

Youth Speaks

***S.L.A.M. Club
Handbook***

Last updated 11/03/2021

WELCOME

Welcome to the official Student Led Arts Movement (S.L.A.M.) club handbook! This handbook is designed to help youth leaders and their allies – teachers, poet-mentors, and staff – build strong, vibrant S.L.A.M. clubs in your schools and communities. It explains the structure of S.L.A.M., both at your school and throughout the Bay Area, and how you can plug in. The goal is to lay out the opportunities and expectations that go along with being an official S.L.A.M. club, as well as offer creative ideas for getting your club going.

One thing to remember is this is a living document. More important than the suggestions included here is doing what will work best at your school. The key is that this is a student-led movement. Our job at Youth Speaks is to give you the tools and support to help you build a spoken word culture and community at your school. Your job is to be the club organizer/member/teacher/ supporter who inspires and organizes a movement of your peers to build student voice, leadership, and community.

Let's make it happen.

ABOUT YOUTH SPEAKS

Founded in 1996 in San Francisco, Youth Speaks has long championed a local, national, and increasingly global movement of young people picking up pens and stepping proudly onto stages, declaring themselves present. We believe that literacy is a need, not a want. One of the world's leading presenters of Spoken Word performance, education, and youth development programs, Youth Speaks produces local and national youth poetry slams, festivals, and reading series, alongside a comprehensive slate of arts-in-education programs during the school day, in the after-school hours and on weekends. In addition, we create internationally-recognized theater and digital programming, and have helped launch a national network of over 70 programs who believe in the power of young people.

OUR MISSION

Youth Speaks creates spaces that challenge young people to develop and amplify their voices as creators of social change.

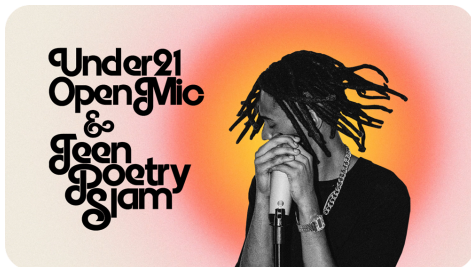
OUR VISION

Youth Speaks envisions a world in which young people are heard, honored, and connected through creative ecosystems of care.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

By providing free arts education to youth with limited access, our programs seek to empower young people with opportunities to discover and develop their own voices. We firmly believe that young people must think of their voices as vital tools through which they can process their lives, shape the world around them, and hone their abilities to envision and create long-lasting impact. To achieve this, our programs employ best practices of arts education and youth development, while encouraging young people to write about issues relevant to them, in their own vernacular. We ask young people to engage their own cultures to help bridge their personal literacies and the traditional academic literacies presented in school.

OTHER YOUTH SPEAKS EVENTS & PROGRAMS



Under 21 Open Mic & Teen Poetry Slam

Want to get on the mic and share something new? Looking for a place to spit your best work and compete for a \$50 prize and an all expense paid trip to Washington DC? Sign up to bust at this twice-monthly double-feature event.



After School Workshops

Free weekly writing and performance workshops are taught throughout the school year by leading poets, writers, spoken word artists, cultural activists, alums, and burgeoning teaching artists. Each session, students are guided through a generative writing and performance experience.. After School Workshops are open to anyone age 13-19 years old.



Spread the Fire

A Publishing Workshop with Hieu Minh Nguyen: The fire you spit on stage, can also scorch the page. In this workshop, poets will learn how to refine and prepare their poems for publication. All levels of experience are welcome. Any poet between the ages of 13-19 who wants to learn how to write a book are welcome.



Rhyme & Reason

A Workshop Series on Hip-Hop, Lyricism, and Black Oral Tradition with EJ Walls aka Sin Q. Participants in this workshop series will be invited to develop and exercise skills in writing and performing rap and other melodic forms of lyricism, as well as learn about the history of great orators, writers, speakers and performers that have pioneered what we know as "rap" or "hip-hop" music today.



Bay Educator for Youth Voice

A free online community and professional development training series led by Youth Speaks Director of Programs, Gabriel Cortez, and Associate Director of Programs, Sandy Vázquez, exclusively for Bay Area educators, librarians, organizers, after school coordinators, and others that work with teens.

ABOUT S.L.A.M. CLUBS

What is SLAM Club?

SLAM stands for **S**tudent **L**ed **A**rts **M**ovement. It is a Youth Speaks program offering students the opportunity to build, develop, and deepen the art / spoken word movement in their schools, libraries, organizations, and other community spaces. Through school clubs, student-initiated projects, and other campus activities, students create new avenues for self-expression, cultural dialogue, and social activism.

Who can be in SLAM Club?

Youth leaders, artists, and their allies that are interested and involved in building a youth arts movement at their school, libraries, and organizations are the Student Led Arts Movement. That means you!

How does SLAM Club work?

Youth leaders and artists create and build clubs at their schools. Students organize events and activities in their school and communities — poetry slams, open mics, assembly showcases, political dialogues, etc — as well as collaborate and rehearse in preparation for the Unified Poetry Slam.

Unified Poetry Slam:



Squad up with the best poets from your SLAM Club to compete to see who has the top youth poetry slam team in the Bay! This annual team competition allows Bay Area high schools and organizations to bring one team of 4-6 teen poets to represent for a chance at larger stages and larger opportunities. Team Slams are an olympic-style competition where teams compete in four 3 minute 30 second-rounds using original solo and group pieces, which judges will give a score from 0.0-10.0. Each team performs in two qualifier rounds and the highest scoring teams advance to finals.

- When: April 2022
- Where: San Francisco
- What will you need?
 - A team of 4-6 competing poets (between the ages of 10-19). Got more than 6 poets? Bring the rest as entourage to support the competing team!

- At least 4 poems: teams need one poem for each round of the 4-round poetry slam. Each poem must have a different lead writer for each round to prevent against any poet hogging the mic and to make sure we get to hear from at least 4 members of the team. You are allowed to repeat poems and choose different poems (if you have more than 4 poems that you want to share) between slams.
- An adult support person at your school or organization to help with registration, travel, ensuring safety of all participants, and gathering all the necessary permissions required by your site for the team to attend.

What could I win? The highest scoring team at finals is invited to join the Bay Area Brave New Voices Team, which rehearses, collaborates, and travels each summer to represent the Bay Area at the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival.

KEY PLAYERS

Advisor: An adult employed by the school or organization that communicates with Youth Speaks to familiarize the team with all UPS rules and expectations, including what to prepare for competition and when to be where.

Coach: Can also be the advisor, though this person should be able to knowingly guide youth through their writing process, performance techniques, and slam strategy (if valued by the team). Sometimes this person can be on school faculty, but this person can also be a hired teaching artist, alum, or highly initiated youth poet.

Youth Poet: For the purposes of the Unified Poetry Slam, performers need to be between the ages of 10-19 years old. They will be expected to write and perform original work by themselves and collaborate on group poems with the other youth poets on their SLAM team.

