

2016-2017

DISCOVERY



Resource Guide



THE MAYHEM POETS

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2017
9:30 & 11:30 A.M.

The Frank M. *Cait* FOUNDATION
Discovery

Series

VICTORIA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION
www.victoriatheatre.com

Welcome to the 2016-2017 Frank M. Tait Foundation Discovery Series at Victoria Theatre Association. We are very excited to be your education partner in providing professional arts experiences to you and your students!

With the success of Lin-Manuel Miranda's *HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL*, spoken word, hip-hop, and wildly creative storytelling have taken a front seat in the musical theatre world. So, students experiencing *The Mayhem Poets* in Dayton will get a taste of the power of poetry on the stage that Mr. Miranda harnessed for his show. My hope is that your experience today will inspire you to start writing the next great piece of art to change the world!

The information and activities in this resource guide have been carefully crafted to help you and your students explore the many ways a live theatre experience can open up learning opportunities. Grade level icons will help you determine which activities are good for students, too. And don't forget to take advantage of the local resources listed inside to extend the play-going experience and make even more curricular connections for you and your students. Thank you again and welcome!



Gary Minyard
Vice President -
Education & Engagement

Curriculum Connections

You will find these icons listed in the resource guide next to the activities that indicate curricular connections. Teachers and parents are encouraged to adapt all of the activities included in an appropriate way for your students' age and abilities. *THE MAYHEM POETS* fulfills the following Ohio and National Education Standards and Benchmarks for Grades 4-12.



Ohio's New Learning Standards for English Language

Grade 4 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.E

Grade 5 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.E

Grade 6 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.E

Grade 7 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3.E

Grade 8 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.D, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3.E

Grade 9-10 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Grade 11-12 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.B, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.C, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.D

Ohio's New Learning Standards for Math:

Grades 4-5 - Operations and Algebraic Thinking

Grades 6-8 - Expressions and Equations

Grades 9-12 - Seeing Structure in Expressions

This resource guide was created by Amy Handra. All activities are available for distribution and use in the classroom or at home.

National Core Arts Theatre Standards:

Grade 4 - TH:Pr4.1.4., TH:Pr5.1.4., TH:Re7.1.4., TH:Re8.1.4., TH:Cn10.1.4., TH:Cn11.1.4.

Grade 5 - TH:Pr4.1.5., TH:Pr5.1.5., TH:Re7.1.5., TH:Re8.1.5., TH:Cn10.1.5., TH:Cn11.1.5.

Grade 6 - TH:Pr4.1.6., TH:Pr5.1.6., TH:Re7.1.6., TH:Re8.1.6., TH:Cn10.1.6., TH:Cn11.1.6.

Grade 7 - TH:Pr4.1.7., TH:Pr5.1.7., TH:Re7.1.7., TH:Re8.1.7., TH:Cn10.1.7., TH:Cn11.1.7.

Grade 8 - TH:Pr4.1.8., TH:Pr5.1.8., TH:Re7.1.8., TH:Re8.1.8., TH:Cn10.1.8., TH:Cn11.1.8.

Grades 9-12 - TH:Pr4.1.1., TH:Pr5.1.1., TH:Re7.1.1., TH:Re8.1.1., TH:Cn10.1.1., TH:Cn11.1.1.

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About the Show

ENGLISH/
LANGUAGE
ARTS

All
GRADES

Let's go see a poetry show! Having been dubbed "an amazing ride" by the New York Times, this mind boggling performance of The Mayhem Poets has been described as "The Simpsons meets Malcolm X at a Notorious B.I.G. concert." These theatre-trained, comically-gifted, lyrical virtuosos seamlessly blend raw elements of hip hop, theatre, improvisational, and stand-up comedy to tell gut-wrenching truths that leave audiences forever changed.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS



The poets met as students at Rutgers University, drawn together by a shared passion for wordplay and open mics. Their poems comment on everything from literature and school, to politics and fast food. The Mayhem Poet's unique approach to spoken word has landed them feature spots on *The Today Show* and *Eyewitness News*. Since winning 1st place and a grant for \$100,000 in the "Microsoft Idea Wins" Challenge in 2006, they have been touring internationally, taking their unique show to legendary venues like Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Apollo Theatre, and Broadway's New Victory Theatre. They have also toured hundreds of universities, local schools of all grades, as well as group homes and correctional facilities.

