry's public audience. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Joseph Epstein and Dana Gioia declared poetry dead to the average reader (the former in his essay "Who Killed Poetry?" and the latter in "Can Poetry Matter?"). Aided by the rise of MFA programs and the insularity of the academy, poetry, they argued, had been forced into an academic ghetto. Both critics reasoned that if poetry were to be resuscitated from its deathbed, it would have to present a new public face to the general reader.

At the same time critics were lamenting its death, poetry was indeed finding a new kind of public venue. In 1984, in a working-class Chicago barroom called the Get Me High Lounge, an ex-construction worker by the name of Marc Smith was experimenting with poetry and cabaret-style performance art. When he ran out of material to complete a set during an ensemble show, Smith stumbled upon a competitive format that has lasted two decades. He let the audience judge--at first with boos and applause, and later with numeric scores--the poems performed on stage. Two years later, Marc Smith took his poetry competition to The Green Mill Cocktail Lounge, one of Al Capone's favorite haunts. It was there on July 25, 1986, among the clinking of beer bottles and the thick haze of cigarette smoke, that the Uptown Poetry Slam was born.

Simply put, a poetry slam is a competitive poetry reading in which poets perform their own writing for scores. Slams are open and democratic in nature; anyone who wishes to sign up for the competition can. The scores, which range from 0.0 to 10.0, are assigned by volunteer judges (typically five of them) selected from the audience. The highest and the lowest scores for a poem are dropped and the three remaining scores are added together for a maximum total of 30 points. There is also a time limit of three minutes and ten seconds per performance; poets may and do go over this limit, but a time penalty is assessed and figured into their scores. Poets are also restricted in how they perform; no "props, costumes, or animal acts" are allowed. Musical accompaniment, except for that which poets can make with their own body, is also usually excluded. Beyond that, poets are free to use the microphone and any other items on stage to perform their poems. At stake are titles, small cash prizes, and even gag prizes. From the winners of local and regional slams, representative teams from cities across the US and Canada (and some international teams) are certified to compete at the National Poetry Slam, which takes place annually in August.

The slam has grown exponentially since its humble Chicago beginnings. In 1990, the first National Poetry slam was held with two teams of poets from Chicago and San Francisco. Now in its 18th year, the National Poetry Slam has expanded to accommodate 80 teams from the US, Canada, and Europe, and its tournament structure is not unlike a national forensics meet. The slam's rapid national expansion has inspired a number of competition regulations, governed and enforced by a non-profit organization, Poetry Slam, Inc. It has also spawned other international competitions that vary in structure and membership, including the Individual World Poetry slam, established in 2004, and the Women of the World Poetry Slam, which will hold its first competition in 2007. Still, the poetry slam remains at its core a grassroots practice; the Uptown Poetry Slam, for example, still takes place every Sunday night at the Green Mill, and Poetry Slam, Inc. boasts over 100 certified local slam venues internationally.

Local poetry slams have reached a vast array of audiences. Today, slams attract audiences not only in urban centers like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, but also in areas as distant as Singapore and the UK or as remote as Fargo, North Dakota. They are held in bars, bookstores, coffeehouses, universities, street corners, and theaters. Slams have surfaced in most US states and slam poets have performed their work in feature films, in documentaries, on cable television, and on Broadway stages. Slam poetry has even had the dubious honor of becoming the subject of a book in The Complete Idiot's Guide series. The Nuyorican Poets' Cafe, the legendary den of poetic activity on New York City's Lower East Side, is consistently packed for its Friday night slam. And although there may appear to be a consistent tension between the academy and slam, more and more poets are ferrying the divide between the two camps. Former and current slam competitors are now studying or teaching in MFA programs; likewise, winners of academic poetry's most prestigious honors--the Yale Younger Poets Series, the National Poetry Series, and the Pulitzer Prize to name a few--have performed on the slam stage to acclaim. Still other slam competitors have taken their poetry to larger mainstream audiences, namely through commercial ventures such as the HBO series Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry or through spoken word albums.

The growing history and influence of the poetry slam, especially on a younger generation of writers, suggests that the practice is not just a passing fad. The serious critic must cease treating the slam as a literary novelty or oddity and recognize it for what it is: a movement which combines (and at times exploits) the literary, the performative, and the social potential of verse, and which does so with the audience as its judge and guide.

The poetry slam was born in a bar. Now, twenty-one years later, it is finally old enough to drink there.

* * *

The metaphor of legality is an apt one to apply to the slam, since the legitimacy of the poetry performed there has been debated by the literary elite since the slam's inception. In the Spring 2000 issue of The Paris Review, for example, Harold Bloom called the work performed at poetry slams "rant and nonsense" and coined their judgment by audience members "the death of art." On the other hand, nearly fifteen years after he warned poetry not to walk into the divine white light, Dana Gioia declared the popularity of poetry slams evidence of a populist revival of verse, inspired by the oral culture of radio, television, film, and Internet media. Although such claims may be hyperbolic--and in Bloom's case, clearly reductive--they do highlight some myths and truths about what slam poetry is and does.

One myth is that all slam poetry is overtly political, loud, confrontational, or performed exclusively in the hip-hop idiom. Although such tones and language may be de rigueur at many slams, sometimes tiringly so, there exists a variety of poetry being practiced on the slam stage--comedic, dramatic, sensual, personal, and political. This is not to say that the slam community isn't a politically-motivated one; slam poets and their audiences are by and large committed to celebrating ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity. But it is to say that there is more than one poetic approach used at the slam to state one's convictions. The poets and poetry represented in this issue, all of whom have been involved with the slam in some way, are indicative of slam poetry's many faces. The sheer variety of work performed in competitions signals that slam poetry--if we can think about it as a body of work--is not defined by tone, form, or subject matter, but by what it wishes to achieve: a more intimate and authentic connection with its audience through performance.

This sense of authentic connection reveals a truth: that the poetry performed at slams courts its audience, and diligently so. Whether for scores, applause, or mere power of persuasion, slam poets actively attempt to engage and elicit a reaction from their audiences. This marks a distinction between the poetry slam and the poetry reading: the poetry reading, with its hushed and reverent tones, remains a largely private and passive act, where the poetry slam evokes a more active relationship in the public display of applause, whistles, boos, and hissing from its audience. The slam invites the audience to assess the poem and its performance in a public context. Whereas the audience of a poetry reading usually offers no reaction other than the occasional "grunt and nod" of poetic acknowledgement, the audience of a slam does not hesitate to applaud or heckle each poet or poem. In this respect, slam poetry resembles not a form of poetry, but a rhetorical mode of address, one that woos its audience by making an argument, softly or loudly.

Some critics of the slam cite this emphasis on pleasing the audience as its tragic flaw. Amiri Baraka, for example, lamented in *The New Yorker* what he saw as the carnivalesque nature of the poetry slam, calling it the "strong-man act" of the poetry world. Indeed, there are times in slam competition where attempts to entertain the audience are reaching and obvious. But lest one think of poetry slams as mere popularity contests or a poetic version of *American Idol*, know that slam audiences are savvy and quick to dismiss poets whose performances are cloying or not up to their standards. In this regard, even when a poet woos his or her judges too assiduously, the slam's focus on audience marks a profound shift in poetry's critical reception. A slam, much to the chagrin of some literary critics, puts its audience in the seat of critical power--and an audience who has come to see poetry performed at 8 pm on a Friday night is not one whose intelligence we should insult.

Another misconception about slam poetry is that it exists only as a spontaneous performance. Although some slam poets freestyle or otherwise improvise on stage, most verse performed there is carefully composed and written down. Some poets bring their texts on the stage with them; others feel that memorizing their poetry allows them to focus on the performative elements of live presentation. Likewise, slam poets showcase their poetry through CDs, DVDs, and chapbooks alike. So, although some slam poetry is best appreciated in the context of live performance, it exists in and through a variety of media--print, oral broadcast, recorded performance, and live performance--and in many cases is a true hybrid of these different types of media. To make matters more complicated, the printed version of a slam poet's work is not necessarily the most definitive--the same slam poem can exist in different versions across different media and alter many times in the live context. In this respect, slam poetry raises the question of what verse's native technology should be.

Still others have tried to understand slam poetry's impact by citing Greek poetry competitions and the legacy of the bard or troubadour, saying the poetry slam reclaims poetry's long-lost origins in oral culture. A visit to any poetry slam will reveal that the primary emphasis here is not on the oral or aural--on speaking or listening--but on performance. Of course, orality is a part of what makes the poetry slam popular and unique--outside of the slams competitive framework, such work is known as "spoken word poetry," after all. Still, the most significant aspect of slam poetry is its performativity--its emphasis on presence and the body, its enactment of the authentic, and its performance of the self, identity, and authorship. It's not the sounding of words that a slam audience craves, but rather a personal experience that affirms to them what poetry is and does, regardless of the poet's (or their own) pedigree.

This last impulse is why Miguel Algaren, former Rutgers University professor and co-founder of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe, dubbed practice of the poetry slam "the democratization of verse." As an open

venue, the poetry slam is continually welcoming new audiences and practitioners into its ranks, all of whom can have a say in what is rewarded at the slam and where the artform is going. Poetry slams create communities of poets and poetry lovers in which poetry is not only disseminated but discussed, critiqued, debated. Such a democratic, critical strain is woefully absent from so many other public poetry projects designed in the wake of the "Can Poetry Matter?" years--projects which focus on getting poetry out to readers for aesthetic enjoyment but which don't invite its discussion or vital sense of community.

* * *

Speaking of community, my own involvement in local and national poetry slams for the last decade demands that I highlight one thing that makes this group of artists so remarkable. Although the tenor of competition is sometimes cutthroat (trash-talk and strategy sessions abound at slams when the stakes are high), the poetry slam is, at its heart, a place meant to celebrate its community and to nurture new writers and performers regardless of their credentials. For some poets, the slam provides a place of acceptance where they otherwise could find none, and so it should be of no surprise that the slam boasts of a much more diverse group of poets--both in demographics and in style--than one will find in more elite circles. The slam's openness has ushered in a new awareness of and enthusiasm for the oral and performative possibilities of poetry among popular audiences.

Still, the poetry slam is far from a verse utopia. Slam poets, even though they are told by MCs to check their egos at the door, sometimes don't. And let's face it, the competitive aspect of slam can bring out the worst in people. (One poet in this issue, Taylor Mali, even published a tongue-in-cheek chapbook of winning slam strategies which includes tactics as crass as "Don't Lead with your Lesbian.") Nor is the poetry slam a one-stop panacea for poetry's once ailing life in the public sphere. If poetry is to become a part of the general reader's life, it must do so in variety and abundance, on both the page and the stage and all the media in between.

Yet, the poetry slam has been incredibly successful at creating one thing that other public poetry projects have not--a close-knit, distinct, and vibrant community of writers and patrons. We refer to our clan as the "slam family,"; dysfunction and all. As someone who identifies as an academic poet, a slam poet, and a critic, and as someone who is active in all of those arenas, I must say that I have not found a community as welcoming and permanent as this one. Even though most of us retire from competition at some point, a good number of slammers move on to have another, larger relationship with poetry--whether as organizers of slam events, as actors or musicians, or as respected authors or teachers within the academy. Some of us have met husbands, wives, and life partners at a slam. Many of us have met lifelong friends. We convene at our national competitions to revel in the possibilities of poetry in performance, geek out on our latest reading, debate what's new in spoken word poetry, and boogie. It's a great party. In such matters, the words of slammaster Allan Wolf--"The points are not the point, the point is poetry"--ring true.

Source: [Rattle.com, #27](#)

Official Poetic Licenses

(Actual licenses will be pocket-sized)

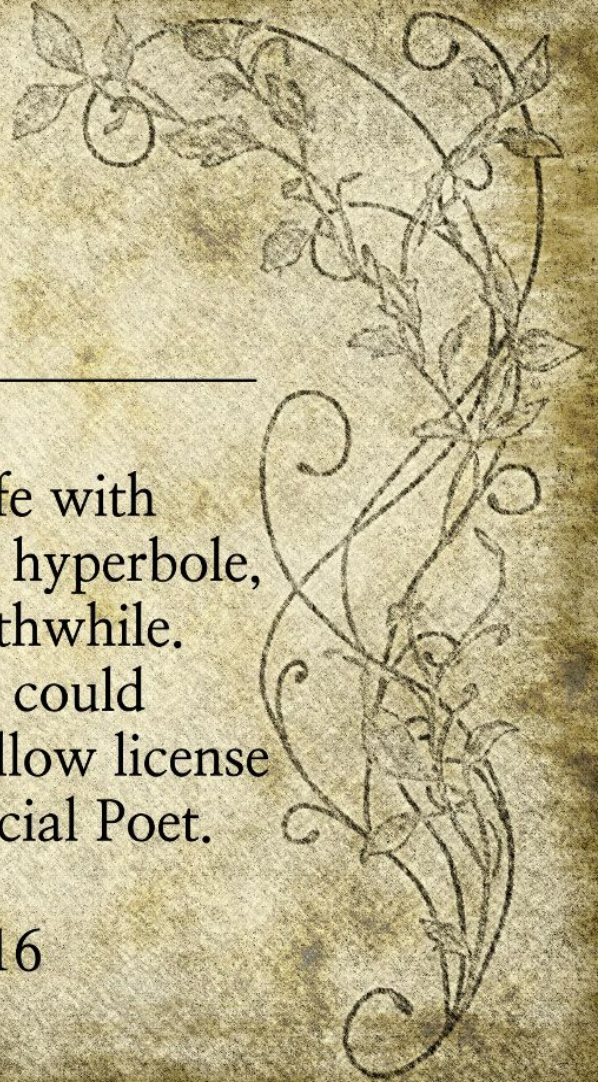
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Poetic License

entitles 2016 SPARK Poet _____

to craft a fierce, lyrical legacy rife with mixed metaphors, truckloads of hyperbole, and enough sass to make it worthwhile. Failure to check ego at the door could result in gentle side-eye from fellow license holders and a stint as the Sacrificial Poet.

issued this 20th day of June, 2016



TEACHER NAME		Lesson #
Kimberly R. Holzer-Lane		2
MODEL	CONTENT AREA	GRADE LEVEL
Bruner Constructivist Inquiry	Language Arts	6-8
CONCEPTUAL LENS		LESSON TOPIC
Legacy		Perspective can change poetic voice.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES (from State/Local Curriculum)		
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6: Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2</p> <p>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.</p>		
THE ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING (What is the overarching idea students will understand as a result of this lesson?)		THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION (What question will be asked to lead students to “uncover” the Essential Understanding)
Legacies inspire voice.		How do legacies inspire voice?
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (What factual information will students learn in this lesson?)		PROCESS SKILLS (What will students be able to do as a result of this lesson?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poetry Slam or performance poetry is a well-recognized art form with well-respected leaders who have left a strong imprint on its history. Poetic Voice, the narrative voice of a poem, can change by taking another perspective or viewing through another lens. The most compelling performance poems advocate, skillfully detail a narrative arc, and/or portray a narrative of self. The voice of a performance poem is often one that seeks to secure creative legacy through advocacy, cultural or social identity, or courage. Performance poetry is evocative and often bold in word, tone, and message. 		<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift their perspective to encompass and internalize diversity in all its forms, not the least of which is ideological. Analyze performance poems and the biographies of its greatest practitioners. Draw conclusions about a writer’s intent. Evaluate the impact of a writer’s creative legacy. Make generalizations about the short- and long-term legacies that are left by writers and performers. Collaborate positively and productively with peers.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What questions will be asked to support instruction?