- **Original Work:** Poems must be original writing by the competing poet(s).
- **Group Poems aka Group Pieces:** Poems constructed and performed as duets, trios, or quartets. Each performing member of a group piece must have participated in the writing of the group piece. No more than 5 poets may participate in the performance of any one poem.

Early Registration for Unified Poetry Slam

Want to compete?

Team registration opens in January 2022, but we are offering early registration for any school, library, or organization committed to bringing a team to the Unified Poetry Slam.

Why register early?

As a thank you for committing early to the Unified Poetry Slam, we would like to offer a **free Youth Speaks assembly or workshop at your school, library, or organization**. Our assemblies are a fun and accessible way for youth to get to know Youth Speaks by participating in an hour-long interactive performance. Each assembly consists of 4-5 Youth Speaks performers who share their original work then facilitate a student open mic. Assemblies are an excellent way to model what making space for student voices could look like in and out of the classroom! Assemblies are also a great way to promote the SLAM Clubs at your schools.

EARLY REGISTRATION HERE

Open from 11/03/2021 - 01/03/2022

How To Start A SLAM Club At Your School?

Best Practices:

- **Gather your support systems: partner teachers and admin.**
 - How they can help:
 - Outreach: identify and encourage potential participants to join Club by making announcements, hanging flyers in rooms, offering extra credit, and coordinating trips to Youth Speaks virtual or in-person events.
 - Presence: By attending, participating in, and helping to facilitate Club.
 - Support: Providing institutional support for events like assembly performances, in-school open mics, school-wide intercom announcements, and spreading the word amongst other teachers and staff.
- **Advertise!**
 - Put signs up on the walls and in other locations that are visible throughout the school
 - Make announcements on the school's intercom
 - Lead a school-wide assembly, where you perform and invite students to come to Club. If you are interested in having Youth Speaks poets help by coming to perform at your school, invite us at youthspeaks.org/bookings. SLAM Clubs get one free Youth Speaks assembly or workshop each year!
 - Collaborate with other clubs on campus (*who says a student lead art movement can or should only involve one club or organization?*)
 - Promote at school wide club fairs
 - Conduct classroom visits, performing and passing around a sign up sheet
 - Encourage teachers to offer extra credit for attendance or advertise SLAM Club at the beginning of class
 - Lead an in-school open mic. Sometimes, performance is the moment of transformation that invests young folks in coming to SLAM Club.

How does SLAM work at my school?

Each club will work differently depending on what the club members want to make out of it. You determine the meeting time and place, events, logo, and of course, the club's name.

- Come up with a great name like: "Hip-Hop 101", "Writer's Bloc", "The Poetic Avengers" ... you get the point. Make it something FRESH.

- Think of some events you could do: writing workshops, open mics, revision sessions, writing group pieces, SLAM club led arts festivals on campus, a student-hosted panel discussion, or even a “familia dinner” of sorts. The possibilities are endless!

Roles Within SLAM Club

Club Members

Opportunities

1. Organize, participate, and perform in the spoken word, poetry, and hip-hop theater events that you want to see, right in your own school or organization
2. Participate in special field trips to performances, youth forums, and festivals like the Unified Poetry Slam.
3. Receive artistic and leadership development from Youth Speaks (sign up for YouthLeads at youthspeaks.org)
4. Become an active member and leader at your school or organization

Expectations

1. Help organize and participate in the weekly club meeting at your school or organization
2. Act as an ambassador of your SLAM Club, promoting spoken word events and workshops
3. Find an Adult Advisor at your school or organization, and work with them to ensure a consistent meeting space and administrative support

Adult Advisor Information

In order for SLAM to be successful, the students need the support of an Adult Advisor at the school to provide assistance and experience. As adult allies, these roles help facilitate, rather than overrule, student direction within the club.

Opportunities

1. Receive free and/or discounted resources on spoken word education
2. Be able to take your classes and/or club on field trips to Youth Speaks events
3. Receive ticket subsidies to the Youth Speaks events and showcases

4. Participate in Bay Educators and Organizers for Youth Voice and other trainings by Youth Speaks (for more information and to sign up, youthspeaks.org/youth-voice)
5. Have Youth Speaks visit your site for assemblies, workshops, and other opportunities

Expectations

1. Help with the logistics for the weekly club meeting: securing a room, getting an announcement over the PA, getting flyers on the bulletin boards, etc.
2. Assist the club members in the planning and implementation of their project, including registering for the Unified Poetry Slam
3. Advocate for the club, announcing events and opportunities to other teachers and the administration

SLAM Team Member

Each SLAM Club forms a SLAM Team, which represents their school or organization at events like the Unified Poetry Slam. They consist of 4-6 members of the most highly initiated participants.

Opportunities

1. Performing and competing at the Unified Poetry Slam
2. Collaborating with other members of your SLAM Team on group poems
3. Compete for a chance to rep the Bay Area at the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Festival
4. Connect with a community of young poets from all over.

Expectations

1. Write, rehearse, and collaborate with SLAM Team Members
2. Attend practice
3. SHOW UP! SHOW OUT!

Forming The Slam Team

Each SLAM Club often forms a SLAM Team, which represents their school or organization at events like the Unified Poetry Slam. They consist of 4-6 members of the most highly initiated participants. SLAM Club Teams are a unique opportunity for participants to find, develop, present, and apply their voices, identities, power, and imaginations, as a small collective of artists.

There are multiple ways for SLAM Club Teams to form:

- Auditions, taking the highest scoring participants from an in-school slam
- If your club has only 4-6 members, asking if they would like to form into a team.
- Holding a school-wide poetry slam
- Allow students to audition as individuals or in pairs
 - Maybe two different slams—an individual slam to fill the first 4 spots of the team and then a duo slam to fill the remaining two spots.

Best Practices

Give students time to prepare for SLAM Team auditions, which means making sure that prior to the auditions the SLAM Club:

- Hosts writing workshops for students to generate poems
- Offer performance opportunities so students can get comfortable on the mic
- Host performance workshops
- Give an overview on poetry slams and its rules
- Show examples of poetry performances (see [youtube.com/youthspeaks](https://www.youtube.com/youthspeaks) for examples)

Prepare Slam Team For The Unified Poetry Slam

- Who coaches? Coaches should consist of someone at your school that is interested and available to mentor and coordinate the SLAM Team. This may include partner teachers, staff members, or highly initiated youth that have participated on a SLAM Club Team before.
- What should generally happen at each Team practice? Team practices should be similar to regular SLAM Club meetings but with more emphasis on generating and revising poems in preparation for the Unified Poetry Slam. You can have practices dedicated to coming up with topics to write towards, revising pieces, developing group pieces, testing memorization, trying out performance, choreography, etc.

Examples Of Poetry Performances

Though spoken word and slam poetry has its perceived performance styles, it is important to note that perception is false. The delivery of a poem is entirely up to the poet. The standard is yourself.