Ohio Spotlight

SOCIAL
STUDIES



OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION

The Ohio Poetry Association (OPA) is an active group of poets and lovers of poetry. With members throughout the United States, United Kingdom and Mexico, the Ohio Poetry Association seeks to promote the art of poetry and support poets and those who appreciate poetry.

The Ohio Poetry Association is a not-for-profit organization offering the following member benefits:

- Quarterly newsletter, *Workshopping Our Words*
- Members-only poetry journal, *Common Threads*
- Free quarterly poetry workshops (usually located at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio)
- Statewide network of poets and lovers of poetry
- Enthusiastic support for poets at all levels of expertise
- Participation in members-only contests

Student memberships cost only \$8 annually.

For more information, please visit <https://sites.google.com/a/ohiopoetryassn.com/the-ohio-poetry-association/home>.

Meet the Mayhem Poets!



COMPREHENSION



Scottt Raven

A graduate of Rutgers University with a double degree in Acting and Journalism, and co-founder of the Mayhem Poets, his performance work has been featured by Fiat, Purina, CNN, and The Today Show. His written work has appeared in the *New York Times* and *New York Post*. He is the author of *Sconnetts*, a collection of poems based on his past romantic relationships, his family, and his athletic background; *The Polygons*, *Surrealist Poems: Volume 1*; and the upcoming *6 Piece Chicken*, performable poems and stories from on tour. Scottt is also an actor in commercials, plays and films and proud new member of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). Scottt grew up in Edison, NJ, and currently lives in Harlem, NYC, where he runs and puns with his imaginary man's best friend, Spott. TW/IG: @scotttraven #sconnetts



Mason Granger

Originally from Philadelphia, raised in Willingboro, New Jersey, and currently living in Queens, New York, Mason has been a full-time member of the performance poetry trio the Mayhem Poets since 2005. "With a style that's equal parts smart and smile, Mason gets his points across in a way that leaves audiences hopefully a little more knowledgeable and feeling a little better than when they arrived." Mason is also the creator of *SlamFind*, the world's first mobile app dedicated to performance poetry that allows poetry fans to discover and connect with live poetry venues and individual poets all over North America. *SlamFind* poetry videos have been featured on *The Huffington Post*, *Upworthy*, *Buzzfeed*, *Cosmo* and many more. Mason himself has been featured in magazines such as *Vibe*, *Complex*, *Fader* and *Rolling Stone*.

TW/IG: @masongranger @SlamFind



Mikumari Caiyhe

is an established actor, emcee, spoken word poet, and arts educator. A native of Washington, DC, Mikumari graduated from the distinguished Duke Ellington School for the Arts, with a focus in Theatre. He completed his formal education at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University as an acting major. As an artist, Mikumari has toured internationally. Some credits include being cast as the lead actor in the musical, *Revelations* (God/MC), being one of the first emcees/rappers to ever do a Hip Hop concert at Shakespeare's Globe, and most recently performing as a member of NYC's Nuyorican Poets Cafe 2013 Competitive poetry team. As an educator and arts advocate, Mikumari is independently contracted by The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC), Boys and Girls Club of America, and the YMCA to facilitate art residencies and workshops teaching Literary Arts, Acting, and Ballroom Dance. Finally, it is Mikumari's ambition "to use art to liberate individuals from fear, emancipate and empower the light within and...illuminate forever."

TW/IG: @Mikumari_Caiyhe



Kyle Rapps

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

Poetry Vocabulary



A lot of effort goes into writing poetry and mastering the art of writing poetry takes a lot of practice. Below are some important vocabulary words to learn and use when writing and talking about poetry.

