



ALL STAR SLAM



STUDY GUIDE



In association with:

PROLOGUE
to the Performing Arts
• aux arts de la scène •





ABOUT THE SHOW

Slam is a poetic competition in which the audience is given score cards and rates each poem with a score of 1-10, just like in the Olympics. Sound too cutthroat? Not to worry. The All Star Slam is actually a supportive forum that introduces students to some of Canada's greatest poets (and yes, they're friends, no knives out) in an accessible manner that is interactive, engaging, hilarious, and deeply poignant. As one student put it: **"It's better than Beyoncé!"** (which is a bit of a stretch but it's what we're aiming for). It would be hard to find a better way to channel a sense of school community and to engage students.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

All-Star SLAM features some of Canada's most decorated performance poets from across the country. The ringleader and host is former Canadian SLAM champion **Brendan McLeod**. Hailing from BC, he is also a former world SLAM runner-up and the former Poet of Honour at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. The show also features world poetry SLAM champion **Ian Keteku**, two-time Canadian SLAM champ **Andre Prefontaine**, and YouTube phenom (one of her poems now has 3,000,000 views!) **Sabrina Benaim**.

ABOUT THE STUDY GUIDE

This guide can be used either before or after the All Star SLAM performance. There are introductory exercises to help teachers prepare for the onslaught of poetry, and more in depth exercises to go through after the poets have left you in their wake. This guide is focused on Intermediate students but can also be used for senior schools. to channel a sense of school community and to engage students.





LEARNING GOAL

- You will be able to create and perform spoken word pieces.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

- You will be able to comment on your own and others' poetry using appropriate vocabulary.
- You will create poems using images from everyday life, and issues important to you.
- You will perform poems using appropriate voice, body language, and movement.





PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

Viewing



If students have never seen the wonder of poetry SLAM before, they might check out some of these amazing PG friendly poems on Youtube.

These poems are concerned with issues of self-esteem, ambition, mental illness, and (of course) love.

For poems from All Star Slam
please check this link

<https://www.brendanmcleod.ca/all-star-slam/>





DISCUSSIONS

- What is SLAM poetry?
- Why do you think this method of presentation came about?
- How is SLAM different than traditional page poetry?
- What are some of the good things about this form of doing poetry?
- What are some potential drawbacks of watching poetry performed, as opposed to reading it on the page?
- What kinds of themes tend to come up a lot in SLAM? Why do you think that is?





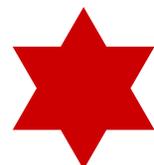
ACTIVITIES



**SLAM poetry is very visceral.
There is a lot of emotion and high stakes.
One way to access that is to free write.
Have students write for a set amount of time.**

The Rulez

- 1. Keep the hand moving – no pausing to re-read the line you just wrote.**
- 2. Don't cross things out.**
- 3. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.**
- 4. Lose control— don't think, don't get logical.**
- 5. Go for the jugular – if something is scary or feels taboo– let it out – it probably has a lot of energy in it. The aim is to burn through to first thoughts, the place where energy is unobstructed by social politeness or the internal censor...to the place where they are writing their first thought first thoughts first thoughts – what their minds actually see and feel, not what the mind thinks it should see or feel.**





Letter Writing

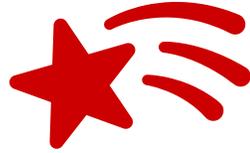
SLAM poetry is also about voice. The performers aren't actors – they are talking about things that are personal to them, and doing it in their voice. Have the students write about a moment of conflict in their life but they have to write about it from the other person's perspective. So they have to write about themselves from outside themselves, and take the other's point of view.



As a bonus, they can also write about the conflict from the point of view of something that was in the room at the time – a garbage can, a lamp, a dog. What would these things sound like?



HYPERBOLE BATTLE



Figures of speech are very important in spoken word. Give a group of students a sentence that says:
“I am so (insert adjective) that...”

They have to complete the sentence three times, using different hyperboles. No clichés allowed! Only original thinking. Next, they can perform these hyperboles for the class.





POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

- How was this poetry different from your expectations?
- What poems were successful in reaching you and which weren't? Why?
- What did the poets do with their bodies and voices to make the poems more interesting?
- How did they write the rhythms for their poems?
- How is SLAM different/similar to hip hop? How about stand up comedy?
- What socio-political issues did the poets raise? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?



ACTIVITIES



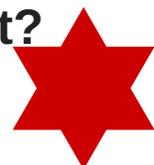
YOU GOT RHYTHM?

A lot of students wonder how the poets write in the rhythm they do. To practice it for themselves, have students think of a situation that has some movement in it: a sports game, an argument, being at a dance, watching a funny YouTube video. Have them describe it, paying specific attention to rhyme, repetition, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. Each sentence must have at least two of these elements. Lo and behold, a rhythm starts to emerge. Bonus points for performing in front of the class.

Walking Poetry



Have students find a partner to do a walking poetry assignment. Using whatever they come across, they discuss, take notes, and describe what they see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. This exercise is designed to get them describing, using their five senses, not just stating what they see. After they have walked, they can write a poem on the basis of this research. They ask themselves: how do I feel about this environment? How does it shape me? How do I shape it?



ACTIVITIES

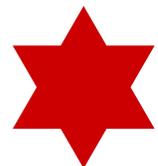


Story Poem

A lot of students don't know how to get started with poems. In that case, have them begin it like it's an essay or a story: what is the beginning, middle, and end? Once they have those facets in place, they have to ask themselves what makes a poem a poem? The answer: poems revolve around images. So, tell the story, but using images instead of narration. Bingo, you have a poem! This is also an effective exercise for teaching the power of metaphors.

BOX OF DOOM

Have students pull pieces of text, that are NOT poetry, from a hat. But they have to perform it like it is. In this way, they learn that how we say words and how we hold ourselves when we say them, effects their meaning.



ACTIVITIES

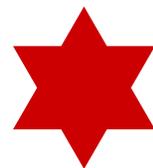


MEMORIZATION

Now have them complete a poem or memorize a favourite poem. Then have them perform it. By committing it to memory this lesson will take root at a deeper level.

GROUP POEMS

Divide class into groups of four. Have them prepare an oral poem (all must speak at some point, but in whatever way they design it) based on a scene/situation/problem in everyday life. Each group will perform while others watching judge their poem on a scale of 1-10...and so forth. Discuss reasons for scores.





ALL STAR SLAM



ANDRE **IAN** **SABRINA** **BRENDAN**
PREFONTAINE KETEKU BENAİM MCLEOD