YOUTUBE CHANNELS: (clickable)



SELECT PERFORMANCES:

SOLO POEMS:

[Quinn Edlin | Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam Finals 2019](#)

[2017 - 21st Annual Youth Speaks Teen Poetry Slam - "Four Lines" by Brandon](#)

[Patrick Roche - 21](#)

[Isha Camara - "alien party" @WANPOETRY \(CUPSI 2019\)](#)

GROUP POEMS:

[2015 - Brave New Voices \(Finals\) - "Emmett" by Philadelphia Team](#)

[2018 - Brave New Voices \(Finals\) - Boston \(Round 1\)](#)

[Darius Simpson & Scout Bostley - Lost Voices](#)

DOCUMENTARIES:

HBO: [Russell Simmons Presents Brave New Voices 2008](#)

HBO: [Brave New Voices 2010](#)

How To Organize An Inschool Poetry Slam

A good strategy to organize a poetry slam at your school is to identify a student or a group of students (SLAM Club) that will work with you, the Advisor and/or Coach, to make the slam happen.

Empower this group to take the lead in coordinating, marketing, and producing the performance. The secret to a successful slam is good communication and shared decision-making between Coach(es), Advisors, and Youth Poets.

What Is A Slam?

A poetry slam is an event in which poets perform original work and are judged by members of the audience. Typically, the host or another organizer selects the judges, who are instructed to give numerical scores (on a 0.0 to 10.0 or 1.0 to 10.0 scale) based on the poets' content and performance. Youth Speaks' slams emphasize writing and performance, encouraging students to focus on WHAT they're saying and HOW they're saying it. We destress the competition by speaking to the special kind of community that's created through poetry. The points are not the point, the point is poetry.

Slam Rules

- Poems are scored by five judges on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0. The highest score and the lowest score are then dropped, and the middle three scores are added together, making the highest possible score for any poem a 30.0.
- No props may be used in the Slam. Props are defined as any non-body piece of equipment. Musical accompaniment (excluding mouth/body percussion) may not be used in the Slam.
- Each poem must be **under 3 minutes, 30 seconds** in length. There is a 10 second grace period, after which significant time penalties will incur.
- If a poet goes over the time limit, their scores will be penalized .5 points for each 10 seconds beyond the limit. For example, penalties for 3 minutes 30 second poems start at 3 minutes 40 seconds. (i.e. up to 3:39 – no penalty; 3:40 to 3:49 – .5 point penalty; 3:50 to 3:59 – 1 point penalty, etc.)

Preslam Checklist

- ☐ Secure Date & Time for the Slam
- ☐ Secure a Venue
 - ☐ Venue should host most, if not the entire student body; auditorium and/or school theatre is preferable. Sound system and mic should be set up prior to the event.
- ☐ Publicize the Slam
 - ☐ The SLAM Club will be key in helping spread the word on campus. Promotion for the poetry slam should kick off 3/4 weeks prior to the event, or as early as possible.
 - ☐ Publicity can consist of:
 - ☐ Social Media
 - ☐ School Website
 - ☐ Flyers (to student groups, staff/faculty mailboxes, faculty mtgs)
 - ☐ Posters
 - ☐ P .A. Announcements
 - ☐ School newspaper
 - ☐ Faculty meetings
- ☐ Create Slam SignUp Sheet
 - ☐ Post a signup sheet in your class for students interested in performing in the slam.

Who You Need?

Key Players:

- **MC**
 - Welcomes the audience
 - Explains slam rules
 - Lead poet huddle
 - Have each poet draw a number from a hat to determine performance order
 - Use this moment to do an icebreaker activity
 - This is where community is formed
 - Introduces poet
 - Keeps the show alive and moving!
 - **They'll need:** a list with the names of performers
- **HOST** (doubles as scorekeeper)
 - Read scores after each poet
 - optional: to deemphasize the competition, a silent scoring system can also be used. The host will collect the scores from the judges and tabulate them privately.
 - Keep time with stopwatch
 - Calculates scores
 - Shows LOVE to every poet!
 - Reminds the audience that the points are not the point, the point is poetry.
 - **They'll need:** stopwatch, score sheet, microphone (depending on venue and size of the show)
- **5 JUDGES** (including at least 1 youth judge, if possible)
 - Scores each poet/poem on scale of 0.0-10.0 using one decimal point (example: 8.7, 9.1)
 - Judges can also be chosen randomly or chosen ahead of time, asking other faculty members, administrators, school support staff, and alumni.
 - To prevent bias, judges should not personally know the competing poets
 - **They'll need:** score cards (1 card/poet/round), markers, judges table or row of seats

- **Calibration Poet**

- This poet is not part of the competition, but will go first in the slam so the judges can get used to scoring.
- Tell the judges to use the calibration poet to set the bar, and to judge the rest poets based off of the score they gave this poet.
- This poet can be another student who doesn't want to compete, an alum, a guest artist.
- It's not ideal, but in an emergency, and if the venue permits, have the judges score one of the poems from the Youth Speaks YouTube channel as the calibration poem.

- **DJ** (highly recommend)

- Plays as the audience arrives and in between poets
- Keep the music appropriate
- Read the energy of the room
- The DJ is another way to keep the energy lively.
- **They'll need:** table, sound system, extension cords.

It's good to feature experienced spoken word youth and adult artists at the open mic/slam performance. Youth Poets should identify and invite the guest artist. At the end of the show, have interested students sign up to be a part of the SLAM Club.

SAMPLE POETRY SLAM SCORESHEET

DATE: _____

ROUND: _____

NAME	TIME (MIN)	SCORES *the high and low score are dropped					TOTAL *middle three scores
POET X	2:48	8.6	8.4	9.0	9.3	40.0	26.9
POET Y	3:41 -0.5	9.0	9.2	9.3	9.7	9.6	28.4 27.6

Each poem must be **under 3 minutes, 30 seconds** in length. There is a 10 second grace period, after which significant time penalties will incur.

If a poet goes over the time limit, their scores will be penalized .5 points for each 10 seconds beyond the limit. For example, penalties for 3 minutes 30 second poems start at 3 minutes 40 seconds. (i.e. up to 3:39 – no penalty; 3:40 to 3:49 – .5 point penalty; 3:50 to 3:59 – 1 point penalty, etc.)

Suggested Run of Show:

PRESHOW:

- ☐ All Key Players arrive:
 - ☐ MC
 - ☐ HOST
 - ☐ 5 JUDGES
 - ☐ CALIBRATION POET
 - ☐ DJ
- ☐ Set up additional sign-up sheet for last minute sign-ups
- ☐ Sound check:
 - ☐ MC
 - ☐ HOST
 - ☐ CALIBRATION POET
 - ☐ DJ
- ☐ HOST: Set up the Judges' table w/ the materials needed
- ☐ HOST: Get one sentence bio or fun fact about each judge.
- ☐ DJ: Starts playing music as audience and participants arrive
- ☐ MC: Welcomes the audience as they are arriving
- ☐ MC: Asks arriving participants to check in with them
- ☐ HOST: Train the Judges on how to score and purpose of CALIBRATION POET
- ☐ MC: Last call for sign ups
- ☐ MC: Call all participating poets over to lead the POET HUDDLE

MC: OPENING POET HUDDLE:

- ☐ Check to see if everyone who signed up is present
- ☐ Poets draw numbers out of a hat to decide order of slam
- ☐ Write down performance order
- ☐ Do icebreaker activity
- ☐ Affirmations
- ☐ Remind them that THE POINTS ARE NOT THE POINT, THE POINT IS THE POETRY

SHOW:

1. MC: OPEN THE SHOW:
 - a. Welcome everyone, introduce yourself
 - b. Get hype
 - c. Tell them why we are here
 - d. Introduce HOST
2. HOST:
 - a. Explain the rules of poetry slam
 - b. Introduce the judges
 - c. Remind audience that it is not about the points
 - d. Kick it back to the MC
3. MC: Encourage audience to audibly respond to poets
 - a. Demonstrate ways audience can show poet love (snaps, claps, audible affirmations)
4. MC: Get the crowd hype (in your own style): Speak truth // Rock this mic // Let's go // Are you ready for a poetry slam? (they're not because you have a CALIBRATION POET)
5. MC: Explain the purpose of calibration poet: to get the judges AND audience calibrated
6. MC: ****Intro calibration poet****

TRANSITIONS

- DJ: Play music when the poem is over, and while poets get on stage, fade out when they get to the mic.

AFTER EACH POEM

- MC: Affirm the poet. Ask the audience to show love.
- MC: Tell Judges to write down their score for the poem. Remind them to stay consistent. Remind them to consider what score they gave the calibration poet.

INTRO BETWEEN POETS

- **Announce the poet who is ON DECK (this person is NOT next, but is after)**
- **Announce the poet who is NEXT**
 - "ON DECK we have _____, but coming to the stage right now, give it up for _____"
 - Adjust mic for poet if they need help

CLOSING THE SHOW

1. MC & Host: respond to last poet
 - a. Host: Intro MC to bust last poem
 - b. MC: Bust Poem
 - c. HOST: Calculate final score while MC performs poem
2. MC: Clap it up for all poets. Pass to Host
3. Host: Remind poets about the closing poet circle
4. Host: Announce the winners of the slam and what they won

CLOSING POET HUDDLE

This is your chance to affirm all who participated, encourage folks to participate again, plug other ways to stay involved, and to emphasize the importance of community.

SLAM Club Sessions

The weekly meeting should be the cornerstone of the club: the place to bust that new verse, to announce upcoming events, to plan your club's project, to welcome new members, etc. As the club members, you all get to decide what goes down at each meeting. The key is for your club to be a space for both the artistic and activist sides of SLAM,

CLUB PROJECTS

One of the main goals of SLAM is for each club to plan and organize its own SLAM-related project in its school and/or surrounding community. Use this project as a way to take leadership and reach the wider school population. We want you to be original with this: create something new, something fresh, something your community wants & needs! The project needs to be related to the mission of Youth Speaks, but doesn't have to be just poetry. Some possible projects could include:

- a teacher/student poetry slam: see teachers and students go head to head
- a monthly open mic series: have a different featured artist every time * a poetry fashion show: students bust their poems and model student-designed gear
- a forum with different speakers and artists about an issue in your community: violence, immigration, the war, etc.
- an anthology of youth writing and artwork
- create a poetry slam team representing your school
- a 'zine or website dedicated to lyrics, music, and youth expression
- a topical MC battle: have rappers freestyle on social and political issues
- community outreach: lead writing workshops at a local middle school or youth center
- what else can YOU think of?!?!
- What do you think will be the main outcome(s) of the project?

Sample Timeline For Your SLAM Club

(First 12 Sessions)

GET STARTED: The first few SLAM Club sessions are essential in establishing expectations, purpose, and a culture of care—a space where young people voice their needs and opinions.

Meeting 1: What is S.L.A.M.?

- Kickoff meeting! Pizza?
- Intro to Youth Speaks + S.L.A.M. (footage session)
- 101 Writing Workshop
 - YS Classic Lesson Plans can be found in the back of this handbook
- Share Poems
 - Always make time for participants to share their work
 - This can be anything they wrote, not just from writing workshop
- Come up with club name
- Set consistent meeting time

Meeting 2: Getting Hype!

- Establish Check in Routine:
 - Prepare a check in question w/ an icebreaker question
 - Example: How are you doing? And what is your favorite holiday?
 - Opening poem.
 - Share a poem by someone else.
 - It can be from a book, a video, a song, a text message from a friend, a commercial.
- Remember: anything can be a poem.

- Get a volunteer to do this for the next session
 - 101 Writing Workshop
 - Share Poems
 - Overview of future events: open mic, field trip, in-school poetry slam, the Unified Poetry Slam
 - Give take-home prompts
 - Keep it simple:
 - expand what you've written so far
 - Revise what you've written
 - Write a poem that is at least 3 minutes when read out loud.
 - Bring a new poem to share for the next meeting
-

GET PLANNING: This is when the young people take control, dreaming, organizing, and executing their vision.

Meeting 3: Event Planning

- Check In
- Open Mic Planning:
 - Discuss and assign project tasks: venue, host, artists, publicity/marketing, etc.
 - Discuss new publicity/outreach strategies to recruit new club members/audience/participants for Open Mic
 - Hit up english/theatre/music/ethnic studies classes
 - Make sign-up sheet
 - Make posters
- 101 Writing Workshop
- Share poems
- Take-home prompt:
 - Prepare something for the open mic

Meeting 4: Promotion!

- Check In

- Active Promotion for Open Mic!
 - Poster the hallways
 - invite other clubs to participate
 - invite classes, ask choir classes if they want a spot on the list.
- 101 Writing Workshop
- Share Poems

Meeting 5: Open Mic!

- OPEN MIC
 - Everyone from SLAM CLUB prepares something to perform
 - Prioritize new names
 - Make sure to show love to everyone
- **ANNOUNCE In-School Poetry Slam (SLAM Team audition)**

GET AHEAD: Let the accomplishment energize the squad. Y'all did it, but there is more! At this point Club members should be leading each session.

Meeting 6: Momentum

- Check In
- Debrief Open Mic
- In-School Poetry Slam Planning
 - Fill Roles: MC, HOST, 5 JUDGES, DJ, CALIBRATION POET
 - Outreach
 - Promotion
- 201 Writing Workshop
- Share Poems
- Take home prompt:
 - Prepare something for the Youth Speaks Under 21 Open Mic and Teen Poetry Slam

Meeting 7: Promotion + Field Trip

- Check In
- Promote In-School Poetry Slam:
 - Make sure folks know they are slamming to rep your school at the Unified Poetry Slam
- Field Trip:
 - Sign up for either the Under 21 Open Mic or the Teen Poetry Slam
 - use it as an opportunity to practice
 - Qualify for Teen Poetry Slam Semi Finals
 - Meet other young poets from outside of your SLAM club

Meeting 8: SLAM Team Auditions

- Check In
- Poet Huddle
- POETRY SLAM
- Announce SLAM Team
- SHOW LOVE TO EVERYONE

GET FOCUSED: After the SLAM Team has formed, the Club will go through a major transition. Don't let the poets who didn't make the team feel discouraged, as if they are no longer in the club, make sure they are still engaged by setting new goals that the club can help them accomplish, whether that be more school events, or to slam individually at the Youth Speaks's Teen Poetry Slam, the possibilities are endless. The SLAM Team should start focusing on preparing for the Unified Poetry Slam.

Meeting 9: Collaboration

- Check In
- Reset SLAM Club Goals:

- SLAM Teams sets goals/expectations
- SLAM Club sets goals (Make sure to keep nonSLAM Team members engaged)
 - Plan other events
 - Prepare to slam solo at Youth Speaks's Teen Poetry Slams
- Breakout sessions:
 - SLAM Club:
 - 201 Writing Workshop
 - Event Plan
 - SLAM TEAM Discuss/Write
 - Topics that each person want to write about and see if anyone wants to collaborate on a group poem
 - If there were any free writes from previous writing workshops that could inspire a group poem
- Share
 - Ask folks to listen for possible group poem opportunities.
- Take Home Prompt
 - Work on group poem
 - Register for Unified Poetry Slam

Meeting 10: Group Feedback Session (Writing)

- Check In
- Group Poem share
 - Writing feedback from group
- Solo Poem share
 - Writing feedback from group
- Breakout sessions:
 - SLAM Club:
 - 201 Writing Workshop
 - Event Plan
 - SLAM TEAM
 - Revision time
- Share Poems
- Take Home Prompt: Begin memorizing poems

Meeting 11: Group Feedback Session (Performance)

- Check In
- Group Poem share
 - Performance feedback from group
- Solo Poem share
 - Performance feedback from group
- Breakout sessions:
 - SLAM Club:
 - 201 Writing Workshop
 - Event Plan
 - SLAM TEAM
 - Rehearsal time
- Share Poems
- Take Home Prompt: Finish memorization

Meeting 12: Present

- Check In
- Group Poem share (memorized)
 - Choreography feedback from group
- Solo Poem share (memorized)
 - Choreography feedback from group
- Breakout sessions:
 - SLAM Club:
 - 201 Writing Workshop
 - Event Plan
 - SLAM TEAM
 - REHEARSAL
- Run through all poems
- Take-home prompt: Polish performance

**note: after these first 12 meetings, clubs should be well on their way to establishing a consistent group of participants and making projects happen. This is just a sample template; each club should assess best practices for their space*

101 Lesson Plans

These workshops are made to be flexible to adapt according to participant needs. Each functions as a stand-alone point of entry for both first-time and returning students. 101 workshops are designed for introductory level participants and are focused on helping them find voice and co-create the culture of the space in a way that centers their lived experiences.

101 Learning Objectives:

- ❖ Participants will develop key Youth Speaks practices: freewrite, word palette
- ❖ Participants will co-create a classroom culture in accordance with Social Emotional Learning goals with the support of Youth Speaks golden rules: there are no wrong answers and the standard is yourself
- ❖ Workshops will be generative and reflective
- ❖ Participants will begin to find, develop, present and apply their voice, identity, power, and imagination towards societal change.

I AM, I WAS, I WILL BE

In this workshop, participants will explore the idea of personal identity. Fueled by a communally-constructed word palette, writers will produce a declarative poem about who they were, are, and will be. Guided by the fundamental Youth Speaks concept that there are “no wrong answers,” writers will reflect upon the ways the people, places and moments of their lives have shaped - and will continue to shape - who they are.

Length: 1 Hour

Themes: Personal change, communal knowledge, narrative considering past, present and future

Objective: Participants will take concrete steps toward writing about personal identity. Drawing from a communally constructed word palette, students will produce a declarative poem about who they were, are, and will be. This workshop is used to introduce fundamental Youth Speaks concepts and tools – “No Wrong Answers,” “The Standard is Yourself,” the word palette, the free write.

Level: Introductory

Materials: white board, dry-erase markers, writing materials

Set-Up: arrange chairs in circle

Check-In (10 min): name + what is one thing changing in your life?

Word Palette (20 min): Divide whiteboard into 5 columns: Places, Times, People, Extinct, Invisible

- PEOPLE - who are people everyone in this room should know?
- PLACES - what are places everyone in this room should know?
- TIMES/ MOVEMENTS - moments across time everyone in this room should know
- COLORS - that are not on the rainbow
- \$\$\$ - things that are valuable but not man-made
- Other Palette Options (can replace Extinct and Invisible)
 - EXTINCT - things that are *going* extinct (note: not currently extinct)
 - INVISIBLE - things you believe in that you can't see

*Directions: Have participants copy the columns onto the paper as they are populated. After all the columns have been populated, read back the contents of the columns to the group. Make time for participants to explain their contributions to the palette. After, each participant selects 3 – 5 words from each column. Depending on the skill level of the group, either make the use or exclusion of the selected words mandatory.

Writing Prompt (10-15 min) - Participants will write about themselves and the changes in their lives. They will utilize words from the palette using the following prompts:

"I am..."

"I was..."

"I will be..."

Instruct students to freewrite (no stopping, amending, redacting, or revising), moving from prompt to prompt as they are so inspired. Goal: students use all of their chosen palette words and write for the entire time. If they use all the palette words, they should continue writing until time is up. If they find their writing heading in another direction, they are encouraged to pursue that direction.

Share (10-15 min)

I LIVE HERE

Length: 1 Hour

Themes: Life, Environment, Identity

Objective: Participants will examine location, activity, and self, building towards an incremental understanding of the context in which they live. Drawing from a communally constructed word palette, students will produce a descriptive poem about a moment in which they felt truly alive. This workshop is used to encourage continued practice with fundamental Youth Speaks concepts and tools – “No Wrong Answers,” “The Standard is Yourself,” the word palette, the free write.

Level: Introductory

Materials: white board, dry-erase markers, writing materials

Set-Up: arrange chairs in circle

Check-in (10 min): Name & pronouns + one thing you did today OR one place you were today; no repeats

Brainstorm (10 min): Create three columns on the white board and have participants brainstorm relevant ideas for each column, one at a time:

- LIVE – What does it mean to live?
- HERE – If someone asked you, “where do you LIVE?” what would you say? As you enter this, assert that there is a relationship between *how* you live and *where* you live.
 - After getting a few words down, ask: How could *where* you live change *how* you live? i.e. do you dance different in SF v.s. the suburbs? Do you eat different here v.s. the country your grandparents come from?
- I – Who are you? What are the ways you identify, the categories you fit into, the groups you represent and/or the communities you claim.

Note for facilitator: As you add participants’ suggestions to the white board, ask them to write these down on their own paper, as well. Make time to discuss interesting or ambiguous responses. Then have participants choose 3-5 words from each column, and write them at the top of their page. Depending on the skill level of the group, either make the use or exclusion of the selected words mandatory.

Writing Prompt #1(7 min): Write about a moment (or moments) when you felt truly, deeply alive.

Challenge: Try to ground this moment in a specific location from the “HERE” column.