1. **Alliteration** (noun): the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables.
2. **Allusion** (noun): a passing or casual reference; an incidental mention of something either directly or by implication.
3. **Couplet** (noun): a pair of successive lines of verse, especially a pair that rhyme and are of the same length.
4. **Hyperbole** (noun): an exaggerated statement or figure of speech not intended to be taken literally.
5. **Metaphor** (noun): a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest a resemblance .
6. **Onomatopoeia** (noun): the use of imitative and naturally suggestive words for rhetorical, dramatically, or poetic effect. Examples: meow, honk, boom.
7. **Personification** (noun): the attribution of human nature or character to animals, inanimate objects, or abstract notions.
8. **Simile** (noun): a figure of speech in which two unlike things are explicitly compared.



Pre-Show Conversation Starters



1. Look up and write down the definition of **slam**. Why do you think a poetry competition is called a **slam**?
2. There are many similarities between hip-hop, rap and poetry. What are some of the similarities you see between the three art forms? What are some of the differences?
3. If you were to enter a poetry **slam**, do you think you would want to perform as an individual, or would you want to get a team of friends together and perform with them? What would be some advantages and disadvantages to each option?

Spoken Word/Slam Poetry History



Spoken-word poetry has been around for thousands of years. Before there was written language, oral poets were the keepers of the history and mythology of their people. Epic poems such as Homer's *Illiad* and the Scandinavian saga *Beowulf* were passed down orally for generations before they were finally written down. West Africa has the **griot** (pronounced GREE-oh), a storyteller and historian who speaks or sings the history of his/her people. William Shakespeare is probably the world's best-known performance poet; his plays were written in verse and were meant to be performed not read. It was Shakespeare's actors who wrote down the text of his plays, and if they hadn't done so, we would not be studying and performing those works today.

Slam poetry, an interactive poetry competition, is thought to have begun in Chicago in 1985 at a jazz club called the Green Mill.

A construction worker named Marc "Papi" Smith created a lyrical "boxing match", pitting poets against each other, one-on-one. From there, **slam poetry** caught on in cities such as San Francisco and New York City. **Slam poetry** uses elements of theatre, hip-hop, music and stand-up comedy, as



poets work to impress the crowd with entertaining and imaginative poetry. Official **slam poetry** rules require a poem to be no more than three minutes in length and in competitions, props, costumes, and music are not allowed. In the United States, performance poetry can be seen on television and even on Broadway, where Russell Simmons' *Def Poetry Jam* won a 2003 Tony® Award for Best Special Theatrical Event.

The Poets Toolbox

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

- 1. Acronyms** are abbreviations for proper names and common phrases, aka "text language" (LOL, BFF, AKA, etc.)
- 2. Clichés** and popular phrases ("ace up his sleeve", "be there or be square", "no strings attached", etc)
- 3. Pun** (noun): a joke exploiting the different possible meanings of a word or the fact that there are words that sound alike but have different meanings ("I wondered why the ball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.")
- 4. Pop-culture references**
- 5. Similes and metaphors**

***You can always use multiple tools at once as well. For example; you can use tool 4 and 5 by using a phrase like: "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." (Extra points if you can identify the movie!)

Making a Personal Connection



No matter how well you write, the best way for your poetry to resonate with an audience is to be sure it has personal meaning for you. By writing about specific ideas, issues, places and things that matter to you, you are able to better connect with the audience. When an audience sees your passion for a subject, they are more likely to connect with you on a personal level.

So, how do you figure out what to write about?

Step One: Make a list of things you feel strongly about—they can be things that are negative or positive.

Step Two: Pick one of the items on your list as your starting point. Next, explore the topic through free-writing.

Step Three: Use your free-writing as a springboard for writing a spoken-word poem that captures how you feel about the topic.

Step Four: Perform your poem for an audience—your audience could be your class, a group of friends, your family, or a group of strangers at an open mic night or poetry slam event.

I AM POEM

Use the poem outline below to write a poem about yourself. It does not need to rhyme. When you are finished, you will have a poem that you can draw inspiration from for a future slam poem.

I am from _____
(Where home is for you)

I am from _____
(Where you feel most comfortable)

I am from _____
(Your favorite thing to do)

I am from _____
(Something from your childhood)

I am from _____
(Your plans for the future)

Poetry and Mathematics



Did you know that April is both Math Awareness Month and National Poetry Month? And, while you might be thinking math and poetry have nothing in common, the similarities between the two might just surprise you!

SYMBOLS

Poetry: symbolism is the very basis of poetry. Poets often use **symbols** by taking a literal or concrete object and using it to represent something abstract or intangible.

For example, poet Emily Dickinson writes, "Hope is the thing with feathers /That perches in the soul/And sings the tune without the words/And never stops - at all," comparing **Hope** (something abstract) to a **bird** (something concrete).

Mathematics: is also a language that describes the physical or concrete world by depending heavily on symbols. For instance, math uses variables, Greek letters and characters that represent operations like addition and division.

PATTERNS

Poetry: patterns are often found in the meter (stressed versus unstressed) and the rhyme scheme. Along with iambic pentameter, blank verse, and free verse, traditional poetry may also follow trochaic, spondaic, anapestic or dactylic meters. Examples of patterns can be seen in much of William Shakespeare's work. For example, look at rhythm and rhyming pattern used in these four lines from Shakespeare's *Sonnet 2*:

- / - / - / - / - /
When forty winters shall beseege thy brow,
- / - / - / - / - /
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
- / - / - / - / - /
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
- / - / - / - / - /
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:

Mathematics: the use of **patterns** can be seen everywhere from counting, multiplication tables, geometric sequences, etc. Some examples would include (1, 2, 3, 4, 5...), (5, 10, 15, 20...), and (1, 2, 4, 8, 16...).

SYMMETRY

Poetry: while not mandatory, **symmetry** in poetry is often found in the way that verses and stanzas are structured. For example, Shakespearean sonnets are always **symmetrical**, in that they always contain a total of 14 lines which each contain 10 syllables. The lines are also composed of 7 rhyming couplets, and always use the rhyme scheme of **ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG**.

Mathematics: Like poetry, **symmetry** is definitely not mandatory in math, but often times it takes center stage. Examples of **symmetry** include: symmetric shapes, like circles or isosceles triangle and the use of **symmetry** when solving equations, as you must do the same thing to both sides of the equation.

Poetry From Around the World



Specific poetic forms have been developed by many different cultures. Below are a few specific forms of poetry that are used across the world.

1. **Sonnet**—Used in Italy and England, a **sonnet** is a poem with fourteen lines following a set rhyme scheme and logical structure. For example, the English (or Shakespearean) sonnet follow the rhyme scheme *abab, cdcd, efef, gg*.
2. **Shi**—Used in China, **shi** is a form of poetry typically written in the style of the classic Confucian poem. Although there are large variations in the type of **shi** found throughout China, there are a few formal constraints that characterize most, including the line length which is usually four characters and no more than seven and the rhyming of every other line.
3. **Tanka**—Used in Japan, a **tanka** is an unrhymed poem in a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable structure. There is generally a shift in tone and subject matter between the upper 5-7-5 syllable line phrase and the lower 7-7 syllable line phrase. The **tanka** was used to explore personal rather than public themes.
4. **Haiku**—also used in Japan, a **haiku** is an unrhymed poem with a 5-7-5 line syllable structure.
5. **Ode**—Used in Greece, **odes** have formal poetic diction and generally deal with a serious subject. They written in a strophe, antistrophe, and an epode pattern.
6. **Ghazal**—Used in the Middle East, the **ghazal** has from five to fifteen rhyming couplets that share a refrain at the end of the second line. This refrain may be of one or several syllables, and is preceded by a rhyme. Each line has an identical meter. The **ghazal** often reflects on a theme of unattainable love or divinity.

Explore International Poetry



What is a country that you have always wanted to visit? Research the kind of poetry that is written in that country. You might find that the country you picked has similar poetry to the countries above, or it might be totally different! Have fun and see what you can find. Be prepared to share your findings and an example of the kind of poem with your class. And, if you get really inspired, try your hand at writing your own poem in the international style you have learned!