Include both “lesson plan level” questions as well as questions designed to guide students to the essential understanding

Pre-Lesson Questions:	During Lesson Questions:	Post Lesson Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are some of performance poetry’s greatest voices? How have their legacies shaped the art form and made their work important? • What is <i>performance</i> or <i>Slam</i> poetry? How do you think it may be different than poetry published on the page? • What do performance poets do? • How do slam poets do what they do? • How does performance poetry live in our culture differently than does purely literary work? • Who are your different “selves”? How is your role as daughter or son different than your role as student or friend, and how might those <i>poetic</i> voices differ? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of legacies do writers and spoken words artists leave? • Which of your “selves”—your creative personas—is most likely to leave the most lasting creative legacy? • How do factors such as a writer’s race, sex, and life history inform their poetic voice? • What is the impact of a person’s divergent inner voices on their overall poetic legacy? • How does what a person knows, what a person experiences, or who a person is impact on his or her poetic voice and overall creative legacy? • How does a reader analyze a written version of a performance poem? How do they know if their analysis is true to the poet’s intent? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do legacies inspire voice? • How does the convergence of a poet’s whole self, both inner characteristics and accumulation of experiences, shape their poetic legacy? • Why is understanding performance poetry and its greatest practitioners important? • How can you build upon the Slam poetry legacy that currently exists in our culture? • How can you move Slam poetry forward and continue to shape the movement’s legacy? • What is the point of performance poetry? • How does the legacy left by great Slam poetry artists make us stronger, freer, more open, or more empowered?

DIFFERENTIATION

(Describe how the planned learning experience has been modified to meet the needs of gifted learners.

Note: Modifications may be in one or more of the areas below. Only provide details for the area(s) that have been differentiated for this lesson.

Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment
The readings and media presentations convey robust emotional and sociocultural themes and advanced vocabulary. The conceptual framework is given context through socioculturally and ideologically diverse content.	Students will engage in analysis of the highly abstract concept of legacy, through higher-order critical, open-ended questions that lead them toward analysis of complex text.	Students will assume varying voices through diverse poetic identities, brainstorming and writing work from the perspective of those identities.	Students are supported through the process of intellectual, personal and sociocultural inquiry in an environment that models and encourages the understanding and analysis of diverse voices and experiences.

PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

(What will the teacher input? What will the students be asked to do? For clarity, please provide detailed instructions)

Engage and Connect - *This phase focuses on piquing students' interest and helping them access prior knowledge. This is the introduction to the lesson that motivates or hooks the students.*

Students will watch two videos: These videos are intended to show students two things. The first is poetic craft, which is in contrast to much of the poems whose success lay more in their assertion or performance. Anis Mojgani's legacy is just that--craft. He holds the audience gently in his hand and takes them on very personal, motivating, meaningful journeys. The second video is intended to show students what may be available to them should they choose to take on Slam in their lives. Are national competitions part of their future? Are they prepared for the discipline that they involve? Are they prepared to craft a very public legacy and all that comes with it? "Louder than a Bomb" shows teenagers answering just these questions.

- "[Shake the Dust](#)," Anis Mojgani
- "[Louder than a Bomb](#)," movie trailer

Explore - *In this phase, the students have experiences with the concepts and ideas of the lesson. Students are encouraged to work together without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher acts as a facilitator. Students observe, question, and investigate the concepts to develop fundamental awareness of the nature of the materials and ideas.*

Based on their learning so far, students will collaborate to answer the question, "What do slam poets do?" They will collaborate as a large group to share their observations on the lives, the work, the experiences, and the impact of slam poets.

Students will now move into the larger question, "How do slam poets do what they do?"

Explain —*Allow students to use their new knowledge and continue to explore its implications. At this stage students expand on the concepts they have learned, make connections to other related concepts, and apply their understandings to the world around them in new ways*

Process of inquiry

Students will be taken through four different stations that will give them the space to practice writing across varying emotional states, issues of identity, and social issues. *But for **station one** they will practice within the persona of one Slam poet in stations 2-4.*

- Those poets will include (with photo, bio, and one exemplar poem):
 - *Taylor Mali*, known as "The Teacher Poet". Wealthy, New York blue blood, Caucasian male [Poems Bio Performance](#)
 - *Beau Sia*, Chinese-American poet from New York, Broadway star of "Def Poetry Jam" [Poems Bio Performance](#)
 - *Patricia Smith*, African-American poet, former Boston Globe columnist, NEA grant recipient, National Book Award finalist [Poems Bio Performance](#)
 - *Rachel McKibbens*, Chicana poet, mother of five, abandoned by schizophrenic mother, has struggled with mental health issues. [Poems Bio Performance](#)
 - *Rachel Wiley*, Biracial female poet, National Women of the World Slam finalist, Body-positive activist for people of all sizes. [Poems Bio](#)
 - *Charles Bukowski*, practitioner of Dirty Realism and spartan verse. Working class Caucasian male known for spare, simple language that carries complex, everyman themes. [Poems Bio Performance](#)
 - *Marc Kelly Smith*, known as "Slampapi," father of Poetry Slam, Middle class Caucasian male [Poems Bio Performance](#)