Example: one way this could look is by creating a phrase using one word from each column i.e. Black dances BART like turf feinz twisting shoulders out of sockets and into freedom; Boy breathes Berkeley and it smells like the intersection of college and poverty; girl runs on the corner of 16th and mission from a city that threatens to push her to the suburbs

Ghostline: *"I could never forget..."*

Share (5 min)

(Optional - if time allows) Writing Prompt #2 (7 min): OPTIONS

- Bring your world to life by writing about the places in the "Here" column as if they could do the things in the "Live" column i.e. how does your neighborhood breathe? Does it breathe light or heavy? Is it healthy or out of breath? If your grandma's house learns, what does it learn? Who teaches it? What lessons does it learn every day?
 - *Facilitator note:* if you do this, it may help to briefly introduce personification as new vocabulary after the previous share out.
- Bigger Picture Remix: write about things in the "Here" column that keep you from doing the things in the "Live" column.
 - Ghostline: *I would _____ but/if...*
 - Example: I would dance but BART criminalizes us for playing our music too loud. I saw a Black boy moonwalk between closing doors while a cop reached for his gun; I would eat healthy if there were more grocery stores in my neighborhood
- Describe a place from the "HERE" column using all 5 senses. Paint a picture with your words.
- Write from the perspective of a place from the "HERE" column. What would that place say about you? How would it describe the day you first met?

Share (10 min)

I'M NOT WHO YOU THINK I AM

Participants explore the roots of stereotypes and the scope and scale of the stereotypes that impact their personal lives. Participants are challenged to write through the contradictions and misperceptions that stereotypes cause in order to get to the heart of who they are at their core.

Length: 1 Hour

Themes: Stereotypes, Adjectives, Nouns, Identity

Objective: Participants will take concrete steps toward writing about personal identity. Drawing from communal word palettes and individually constructed adjective and noun combinations, students will consider the impact of stereotypes in their lives and produce a poem asserting who they really are. This workshop is used to introduce fundamental Youth Speaks concepts and tools – “No Wrong Answers,” “The Standard is Yourself,” the word palette, the free write.

Level: Introductory

Curricular Context: School Visit

Materials: white board, dry-erase markers, writing materials

Set-Up: arrange chairs in circle

Check-In (10 min): how you're doing + one word to describe your day

Vocabulary (2 min):

- Nouns: person, place, thing, or idea
- Adjectives: words that describe nouns

Word Palette (15 min)

- PEOPLE: Using adjective / noun combination, who were some people you saw on your way here this morning? Examples: Grumpy barista, tall neighbor, speedy cab driver
- ROLES / RESPONSIBILITIES: Using adjective / noun combination, think about the many roles and/or responsibilities you play in your life. Examples: Intelligent lady, compassionate youth-worker, raw poet, nosy neighbor, busy couch potato, graceful mother
- LABELS & STEREOTYPE:
 - What does “stereotype” mean? Why do you think stereotypes might a problem?
 - Dictionary definition: to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same. A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Individual Practice #1 (2 min): How do you think people label you when you walk into a room? Using adjective/noun combinations, make a list of for labels people might use for you. Try to make your list as long as possible.

Challenge: only use adjective/noun combinations that use your initials

- Examples: NOTE - as a facilitator, model by coming up with your own examples
 - Gabriel Cortez = Gabby Comedian, Ghetto Coyote, Gun Clapper, Grumpy Child, Guesswork Coloration, Grimacing Caveman, Gargantuan Cheeks.

(Optional) Share

Individual Practice #2 (2 min): Make a list of adjective/noun combinations about who you *really* are

Challenge: only use adjective/noun combinations that use your initials

- Examples:
 - Gabriel Cortez = Griot Creator, Golden Child, Game Changer, Glorious Chatter, Generous Conductor, Gracious Confidant
 - Samantha Kang uses her initials to create an adjective/noun combo to describe herself: *Smelly Korean, Smart Kollaborator*. *NOTE: Michelle "Mush" Lee has used this example before but it is problematic to use if you are not Korean. Instead, come up with an example that resonates with your own identities.

(Optional) Share

Individual Practice #3 (10 min): Tell me about who you really are.

Ghostlines: "My name is (adj /noun) and I am not who you think I am..." // "If you really knew me..."

*Facilitator note: use this as an opportunity to rename why stereotypes are a problem and encourage participants to speak back to and challenge the stereotypes they've encountered in their lives.

Share (10 min)

UNWRITTEN RULES

This workshop looks to gauge the moral code of young people by exploring the difference between laws and unwritten rules in our society, culture, communities and personal lives. Participants will identify and reflect upon unwritten rules that exist in their communities, families and personal lives, and then write about a time when they broke an unwritten rule that was either created and imposed upon them by society, or established as a result of their own moral code.

Length: 1 Hour

Themes: Laws vs Unwritten Rules, US President

Objective: Participants will explore the difference between laws and unwritten rules in our society, culture, communities, and personal lives. This workshop is used to introduce fundamental Youth Speaks concepts and tools – “No Wrong Answers,” “The Standard is Yourself,” the word palette, the free write.

Level: Introductory

Curricular Context: School Visit

Materials: white board, dry-erase markers, writing materials

Set-Up: arrange chairs in circle, (Optional) write MLK quote on the board: “One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws” – MLK Jr.

Check-In (10 min): name + if you could make a new law, what would it be?

Brainstorm / Discussion (15 min):

1. Ask participants: *What are the two legal requirements for becoming the President? They are written in the constitution.*
 - Must be 35 y/o
 - Must be a natural-born US citizen
2. What are the unwritten rules to become PRESIDENT?
3. What are the unwritten rules in your COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD?
4. What are the unwritten rules in your CULTURE (consider how you’re told you must act based on your race, gender, sexuality)?
5. What are the unwritten rules in your SCHOOL or CLASSROOM?

Writing Prompt #1(7-10 min): write about the (five) unwritten rules you live by no matter where you are.

Ghostline: “Rule 1: Never leave the house without...”

*NOTE: Before participants write, facilitator shares one of their own unwritten rules

Share (10 min)

Writing Prompt #2 (10 min): write about a time when you broke an unwritten rule *you* created for *yourself* or an unwritten rule that *society* created for *you*. OR tell the story of how you learned an unwritten rule.

*NOTE: Before students write, facilitator shares a story about when you broke a rule or code

Share (10 min)

201 Lesson Plans

These workshops are made to be flexible to adapt according to participant needs. Each functions as a stand-alone point of entry for both first-time and returning students. 201 workshops are designed for intermediate level participants that have developed a level of mastery over 101-level learning objectives and are ready to expand their frame of reference through the introduction of secondary texts used to study the mechanics and possibilities of voice.

201 Learning Objectives: *In addition to continuing to develop 101 objectives, 201 is designed to help participants:*

- ❖ Expand their frame of reference through the introduction and discussion of secondary texts
- ❖ Begin to read as writers
- ❖ Draw upon form to access new dimensions of voice

ANTHEM

Workshop by Gabriel Cortez

Length: 1 Hour

Themes: Anthem, Identity, Reclamation, Celebration

Objective: Participants will consider "Anthem" as a poetic form and begin writing their own "Anthem" poems.

