

# URBANGATEWAYS

## VOICES OF CHICAGO: SLAM POETRY

### POETRY CENTER: POETS WITH CLASS



#### ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Building on Chicago's unique heritage as the stomping grounds of many great writers and the birthplace of modern performance ("Slam") poetry, Chicago Slam Works presents a guided tour of the city's poetic landscape. Some of Chicago's best poets bring poetry to life through their own original work and inspire students to create their own version of Chicago through writing. The show includes performed poems, brief history of slam poetry, and an interactive element where the performers' interview audience members, take suggestions, and perform extemporaneous poems based on the audience in a mock slam competition.

#### MEET THE ARTIST

Poets with Class's teaching and touring artists boasts some of Chicago's most accomplished writers and performers, all of whom have extensive backgrounds in theater, poetry, and education. The Poetry Center of Chicago is an independent not-for-profit, 501c3 arts organization founded in 1974.

#### CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Slam poetry began in Chicago's speakeasy scene at the Green Mill lounge, by Marc Kelly Smith in the year 1986. The poetry slam and the accompanying "competition" was a catalyst for modern performance poetry – a major force in stirring the minds of students, scholars and everyday folks. While it seems simple, the act of putting equal emphasis on both the performance and content of a poem began a new, interactive art form that has since spread around the world and has even been called the most important literary movement of the last 100 years. Due to the growth and enthusiastic response slam poetry has received worldwide, the Chicago Slam Works was born. Chicago Slam Works is a non-profit organization. Those of us within it seek to advance performance poetry, both in Chicago and around the world through live performances, education and outreach. The Chicago Slam Works' staff and founding members are pillars of the international poetry slam movement and the organizational force behind dozens of major poetry events all over the world.

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Read and show different types of poems to the class (haiku, free-verse, acrostic, spoken word, etc.), samples are included under Resources.
2. Show students the Poetry Slam video listed under Resources so students have a better understanding of what to expect.
3. Have a class discussion about poetry in everyday life. What does poetry sound like? Do they like poetry? Do they know any famous poets?

## POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

1. Have students write their own poems! Ask students to select one or two different style of poetry. Ask them to write about the world around them. What is their image of Chicago? Let students know that poems will only be shared if the student agrees.
2. Make a collage! Using whatever material is available, have students create a visual representation of what “voice of Chicago” means to them. What does the city sound like, what does it whisper? What does it stand for?

## RESOURCES

Lesson Plan:	<a href="http://bit.ly/3A3xQuD">bit.ly/3A3xQuD</a>
A Poem A Day website:	<a href="http://bit.ly/33ATVER">bit.ly/33ATVER</a>
TedEd Video “What Makes a Poem a Poem”:	<a href="http://bit.ly/3tqvYeO">bit.ly/3tqvYeO</a>

## VOCABULARY

### ALITERATION

a repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words...like “fast” and “free”

### FREE VERSE

poetry that has no regular meter or rhyme scheme

### HAIKU

a Japanese verse form consisting of three lines and seventeen syllables

### HYPERBOLE

overstatement or exaggeration of actions, emotions, or other qualities

### METAPHOR

comparison between two unlike things without using connective words

### METER

alteration of stressed and unstressed syllables; beat

### ONOMATOPOEIA

the use of a word whose sound imitates or suggests its meaning

### POETRY

the art of rhythmical composition, written or spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, or elevated thoughts

### REFRAIN

a repeated word, phrase, line, or group of lines

### PROSE

the ordinary form of spoken or written language

### SIMILIE

a comparison between two unlike things by using a connective word such as like, as, then or resembles

### SLAM

a competition at which poets read or recite original work. These performances are then judged by the audience

### STANZA

a group of consecutive lines in a poem that form a single unit

## Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in Arts: Scope and Sequence

### Theatre Making

**Skill Development (IL 25A, 26A, 26B; Nat’l 1, 2, 4)**

- Develop focus and concentration while participating in dramatic activities.

**Terms and Tools (Anchor Standard 3: Cr3. b.)**

- Explore the connection to a character through mind/ body/voice to create a vivid character.

### Interpretation & Evaluation

**Evaluation (Anchor Standard 7: Re7. a.)**

- Identify choices in a drama/ theatre work to understand personal reactions as a participant in a drama/ theatre event.
- Articulate personal reactions to artistic choices in a drama/ theatre work.

### Making Connections

**Personal Connections (Nat’l 8)**

- Experience live or recorded performances.