- *Mayde Del Valle*, first Latina and youngest-ever winner of the National Poetry Slam. Writes a great deal about her Puerto Rican heritage, among other themes. [Poems Bio Performance](#)
- *Staceyann Chin*, Jamaican immigrant to the US, bold feminist, Broadway star of “Def Poetry Jam, left Jamaica to escape oppression and threats due to her sexual orientation. [Poem Bio Performance](#)
- *Shane Koyczan*, first Canadian to win the National Poetry Slam. World record holder for poet’s largest audience when he performed at the opening ceremonies of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Anti-bullying advocate, arguably Canada’s most famous living poet. [Poems Bio Performance](#)
- **Station one:** Students will complete a “write like” in the voice of Saul Williams after viewing “List of Demands “Reparations”, and create their own list of demands from our culture or society. **Note: we will begin at Station One Together**
 - **Note:** *Listing is a critical entry practice for emerging poets and activists, allowing students to practice a “brain dump” of sorts. From the aspect of performance, rattling off lists is an accessible way for students to practice rapid-fire delivery of ideas and build energy toward a satisfying crescendo. Saul Williams is a masterful example of this practice.*
- **Station two:** Students will spin the [wheel of feelings](#). They assume the persona of their Slam poet, and write a flash poem in that particular mood, in that particular person’s voice.
- **Station three:** Students will face the *Wall of Activism (Note: I will construct this in the space.)*. Again, students will assume the persona of their exemplar Slam poet and study that person’s bio and sample poem.
 - Students will then approach the social issue that they believe would *most resonate* with their Slam poet. In the persona of their Slam poet, they will leave at least five lines of poetic graffiti addressing the issue on that section of the wall.
- **Station four:** Students will view [“Poetry for Peace” exemplar collaborative piece](#) between one Muslim and one Jewish poet.
 - This station is organized such that desks face one another in pairs. One person in a pair will sit across from the other person in the pair.
 - Each pair of seats will be labeled, respectively:
 - Equality
 - Love
 - Economic opportunity
 - Resilience (Grit)
 - Perseverance
 - Education
 - Students will collaborate, in the personas they have assumed, to write a short advocacy poem that addresses the social issue at hand.

We plan for students to spend 20 minutes at each center.

Elaborate: *This phase assesses both learning and teaching and can use a wide variety of informal and formal assessment strategies.*

- Students will reconvene and reflect on the post-lesson questions about what they have learned about being Slam or performance poets, and look forward to assuming their own voices in the next lessons to move the art form forward.
- Students who move quickly through each station will move to reflection in the daybooks with the day’s essential questions that will move their work forward.

Evaluate:

- Students will now review their personal writings from today's activity. They may want to collaborate on this self-evaluation with a peer.
- Students will select the work that they would like to develop further, in answer to this question—"How do legacies inspire voice?" Students will be editing, developing, and further writing on their strongest piece of the day; this work will continue into the next workshop as students are released to develop and create their own creative works for performance later in the week.

TEACHER NAME		Lesson #
Kimberly R. Holzer-Lane		3
MODEL	CONTENT AREA	GRADE LEVEL
Creative Problem Solving	Language Arts	6-8
CONCEPTUAL LENS		LESSON TOPIC
Legacy		Poetic voice
LEARNING OBJECTIVES <i>(from State/Local Curriculum)</i>		
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2 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.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5: Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7 Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.</p>		
THE ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING <i>(What is the overarching idea students will understand as a result of this lesson?)</i>		THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION <i>(What question will be asked to lead students to “uncover” the Essential Understanding)</i>
Legacies inspire voice.		How do legacies inspire voice?
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE <i>(What factual information will students learn in this lesson?)</i>		PROCESS SKILLS <i>(What will students be able to do as a result of this lesson?)</i>
<p>Students will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the writing process is often driven by a desire to intentionally craft one’s legacy. • That writing and performing in our authentic voices require honesty, craft, and courage. • That writing and performing in an authentic voice requires a willingness to fantasize and unbound our “best selves”. 		<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write creative products that that are authentic to their voice. • Analyze and articulate how their voice helps to build their personal legacy • Evaluate how a written product and its performance intersect for maximum effect • Analyze and apply creative problem solving skills building a representation of their voice and their legacy • Collaborate positively and productively with peers
GUIDING QUESTIONS		
<p><i>What questions will be asked to support instruction?</i></p> <p><i>Include both “lesson plan level” questions as well as questions designed to guide students to the essential</i></p>		

understanding

Pre-Lesson Questions:	During Lesson Questions:	Post Lesson Questions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the differences between a poem that one “just” reads and those that are performed? ● How are those poems different? ● How does a person shape their literary voice? ● How does a person begin to write a poem? ● What does a writer need to begin crafting a poem in their authentic voice? ● How does the writing process begin? ● Who defines a person’s creative legacy? ● What defines a person’s creative legacy? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why did you decide to write on this particular topic, prompt, or concept? ● How does your poem draft resemble any of the poems you have read or seen thus far? ● What will make your poem unique, innovative, and fresh? ● What legacy do you intend to leave with the audience who hears your poem? ● What voice do you wish your audience to associate with your performance? ● What barriers, blocks, or challenges are you facing as you write your poem? ● How does a person’s literary voice inform and shape their written poem and its performance? ● What can you deduce about these poets’ creative legacies? ● How do writers shape their literary voice? ● How does their voice shape their legacy ? ● What work must I do to ensure that my poetic voice communicates my truth? ● How do I write from very personal experiences, thoughts, or feelings? ● How do I make my personal self, public? ● How will I know that my poem is ready to be performed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do legacies inspire voice? ● What writing blocks or challenges did you face? ● How were you able to “hear” the voice of your poem rise from the page to the stage? ● How did you break through your writing blocks? ● How would you edit your poem to improve its fidelity to your voice and legacy? ● How would you perform your poem so that it stays true to your voice and legacy? ● If you could write like or sound like any poet we have studied so far, who would that be and why? ● What poems have you seen from others that you think will be powerful or influential? ● How did your idea of your legacy influence your poem? ● How do writers and performers leave a legacy?

DIFFERENTIATION

(Describe how the planned learning experience has been modified to meet the needs of gifted learners. Note: Modifications may be in one or more of the areas below. Only provide details for the area(s) that have been differentiated for this lesson.

Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment
The readings and media presentations convey robust emotional and sociocultural themes and advanced	Students will engage in writing process that crafts work in authentic literary voice toward building legacy; they will evaluate one	Students will write and perform original works that demonstrate their multidimensional talents and versatility.	Students are supported through the process of intellectual, personal and sociocultural inquiry as they independently and courageously explore their relationship of art to the concept of legacy.

vocabulary.	another's work honestly and transparently. CPS is "the process," often humbling, of learning to return to the drawing board for a more finely-honed product, to move effectively beyond the first draft.		
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PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

(What will the teacher input? What will the students be asked to do? For clarity, please provide detailed instructions)

Engage and Connect - *This phase focuses on piquing students' interest and helping them access prior knowledge. This is the introduction to the lesson that motivates or hooks the students.*

Envisioning

- Students enter and are presented with two divergent poetry performance videos:
 - Marshall Soulful Jones, "[Touchscreen](#)" (youth preoccupation with technology vs. real life)
 - Beth Copeland, "[Falling Lessons: Erasure One](#)" (losing a parent to Alzheimer's, literally "being erased".)
- Students also see on the walls several chart papers on the walls, each with one question:
 - (*Samples; works in progress*) How do "internal" and "external" poems communicate the many voices we all carry in us?
 - How are each these poems different from one another?
 - What can you deduce about these poets' creative legacies?
 - How does a person begin the process of writing a poem?
 - How does a person shape poetic voice to build their legacy?
- Students select one or two posters and write a response to those questions on the paper. They return to the group and are then presented with these questions:
 - How do writers shape their literary voice?
 - How does their voice shape their legacy?

After a brief discussion, students are released to tables at which they will begin the writing process.

Explore - *In this phase, the students have experiences with the concepts and ideas of the lesson. Students are encouraged to work together without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher acts as a facilitator. Students observe, question, and investigate the concepts to develop fundamental awareness of the nature of the materials and ideas.*

Mess Finding

Teacher presents challenge (which has been introduced in earlier lesson, but active creation time takes place today): Students are to write a poem to be performed at our culminating poetry slam, crafting an authentic and representative voice that is true to their intended legacy. They may write from any of the prompts that appear on their tables, or edit and develop a work that they began in previous lessons.

Fact Finding

Students are not allowed to pick up any prompts yet. First, they are to engage with questions that will nurture them into the writing process. Those questions are:

- What work must I do to ensure that my poetic voice communicates my truth?

- How do I write from very personal experiences, thoughts, or feelings?
- How do I make my personal self, public?
- How will I know that my poem is ready to be performed?

Students will quickly collaborate on answers to these questions, before being given the framework of writing workshop:

- The writing process begins as a private, internal process. Leave others be.
- We will come together in partnerships or trios when people are ready to share and edit.
- Everyone must write.

Explain - *Students communicate what they have learned so far and figure out what it means. This phase also provides an opportunity for teachers to directly introduce a concept, process, or skill to guide students toward a deeper understanding.*

Problem finding

- Students clarify the problem—“In what ways might I build an authentic poem based on my authentic voice and true to my intended legacy?”

Idea finding

- [Students are given 15-20 minutes to brainstorm ideas based on the table prompts in front of them.](#) Alternatively, students may further deepen a preselected work using those writing prompts. Teacher facilitates students as needed.
- ***Note:** The link takes you to all of the prompts, which will be cut into strips and placed throughout the room.

Elaborate —*Allow students to use their new knowledge and continue to explore its implications. At this stage students expand on the concepts they have learned, make connections to other related concepts, and apply their understandings to the world around them in new ways*

Solution Finding

- Students use convergent thinking to determine the best prompt that will define their narrative voice. They begin to focus their poem more tightly around crafting it to be cohesive and authentic.

Evaluate: *This phase assesses both learning and teaching and can use a wide variety of informal and formal assessment strategies.*

Acceptance Finding

Students are given 30 minutes of writing and performance practice time; teacher facilitates as a writing coach and mentor.

Asks following questions of students as they engage with this process:

- Why did you decide to write on **this** particular topic or concept?
- How does your poem draft resemble any of the poems you have read or seen thus far?
- What will make your poem unique, innovative, and fresh?
- What legacy do you intend to leave with the audience who hears your poem?
- What voice do you wish your audience to associate with your performance?
- What barriers, blocks, or challenges are you facing as you write your poem?
- How does a person’s literary voice inform and shape their written poem and its performance?

Students are now brought together to evaluate “where they are,” and teacher differentiates according to need:

- Some students may require 15-20 more minutes of writing time.
- Some students are ready to practice read-aloud shares with friends. Teacher will facilitate this group toward sharing and reflection.

Teacher divides students appropriately in the space so that all students may achieve their respective goals.

After this time ends, students are again brought together to reflect on the following questions:

- What writing blocks or challenges did you face?
- How were you able to “hear” the voice of your poem rise from the page to the stage?
- How did you break through your writing blocks?
- How would you edit your poem to improve its fidelity to your voice and legacy?
- How would you perform your poem so that it stays true to your voice and legacy?
- If you could write like or sound like any poet we have studied so far, who would that be and why?
- What poems have you seen from others that you think will be powerful or influential?
- How did your idea of your legacy influence your poem?
- How do writers and performers leave a legacy?
- How do legacies inspire voice?