Level: Intermediate

Check-In (10 min): a song that makes you feel strong/pumped OR the last (good) song you remember OR something that only people from your background know about.

Individual Practice #1 (2 min): Make a list of identities and/or groups you belong to. Think about things you do, places you come from, what you see in the mirror, etc. The more specific and the more unexpected, the better.

(Optional) If inspired, the facilitator could offer personal examples i.e. beatboxers, people that pluck their own eyebrows, people of color with white fathers, folks who lived in Leesburg VA

Word Palette #2 (5 min): have folks share from their individual practice and track responses on the board.

New Vocab (2 min):

- *Anthem* - a poem or song that celebrates a specific group of people. FUBU = for us, by us. A call out to our people and a celebration of their existence. They empower identities that are made to feel small.
 - Examples: Beyonce - Single Ladies, James Brown - I'm Black & I'm Proud, TLC - Creep
- *Allusions* - an expression that calls something to mind without mentioning it explicitly
 - Examples: instead of "San Francisco, I say golden gate bridge, the warriors, rainbow flags." If I said "the Black Panthers, The Raiders, East 14th, Mistah Fab" where would I be talking about?

Secondary Texts (5 min):

- [e40 – Tell Me When To Go](#)
- [Jermaine Dupri – Welcome to Atlanta \(Coast to Coast Remix\)](#)
- [George Watsky – S For Lisp](#)

Discuss (10 min):

- How did it make you feel?
- Allusions you recognized? Didn't recognize?
- What is the poet writing in response to? What stereotypes do they address? How did they flip it and find a way to celebrate themselves?

Individual Practice #2 (10 min): Write an anthem poem celebrating a group you belong to

- Ghostline:
 - *This is for my... who....*
 - *This poem is for anyone who ...*
 - Example: ... *was told to go back to their country*
 - Example:... *'s dad told them to act like a man*

Share (10 min)

NAME: _____ PERIOD: _____ DATE: _____

ANTHEMS WORKSHEET

1. Make a list of identities and/or groups you claim. At least one must be under the surface (not obvious to someone that just met you).

Pro-tip: Think about places you come from, things you do, what you see in the mirror, etc. The more specific and unexpected, the better.

Examples: men, Afro-Latinx, poet, people that moved a lot, Black men with white fathers.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

2. Brainstorm: pick 3 identities/groups you listed in part 1 and write one at the top of each of the 3 columns below. Beneath each one, in the row labeled "allusions", put at least 3 words, objects, places, experiences, etc. that you relate to each identity.

Identities	1.	2.	3.
Allusions			

3. New Vocabulary

- **Anthem** - a poem or song that celebrates a specific identity or group of people
- **Allusion** - a reference that calls something to mind without mentioning it explicitly.

3. List 2-3 allusions you recognize from each city:

Bay Area/Hyphy	Atlanta	New York	St. Louis	Long Beach
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

WRITING PROMPT: Use ONE of the options below to write an anthem celebrating an identity you belong to

OPTION 1: Fill in the blanks. Try and fill each line all the way.

1. The best part about being _____ is... _____
2. We learn early how to... _____
3. Our mothers warned us... _____
4. We find heaven in... _____
5. You wrongfully assume we... _____
6. We were told we would never... _____
7. But they didn't know _____

OPTION 2: Using the rest of this paper, do a freewrite, beginning with:

"WELCOME TO _____ WHERE..." OR "THIS IS FOR MY PEOPLE WHO..."

[illegible]

LOVE / LIKE

Workshop by Gabriel Cortez

Length: 2 Hours

Themes: Love

Objective: Introduce 2ndary text by Shihan, introduce epistrophe as a poetic device, remix the word palette (you can't use *any* of these words) to challenge poets to write about love in a more original way, celebrate and complicate participant understanding of love.

Level: Introductory

Curricular Context: 10th grade, John O'Connell High School "Enrichment" Class. ~18 students

Materials: Composition books, printed rubrics

Set-Up: arrange chairs in circle

Check-In (10 min): Rose & Thorn or How is your heart today or if your love was an animal, what would it be and why?

Palette: LOVE

- Words or ideas that you think of
- What does it look like? Where do you see it? Actions?
- Symbols for love?
- What does it mean? Dictionary Definition: *an intense feeling of deep affection*
- What are the different kinds of love? What's the most important kind of love?
 - Romantic, Platonic, etc
 - 6 Greek Words for Love
 - i. Eros, or sexual passion
 - ii. Philia, or deep friendship
 - iii. Ludus, or playful love
 - iv. Agape, or love for everyone
 - v. Pragma, or longstanding love
 - vi. Philautia, or love of the self

- Movies/songs that taught you about love

Prompt 1: write about your first vivid memory of love

- Challenge: can't use ANY of the words from the palette

Secondary Text: Secondary Text: [Shihan - Love Like](#) [[video](#) / [text](#)]

Discussion:

- Parts that resonated and/or confused?
- What did you think about his performance?
- How do you think Shihan feels about love?
- *Vocab: Epistrophe: ending a series of lines, phrases, clauses, or sentences with the same word or words*
 - *(Optional) Hyperbole: save discussion of hyperbole for later class. Refer to Shihan's poem as an example.*

Prompt #2 (10 min): write a poem *after* Shihan about the type of love you want to give and/or receive.

- Ghosts: I want a love like..., a _____ kind of love
 - Vocab: (epistrophe: ending a series of lines, phrases, clauses, or sentences with the same word or words)
- Pro-Tip: Draw on real events/actions or use your imagination to come up with fictitious ones
- Examples: I want a love like calling each other every weekend, I want a final smash type love, I want a Beyonce making Lemonade to hold Jay-Z accountable type love, etc

Share (10 min)

LIBATION

Workshop by Gabriel Cortez

Length: 1 hour

Themes: Continuum, Metaphor, Anaphora

Objective: Students will consider their support network through the metaphor of a tree. Students will then write poems dedicated to people, places, and events that are important to them after Chinaka Hodge's "Libation."

Level: Introduction

Materials: Markers

Set-Up: Put Quote on Board

Do Now (10 min): name + grade + if you are stuck on an island and could have one food grow from the trees, what would that one food be?

Context: none of us exists in isolation. We are each a part of continuum of those that came before and those that will come after. To imagine and celebrate that continuum...

Individual Practice #1 (15 min): for this word palette, draw a tree and keep track of word palette responses alongside each part of the tree

- ROOTS: Write the names of people/places/events you come from (that helped make you who you are) in the shape of roots.
- TRUNK: Write the names of the people/places/events that support you NOW in the shape of a tree trunk. Consider family, friends, your crew/squad/people.
- BRANCHES: Write the names of people/places/events that you support above in the shape of branches.