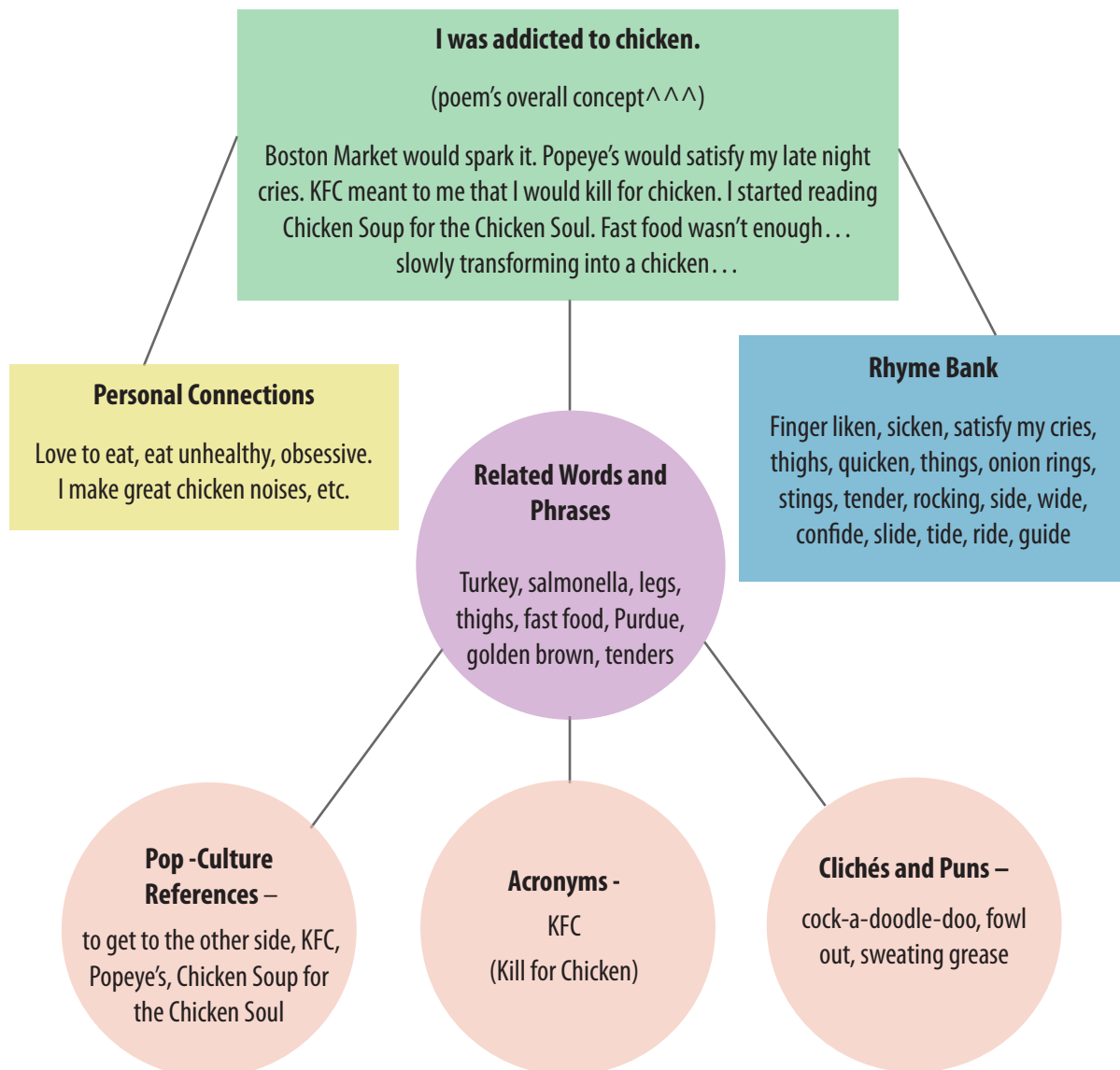
The Poet Tree



Using the Poet Tree

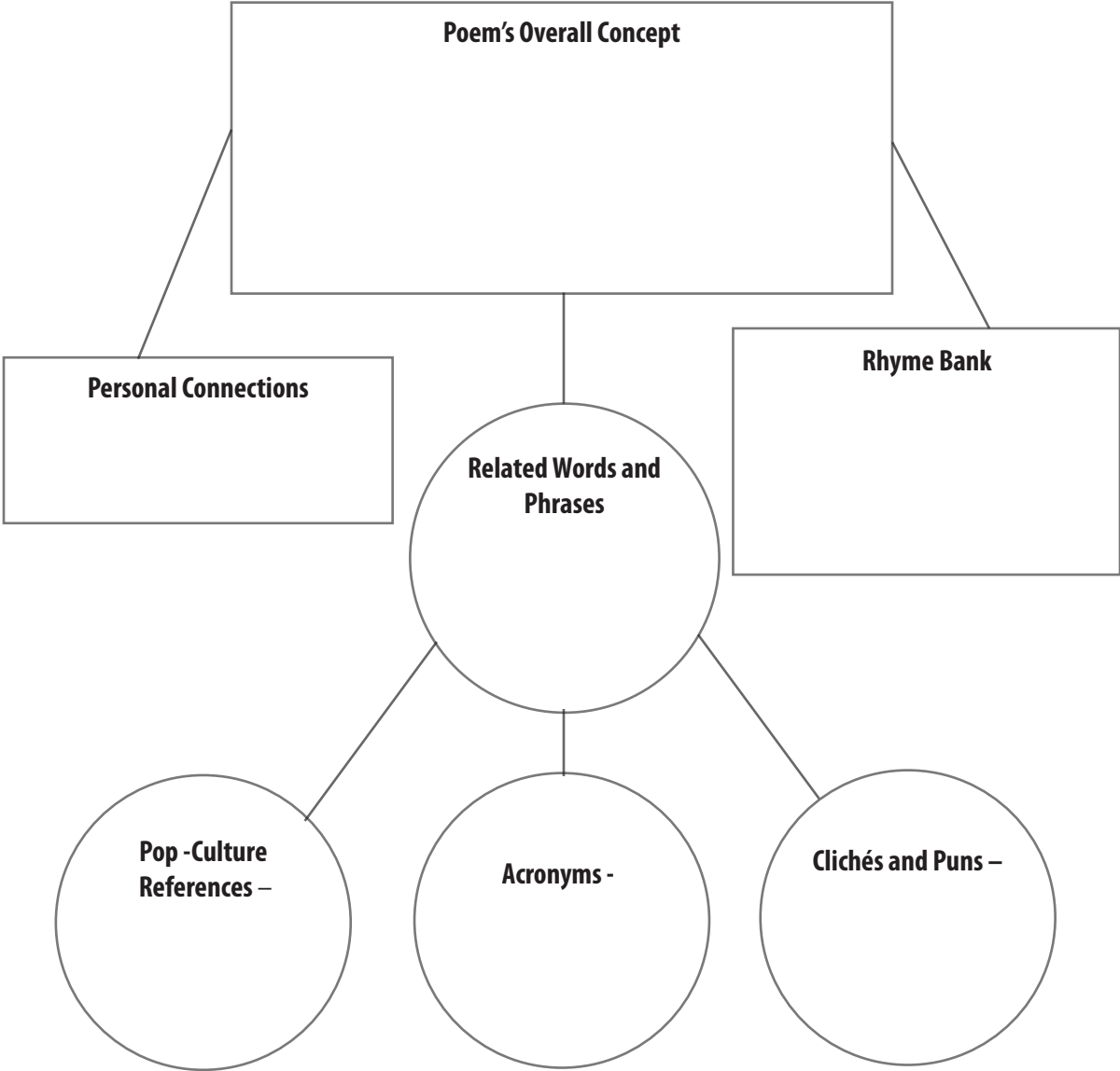
1. Pick one word or environment.
2. On a blank Poet Tree, list 4 or more words or phrases related to that word.
3. Choose one of those words to generate some related ideas to add to the Poet Tree: clichés, puns, acronyms, etc.
4. Start a rhyme bank using normal, multi-syllabic and slant rhymes.
5. Find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

Here is Mayhem Poets' Scottt Raven's "Chicken" Poet Tree.



Make Your Own Poet Tree Worksheet!

Name _____



Hold Your Own Poetry Slam!

ENGLISH/
LANGUAGE
ARTS

ARTS

Now that you have filled out your Poet Tree worksheet, and you are ready to start writing some of your own work, it is time to plan and hold your own poetry slam! Decide with your class whether or not the slam will be competitive and whether you want to award prizes for winners or all the participants. If you don't think you are ready for a slam involving your whole class, have a slam with a small group of friends.



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

While the official slam rules say that the poems can be no longer than three minutes and cannot include props, costumes, or music, your group can have fun with it, take some time to add in props, costumes, or music if you would like!

Use the self-assessment checklist, used by The State Theatre in New Brunswick in New Jersey, to see how you should be judged.

Self-Assessment Checklist

Writing

Rhyming and Rhythm

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

Alternate ways of putting words together

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

Personal connection to poems

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

Performance

Using voice to its full capacity

- Enunciated entire poem clearly and sustained throughout
- Projected so everyone could hear
- Was aware of timing, pacing and rhythm

Using body to enhance performance

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

Connecting with an audience

- Fed off the audience's energy throughout
- Stayed focused during disruptions and took in the unexpected

Overall performance of poem

- Used own distinct voice
- Took the audience on a journey from beginning to end

CREATIVITY

Resources for Students & Teachers

PUBLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Goodman, John C. *Poetry: Tools & Techniques: A Practical Guide to Writing Engaging Poetry*. N.p.: Gneiss, 2011. Print.

Nye, Naomi Shihab. *Time You Let Me In: 25 Poets under 25*. New York: Greenwillow, 2010. Print.

Raven, Scottt. *Sonnetts: Sonnets by Scottt Raven*. N.p.: Lulu.com, 2015. Print.

PUBLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS:

Organic Creativity in the Classroom: Teaching to Intuition in Academics and the Arts, Written by Jane Piirto. Prufrock Press: 2013.

Theatre for Change: Education, Social Action, and Therapy, Written by Robert Landy and David T. Montgomery. Palgrave Macmillan: 2012.

Play: How it Shapes the Brain and Invigorates the Soul, Written by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughn. Harvard University Press: 2009.

WEBSITES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:

<http://www.mayhempoets.com/> - learn more about the Mayhem Poets, their backgrounds, and where they are touring next!

<https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/> - this website contains resources on poetry for students of all age. There is a poetry glossary, "must read" lists for different age groups, lists of writing competitions and online workshops.

<http://www.powerpoetry.org/> - Power Poetry is the world's first and largest mobile poetry community for youth. It is a one-of-a-kind place where you can be heard. Power Poetry isn't just about poetry: it's about finding your voice and using it change the world!

Victoria Fuse's Local Resource

Dayton Poetry Slam

Dayton Poetry Slam offers the Dayton community Open Mic events, Writing Workshops, Feature Performances, and Slam competitions, all free of charge and open to the public. We currently hold an event every 1st and 3rd Sunday at 7 PM at Canal Public House.

Anything goes at this slam and there are no rules. Read something instead of memorizing, sing, bring props, or anything else you can imagine.

For more information, please visit <http://daytonpoetryslam.com/>.



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ASSOCIATION

138 North Main Street
Dayton, OH 45402



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OTHER BROADWAY PROGRAMS:

Background on Broadway
Bagels & Broadway

DID YOU KNOW?

Victoria Theatre Association has three camps for high school students this season:

Music in the Motor City After School Camp

April 10 - 14, 2017 • 4:30 - 8 p.m. each day

On April 13, students will attend *MOTOWN THE MUSICAL*.

Change Your World After School Camp

May 22 - 26, 2017 • 4:30 - 8 p.m. each day

On May 25, students will attend *KINKY BOOTS*.

Big Top Summer Camp

June 12 - 16, 2017 • 9:00 - 3:30 each day

On June 15, students will attend *CIRCUS 1903*.

For more information, please visit

<https://victoriatheatre.com/create-learn/camps-classes/>.

DON'T FORGET

All schools that receive scholarships for a show and/or transportation are asked and encouraged to create thank-you letters or cards for our sponsors. Please address your students' thank-you notes to:

DISCOVERY Sponsors
c/o Victoria Theatre Association
138 North Main Street
Dayton, OH 45402