TEACHER NAME		Lesson #
Kimberly R. Holzer-Lane		4
MODEL	CONTENT AREA	GRADE LEVEL
Creative Problem Solving	Language Arts	6-8
CONCEPTUAL LENS		LESSON TOPIC
Legacy		Poetry performance
LEARNING OBJECTIVES <i>(from State/Local Curriculum)</i>		
<p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.</p>		
THE ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING <i>(What is the overarching idea students will understand as a result of this lesson?)</i>	THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION <i>(What question will be asked to lead students to "uncover" the Essential Understanding)</i>	
Performance builds legacy.	How does performance build a legacy?	
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE <i>(What factual information will students learn in this lesson?)</i>	PROCESS SKILLS <i>(What will students be able to do as a result of this lesson?)</i>	
<p>Students will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance strategies for poetry convey confidence and a deep belief in the material being performed. • Performing original work in an authentic voice requires honesty, craft, and courage. • Audience feedback during a poetry performance can guide a performer to edit both their material and their performance. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform material that is authentic to their voice and intent. • Understand and evaluate audience feedback. • Collaboratively evaluate and self-reflect on performances with peers. 	
GUIDING QUESTIONS <i>What questions will be asked to support instruction?</i>		
<i>Include both "lesson plan level" questions as well as questions designed to guide students to the essential understanding</i>		
Pre-Lesson Questions:	During Lesson Questions:	Post Lesson Questions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does the performance of a poem impact one's legacy? ● How does one's intended legacy impact the performance of a poem? ● What performance qualities bring a poem to life? ● Where in a poem are different performance qualities most effectively practiced? ● How does a person practice a performance poem? ● What are the pros and cons of memorizing versus reading a performance poem? ● How can we effectively collaborate with peers to build one another's confidence and performance capacity? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do I perform an original poem truthful to my legacy? ● How are you making performance decisions throughout the poem? ● How are you editing your performance decisions throughout the poem? ● How can you respond to peer feedback while practicing and working through your performance? ● What challenges are you experiencing as you create your performance? ● What role does your legacy play as you make performance decisions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does performance build a legacy? ● How well does your performance resonate with the work you have written? ● How did you address and overcome any challenges to creating your best performance? ● How did audience feedback during and after your performance affect you? ● When you had time to self-reflect on the entire experience, what conclusions did you draw? ● How did other students' performances resonate with you?
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DIFFERENTIATION
(Describe how the planned learning experience has been modified to meet the needs of gifted learners. Note: Modifications may be in one or more of the areas below. Only provide details for the area(s) that have been differentiated for this lesson.)

Content	Process	Product	Learning Environment
Students will both perform and be witness to diverse, complex presentations with robust emotional and sociocultural themes.	Students will engage in performance process that builds authenticity toward their legacy. They will evaluate and be evaluated in a transparent, real-time process.	Students will perform original works that demonstrate their diverse talents and versatility.	Students are supported in building performance capacity: independence, courage, and the relationship of their art to their legacy.

PLANNED LEARNING EXPERIENCES
(What will the teacher input? What will the students be asked to do? For clarity, please provide detailed instructions)

Engage and Connect - This phase focuses on piquing students' interest and helping them access prior knowledge. This is the introduction to the lesson that motivates or hooks the students.

Envisioning

- Teacher presents students with two live, original poetry performances:
 - [Relearning My Numbers, Kimberly Holzer-Lane](#) (read, not memorized)

- [Seven Pounds, Eight Ounces, Kimberly Holzer-Lane](#) (memorized; fully performed)
- Students see two questions on the wall that they are to contemplate during those performances. After the performances, they are to reflect on these questions in their daybooks—they are to evaluate what they just experienced with the note that ***instructor has checked their ego at the door. DO NOT BE GENTLE:***
 - What are the pros and cons of memorizing versus reading a performance poem?
 - What performance qualities bring a poem to life?
 - What *effective* performance qualities did you see in each poem?
 - Where in a poem are different performance qualities most effectively practiced?

Students are then released to mess find.

Explore - *In this phase, the students have experiences with the concepts and ideas of the lesson. Students are encouraged to work together without direct instruction from the teacher. The teacher acts as a facilitator. Students observe, question, and investigate the concepts to develop fundamental awareness of the nature of the materials and ideas.*

Mess Finding

IMPORTANT NOTE: **By this lesson, students are in process of completing original performance poems. The writing process in this particular art form is often tightly intertwined with the performance aspect. As a result, performance coaching as students work through this mess will be highly responsive to both their writing and performance needs. (Isolated coaching is less helpful with Slam.) Thus, this lesson is intertwined with lesson 3 and carries over into the final performance.**

Students are presented with challenge—to effectively perform an original piece of poetry in front of a live audience. They are to perform in a way that is authentic to their intended legacy and true to their written work. In uncovering their best performance selves, they will work collaboratively to read and critique one another’s overall performances.

Fact Finding

Students are to engage with questions that nurture them into the performance process. These questions are:

- What performance qualities must I practice to ensure that my poetic voice communicates truth?
- How do I perform very personal work while maintaining my composure?
- How do I engage and invite my audience with personal work—how do I create a shared personal experience?
- How will I know that my performance is stage-ready?

Students will quickly collaborate on answer to these questions, before being given the framework of performance workshop:

- Performance workshop requires the acceptance of critical feedback.
- Check your ego at the door.
- Everyone will perform. Everyone will serve as audience.

Explain - *Students communicate what they have learned so far and figure out what it means. This phase also provides an opportunity for teachers to directly introduce a concept, process, or skill to guide students toward a deeper understanding.*

Problem Finding

- Students clarify the problem: “How do I perform an original poem truthful to my legacy?”

Idea Finding

- Students are given 15 minutes to individually brainstorm—to visualize and mentally “walk through” their performances. (**Note:** at the beginning of this workshop, students are *strongly encouraged* to memorize their works in progress at home to maximize their session time on writing and performance.)