Share

Secondary Text: [Chinaka Hodge - Libation](#) (15 min)

- Pass out copies to everyone.
- Before reading, tell students to listen out for who and what the author wrote this poem for.
- Afterwards, discuss poem:
 - What resonated with you?
 - What does “Libation” mean?
 - Definition: *“is a ritual pouring of a liquid as an offering to a god or spirit or in memory of those who have died. It was common in many religions of antiquity and continues to be offered in various cultures today.”*
 - Why do you think Chinaka wrote this poem?

Discussion (5 min): As writers, it is our duty to document the world around us. To tell its story. Nobody has walked the exact steps as you. Nobody has your exact perspective/experience. Through documenting and saying their name, we honor our past, present, and future.

Individual Practice #2 (10-15 min): Write a “Libation” poem after Chinaka for the people, places, & events that make you who you are. Draw on the examples listed in your Tree of Support.

- Ghostline: *“This is a poem for _____, who... (insert why they’re important to you)”*
- Example: *“This is a poem for my uncle Gem, who taught me to find peace in memorized lyrics and video game cheat codes. This is for my mother, who signs birthday cards with love. This is for Leesburg, Virginia, who gave me a cocoon to crack out of. This is for John O’Connell High School, and the students who will learn to heal from my wounds, this is for...”*

Share (10 min)

HOW TO

Workshop by Gabriel Cortez

Length: 1.5 Hours

Materials: Projector, Copies of [How To Make Tamales](#) & [Unsolicited Advice](#)

Individual Practice (3 min): List of things you know how to do or consider yourself an expert in.

Challenge: make them as specific as possible, considering *when* you do/did it, *who* you do/did it with, *where* you do/did it and any other small details that make it you.

Example: perfecting your crossover dribble in your mom's unfinished basement, playing video games with your uncle in the 90s, cutting your hair in the morning while your partner waits to use the bathroom, moving from small town Virginia to big town Los Angeles to live with your dad

Share + Track (5 min): Track responses on the board (ideally, one from everyone)

New Vocab (2 min): Form - poems can look a lot of different ways. They can be stories, sonnets, haiku, raps, rants, letters, diary entries, etc. Another form they can take is as a list of directions.

Share Secondary Text #1 (2 min): Ariana Brown - How To Make Tamales [[text](#)]

Discussion (5 min):

- Parts that resonated or confused?
- What is this poem about? What *else* is it about? What does this poem tell us about the author?
 - Notice how the author uses the steps to tell a bigger story about tradition, family, poverty, joy

Individual Practice (10 min): Write a list of directions for how to do something you know how to do very well.

- Ghost: *Step 1...*

- Challenge: Use the steps in the directions to tell us something deeper about yourself and your experience growing up. Each direction may be as long/short as you want but keep writing the entire time. No erasing allowed!

Share (10 min)

Share Secondary Text #2 (5 min): Tonya Ingram - Unsolicited Advice [[text](#) / [video](#)]

Discussion (10 min):

- Parts that resonated or confused?
- What does "Unsolicited Advice" mean?
- Who do you think this poem is for? Answer: the author. It is advice she would give to herself.
- How is it similar/different than Ariana's poem?

Individual Practice #2 (10 min): Imagine you could go back in time — 1, 5, 10 years ago, or maybe just this morning — and give yourself advice. What would you tell yourself? Write a list of *unsolicited advice* for yourself

- Ghost: *When _____, (after Tony Ingram)*

Share (10 min)

Closeout: Clap for all who shared, all who received. Thank you for trying on a different form. This is a tool you can use whenever you write. What other things do you know that deserve a poem? What other gems of wisdom do you have to offer? What advice do you need to receive?

REVISION WORKSHOP

The Hottest Line I Ever Wrote

What's the hottest line you ever wrote? What if we planted it like a seed and grew more of it?

Created by: Gabriel Cortez

Level: 201

Length: 45 minutes – 90 minutes (if you do all optional activities)

Themes: Revision, Developing Voice, Identifying Power

Objectives: Participants will be able to understand the concept of the “line” within a spoken word context as well as learn how to “expand” on previously written work as a generative revision tool. Students will also be able to identify a “suite” of poems.

Curricular Context: This workshop is intended as a first opportunity for participants to reflect on and celebrate the writing they have created thus far as part of a writing workshop series.

Materials: copies of [Nate Marshall poems](#), whiteboard, writing materials

Set-Up: Chairs arranged in a circle

Check-in (10 min): name + pronouns + something you think gets better with time

Palette (5 min): Re-Vision (first palette “Vision,” then “Revision”)

- You ever watch the same movie or read the same book twice? What did you get out of doing that?
 - Answers: you notice new things
- Vision breakdown: As poets, one of our superpowers is to notice things that others can't. We slow down time, zoom in, dissect, and notice the connections between things that some people might think have nothing to do with each other. Then we write about it to help others do the same.

- Revision breakdown: when we look closely at our own writing to find clarity of thought, get to the root of what you're trying to say, to write your favorite thing ever.

*NOTE: this palette activity was originally created by Youth Speaks alum and Oakland's own, Jade Cho.

(Optional) Individual Practice #1 (5 min): imagine you could go back in time and see (or change) an important moment in your life. What would it be? Prompt: Describe that moment for someone that wasn't there. Try to help us see it.

- Ghost:
 - *And when I opened my eyes, I saw...*
 - *Some memories smell like...*
 - *The sound of _____ filled the air...*
 - *Look!*

Vocabulary: Line (for performance) = anything you can say in one breath

Individual Practice #2 (2 min): Look back at your writing and identify your favorite line from each piece. THEN, pick your favorite one ("the hottest thing you ever wrote") and write it on the board.

(Optional) Discuss: Why is it your favorite? What do you like about it?

Secondary Texts (15 min): [Nate Marshall – Harold's Chicken Shack \(Suite\)](#)

- Context: *Nate Marshall is from Chicago. Harold's Chicken Shack is a chain of restaurants you can only find there, like In-N-Out in California. Nate wrote a suite of poems – different poems that are all inspired by the same topic. Yes, there are probably more than 86 of them. The first one is an ode/praise poem. #35 is about a part of the chicken and how it relates to him. #86 is about the name, "Harold's Chicken Shack," and how it relates to his name.*

Discussion, after each piece:

- How does it make you feel?
- What's he talking about in this piece? What else?

Vocabulary: Expand – *taking something you wrote that you like and growing it. The opposite of cutting.*

Example: Nate took Harold's Chicken Shack and expanded it into almost 100 poems. How many poems could come out of your favorite line?

(Optional) Go through each line on the board and suggest different poem ideas and prompts that could come out of it.

Individual Practice (7 min): take the hottest line you ever wrote and use it as the beginning of a new freewrite. It could be related to the original or it doesn't have to! Imagine it is a seed you are watering.

- Context: This is how I like to write my poems. I write about the same topic a bunch of times then squish them together. This is also a great way to come up with a suite of separate but related poems. Sometimes a good idea turns into a good poem. Sometimes a good idea can turn into a good book or one-person show.

Share (10 min):

- (Optional) Ask each participant, *"do you think it is something you could add into the original freewrite or is it its own poem?"*

(Optional, if time allows) Activity: try to add what you wrote back into your original piece