

# 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:



**Curriculum  
Connections**



**Suggested Classroom Extensions**



**Assessment  
Strategies**

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# STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

## THE SONGWRITER'S SAUCE

### 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:** In this interactive performance, participants are treated to an engaging presentation where Jamaal shares his secrets to writing a song while creating a live song in collaboration with the audience. Students will learn the basics of songwriting structure, language selection and melody production while discovering what makes the lyrics of a song memorable and infectious! (Maximum 90 students)

**Artistic Discipline:** Literary Arts

**Recommended Grade Levels:** 4 – 12

**Session Logistics:** In person only



**Cultural Context:** Black Legacy, North American History

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



# THE SONGWRITER'S SAUCE

## 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
  - Apply the critical analysis process to communicate their feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of music and musical experiences. (Grades 4-8)
  - 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)
- Use a variety of tools, techniques, and technologies to create integrated art works/productions that communicate specific messages and demonstrate creativity. (Grades 9-12)

# THE SONGWRITER'S SAUCE

## 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 makes a song “catchy” or easy to remember?
- Have you ever tried writing your own song or poem?
- What do you think lyrics are supposed to do in a song?

### During

- What words or lines stood out to you in the song Jamaal wrote?
- What was your role (or your classmates’) in creating the song?

### Post

- What did you learn about how a song is written?
- If you could write a song, what would it be about?

**GRADES**  
**7-8**

**Pre**

- What do you think are the most important elements in a good song?
- How are song lyrics different from poetry or stories?
- What kinds of messages do songs help us express?

**During**

- How did the audience influence the direction of the song?
- What did you notice about the rhythm, rhyme, or structure of the lyrics?

**Post**

- What strategies can help make lyrics more memorable or “infectious”?
- How did collaboration change the creative process?

**GRADES**  
**9-12**

**Pre**

- What makes lyrics resonate with a listener—emotion, relatability, or wordplay?
- How can songwriting be a form of storytelling or social commentary?
- What are some key differences between writing for the page and writing for performance?

**During**

- What choices did Jamaal make in terms of structure (chorus, verses, etc.)?
- How did he select words to match both the meaning and the melody?

**Post**

- What lyric-writing techniques can you take away from this session?
- How do you think music amplifies the message of the words?
- In what ways could you use songwriting to explore your identity or express a personal story?



# 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:

- **Lyrics:** The words of a song.
- **Melody:** The tune of the song—the part you usually sing or hum.
- **Chorus:** A part of the song that repeats and usually contains the main message.
- **Verse:** A section of the song that changes each time and gives new details or ideas.
- **Hook:** The catchiest part of a song that grabs your attention—often the chorus or a repeated phrase.
- **Rhythm:** The pattern of beats or timing in a song or line of lyrics.
- **Rhyme:** When words sound the same at the end (like “light” and “night”).
- **Structure:** The way a song is organized—usually verses, choruses, maybe a bridge.
- **Collaboration:** Working together to create something.
- **Imagery:** Using descriptive language that helps you picture or feel something in your mind.
- **Tone:** The mood or feeling in a piece of writing or music.
- **Creativity:** Using imagination to make something new and original.

# Student Health and Well-Being

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

- Choose a color 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