Elaborate —*Allow students to use their new knowledge and continue to explore its implications. At this stage students expand on the concepts they have learned, make connections to other related concepts, and apply their understandings to the world around them in new ways*

Solution Finding

- Students use convergent thinking to make confident performance decisions that will support the legacy of their written work. They begin to converge written work and performance to create a powerful, authentic performance for the live audience.

Evaluate: *This phase assesses both learning and teaching and can use a wide variety of informal and formal assessment strategies.*

Acceptance Finding

- Students will work in pairs and with teacher facilitating as coach and mentor. Students are given sentence starters to support accountable dialogue as they listen to and critique one another.
 - Examples:
 - The timing of this performance is/needs to be _____.
 - I am confused when the performance _____.
 - The part of the performance that resonates most with me was _____.
 - The performance seems true to the poem because ...[provide evidence].
 - The performance can better match the intent of the poem in this way...[provide evidence].
 - The body language in this performance supports/distracts from the written work because...[provide evidence.]
- Students will be guided by these larger lesson questions as they perfect their performances:
 - How do I perform an original poem truthful to my legacy?
 - How are you making your performance decisions throughout the poem?
 - How are you editing your performance decisions throughout the poem?
 - How can you respond to peer feedback while practicing and working through your performance?
 - What challenges are you experiencing as you create your performance?
 - What role does your legacy play as you make performance decisions?

After this time ends, students are brought to the larger group to reflect on the following questions:

- How does performance build a legacy?
- How well does your performance resonate with the work you have written?
- How did you address and overcome any challenges to creating your best performance?
- How did audience feedback during and after your performance affect you?
- When you had time to self-reflect on the entire experience, what conclusions did you draw?
- How did other students' performances resonate with you?

Closure will be theatre-style roundtable "notes" that will inform students on steps they may want to take during at-home practice for the final performance task. It will be peer-led dialogue, coached by teacher.

Unit Resources

Algarín, M., & Holman, B. (1994). *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Cafe*.

New York: H. Holt. *One of the first and most enduring poetry collections from slam poets whose work have stood the test of time.*

Anthony Somers-Willett, S. B., Ph.D. (2007, June). *Can Slam Poetry Matter?* Rattle, (27). Retrieved June 20, 2016, from

<http://www.rattle.com/rattle27/somerswillett.htm>. *Once believed to be breathing in death rattles, the art of poetry has been given new life by a form of art called Poetry Slam.*

Aptowicz, C. O. (2008). *Words in your face: A guided tour through twenty years of the New York City Poetry Slam*. New York: Soft Skull. *The most authoritative and recent volume on the history of poetry slam. Excellent, accessible reading for both teachers and students.*

Brave New Voices | The Voice of the 21st Century. (2016). Retrieved August 01, 2016, from <http://youthspeaks.org/bravenewvoices/> *Official site of Youthspeaks, the organization that organizes and coordinates Brave New Voices, an international poetry slam extravaganza for youth.*

Howe, F., & Bass, E. (1993). *No more masks!: An anthology of poems by women*.

New York, NY: Harper Collins. *An authoritative classic feminist anthology of contemporary English language poetry.*

Isaccs, D. (2003, July 31). *Who's Your Daddy?* The National Poetry Slam sputtered without founder Marc Smith. Now he's back on board and bringing it home to Chicago. Chicago Reader. Retrieved from

<http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/whos-your-daddy/Content?oid>

[=912764](#) Marc Smith, founder of Poetry Slam, retakes the reins of an institution that was beginning to falter, and gives it new life.

Kaufman, A. (1999). *The outlaw bible of American poetry*. New York, NY: Thunder's Mouth Press. *Close to 700 pages of poets whose work lies outside the literary and academic mainstream; an exciting, robust collection of contemporary and lively work.*

Mali, T. (2016). Taylor Mali. Retrieved August 1, 2016, from <http://www.taylormali.com/>. Official site of Taylor Mali, "The Teacher Poet," with ample poems and links to teacher activities.

Marc Kelly Smith. (n.d.). Retrieved August 1, 2016, from <http://www.marckellysmith.net/>. Official site of "Slampapi" Marc Kelly Smith, the man who began Poetry Slam.

Moore, G., & Beier, U. (1998). *The Penguin book of modern African poetry*. London, England: Penguin Books. *An authoritative, accessible, curious, and robust volume of contemporary African poetry in English language. Must-read for students interested in diverse and unique voices.*

Shane Koyczan. (2016). Retrieved August 01, 2016, from <http://www.shanekoyczan.com/>. Official site of Shane Koyczan, whose work in anti-bullying and self-empowerment for young people, continues to save and enrich people's lives.

Devlin, P. J. (Director). (1998). *SlamNation: The Sport of Spoken Word-Educator's Edition* [Video file]. USA: DevlinPix. Retrieved August 1, 2016, from <http://www.devlinpix.com/film/slamnation>. *The authoritative documentary on Poetry Slam in the United States.*

Smith, M. K., & Eleveld, M. (2003). *The spoken word revolution: Slam, hip-hop & the poetry of a new generation*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks MediaFusion.

Poetry slam leaders and exciting voices at the beginning of the new millennium.

Washburn, K., Major, J. S., & Fadiman, C. (1998). *World poetry: An anthology of verse from antiquity to our time*. New York: W.W. Norton. *A fascinating, in-depth collection of world poetry that often goes unexamined in mainstream poetry study. An excellent resource for diverse classrooms.*