

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
LITERARY ARTS

ARTIST:
JUSTJAMAAL THEPOET



The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:

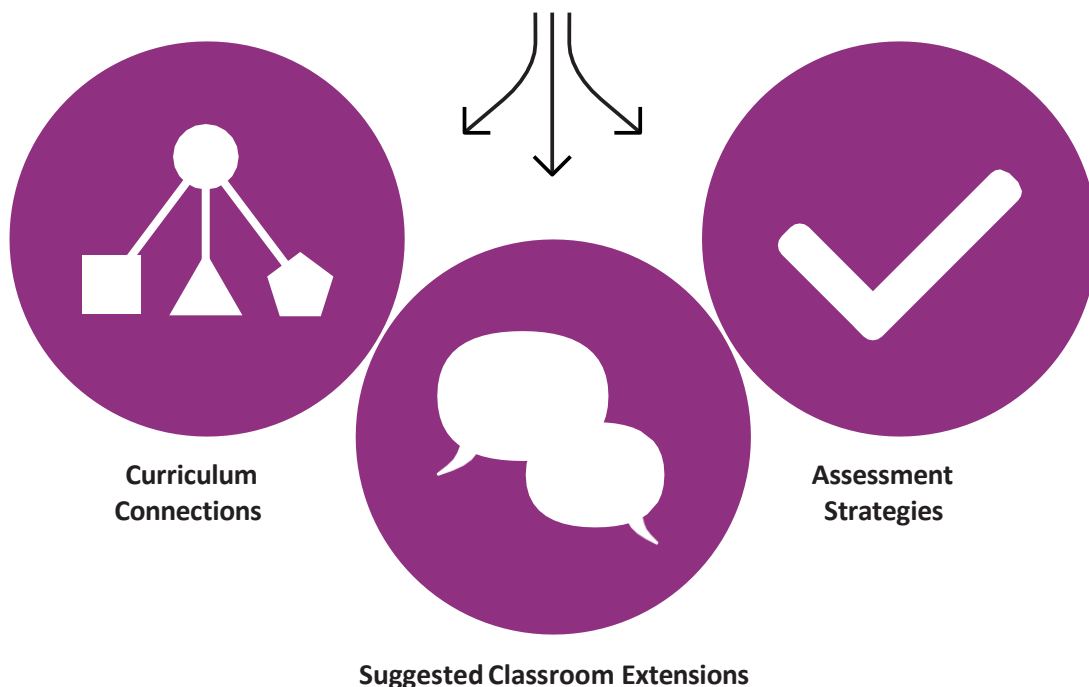


TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS..... 4

 Program Overview 4

 Curriculum Connections 6

 Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)..... 7

LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW..... 10

APPENDIX..... 11

 Vocabulary bank/glossary:..... 11

 Student Health and Well-Being 12

 Additional Resources 12

STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

POLYPHONIC POETRY

Program Overview

Artist Name: JustJamaal ThePoet

Artist Bio: JustJamaal ThePoet is an award-winning poet, educator, and performer who served as Ottawa's poet laureate (2017–2019) and Carleton University's Artist in Residence (2019–2020). Co-founder of Origin Arts + Community Centre, he connects deeply with audiences through workshops and performances on topics like emotional growth, parenting, and world issues. He lives in Ottawa with his wife and six children.

Program Description: Using theatre, song, rhyme, prose and storytelling, Jamaal's presentations will weave fantasy and reality into a poetry experience that will leave students questioning worldviews while inspiring them to explore the urban art of spoken word poetry.

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts, Music

Recommended Grade Levels: 4 – 12

Session Logistics: In person or online

Cultural Context: Black Legacy, North American



History

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



POLYPHONIC POETRY

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Apply the creative process to create and perform music for a variety of purposes, using the elements and techniques of music. (Grades 4-8)
 - Use a variety of techniques and technological tools when performing music and composing and/or arranging music. (Grades 9-12)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding, and Analysing
 - Demonstrate an understanding of how traditional, commercial, and art music reflect the society in which they were created and how they have affected communities or cultures. (Grades 9-12)
 - Demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development. (Grades 9-12)
- Strand C – Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of musical genres and styles from the past and present, and their social and/or community contexts. (Grades 4-8)

POLYPHONIC POETRY

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

GRADES
4-6

Pre

- What is poetry to you?
- Have you ever written or performed a poem? What was it about?
- What do you think “spoken word” means?

During

- What emotions did you feel while listening to the poems?
- What did you notice about how Jamaal used his voice or body?
- Were any of the poems about real-life experiences? What stood out?

Post

- What is one poem or line that stuck with you, and why?
- How did the performance make you think differently about poetry?
- What would you write a spoken word poem about?

Pre

- What do you know about spoken word poetry? How is it different from written poetry?
- How can poetry be used to explore emotions or world issues?
- What role do artists play in society?

During

- What themes or messages came through in Jamaal's poetry?
- Which poem felt most personal or powerful to you? Why?

Post

- What did the performance teach you about using art to express identity or struggle?
- How would you use your own voice or story in spoken word?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- In what ways can poetry challenge the way we see the world?
- What does it mean to “speak truth through art”?
- What role does performance play in how a message is received?

During

- What personal, social, or political issues did Jamaal address?
- How did he use theatrical elements (voice, movement, silence, etc.) to support his message?

Post

- How did Jamaal’s work connect fantasy and reality to explore deeper truths?
- Did any of the poems reflect your own experiences or worldview?
- How could you use spoken word as a tool for activism or personal expression?

LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW

Literary Arts education consists of storytelling, poetry, and creative writing and is foundational to developing literate, reflective, and critically engaged members of society. By engaging with diverse stories, students gain insight into complex perspectives and histories, fostering inclusion and emotional resilience. Writing and sharing stories also supports mental health and builds a sense of community and belonging.

The creative and critical analysis process guide students in imagining, crafting, and reflecting on literary work. These frameworks align with MASC's core values and, when paired with artist-led sessions, empower students to become thoughtful creators and engaged learners.

Literary arts naturally support cross-curricular learning. In social studies, students explore historical context through narrative; in science they use writing to explain concepts. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Spoken Word:** A type of poetry that is written to be performed out loud, often with emotion and rhythm.
- **Prose:** Ordinary, non-poetic writing, used in storytelling and poetry to express ideas clearly.
- **Rhyme:** Words that sound the same at the end, often used to create rhythm or emphasis in poetry.
- **Rhythm:** The beat or flow in poetry, created by words, syllables, and pauses.
- **Tone:** The feeling or attitude expressed in a poem or performance.
- **Metaphor:** A comparison between two things without using "like" or "as" (e.g., "My mind is a storm").
- **Narrative Poetry:** Poems that tell a story, sometimes using characters and plot.
- **Performance Poetry:** Poetry that is meant to be spoken and acted out, not just read silently.
- **Perspective:** The viewpoint or way of thinking a poet brings to their work.
- **Theme:** The main idea or message of a poem (e.g., love, justice, identity).
- **Expression:** The way someone shares their thoughts or feelings through art.
- **Activism:** Using your voice or actions to stand up for a cause or create change.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning