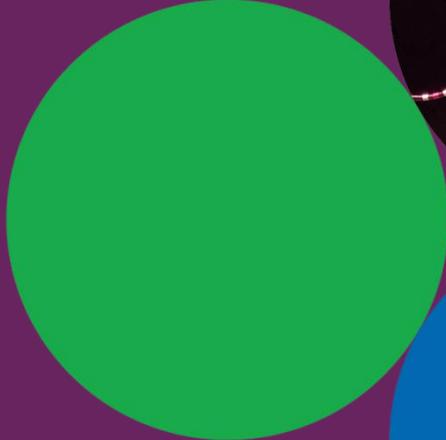


STUDY GUIDE



**DISCIPLINE:
LITERARY ARTS**

**ARTIST:
JUSTJAMAAL THEPOET**

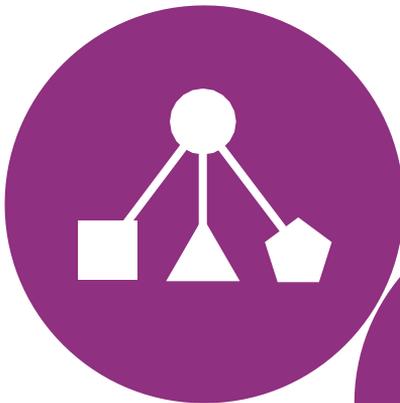
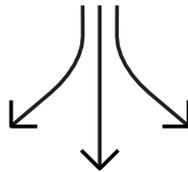


The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

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

POETRY AND THE ART OF SPOKEN WORD

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: An introduction to writing personal narratives using the techniques of storytelling and free verse poetic expression. Through short captivating performances, Jamaal will demonstrate the power of spoken word. Participants will have a chance to discover the natural cadence of writing using standard and forced rhymes that would be similar to the speakeasy era of the 60's, while understanding the relevance of performing constructed pieces for an audience that affects emotional responses and critical thought.

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts

Recommended Grade Levels: 4 – 12



Session Logistics: In person or online

Cultural Context: Black Legacy, North American History

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



POETRY AND THE ART OF SPOKEN WORD

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)
 - Demonstrate an understanding of how performing, creating, and critically analysing music has affected their skills and personal development. (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)

POETRY AND THE ART OF SPOKEN WORD

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 does it mean to tell your own story?
- What do you think “spoken word” poetry sounds like?

During

- How did Jamaal use rhythm or rhyme to help tell his story?
- What was one line or moment that stood out to you?

Post

- What would you write a spoken word piece about?
- How does performing your writing change how it feels or sounds?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- Why do you think personal stories are powerful in poetry?
- What do you know about the “speakeasy era” and how it influenced the arts?

During

- What literary or performance techniques did Jamaal use to hold the audience's attention?
- How did rhyme change the flow of his storytelling?
- What emotional or social themes came through in his work?

Post

- What makes a spoken word piece different from a traditional essay or poem?
- Would you rather write, perform, or both? Why?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- What elements make personal narratives compelling in spoken word?
- How do rhyme and rhythm affect the impact of poetry?
- How might performance deepen or challenge the meaning of a poem?

During

- How did Jamaal use poetic devices (metaphor, rhyme, cadence) to shape emotion or message?
- What influence from the 1960s “speakeasy” performance style could you recognize?
- What moments in the performance challenged or expanded your thinking?

Post

- How can free verse and spoken word poetry empower marginalized or unheard voices?
- What techniques from this workshop could you apply to your own writing?
- How would you structure and perform a narrative about an important experience in your life?

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:** Poetry that is meant to be performed out loud, often using voice and rhythm to express meaning.
- **Personal Narrative:** A story or poem that shares a real-life experience from the writer's own life.
- **Free Verse:** Poetry that doesn't follow a set rhyme or rhythm pattern.
- **Cadence:** The natural rhythm or flow of speech and writing.
- **Standard Rhyme:** A rhyme where the end sounds match exactly (e.g., "light" and "fight").
- **Forced Rhyme:** A rhyme that feels a little unnatural or is made to fit the rhythm or structure.
- **Speakeasy Era:** A time in the 1920s–60s known for underground clubs where music, poetry, and art thrived.
- **Expression:** Showing your thoughts and feelings through art, writing, or performance.
- **Critical Thought:** Thinking carefully and deeply about big ideas or important issues.
- **Performance Poetry:** Poetry created to be heard and seen, not just read.

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