

National Coalition for Core Arts Standards  
Model Cornerstone Assessment  
Theatre/Visual Arts/Media Arts/Music/Dance- High School Junior and Seniors

Model Cornerstone Assessments focus on performance tasks linked to examples of student work and guidance for replicating the assessment in your own classroom.

Discipline: Theatre Arts

Artistic Processes: Creating/Performing/Responding/Connecting

Title: Acting Through Spoken Poetry

Assessment Task Description: Students will work in pairs to create a poetry recitation presentation of a chosen poem and will be assessed for physicality, vocal interpretation, dramatic investment, and mastery of the work.

Grade: 11-12

In this MCA you will find:

- Guidelines for instruction prior to the assessment
- Related knowledge, skills and suggested vocabulary
- Suggested formative assessments
- Summative assessment rubrics specific to the assessment task
- Strategies for differentiation and inclusion
- List of materials and resources needed to carry out the assessment
- Assessment focus chart

Estimate Time for Teaching and Assessment: 12 - 45 minute class periods

Strategies for Embedding Assessment within Instruction (sequences of tasks)

Task One:

1. Choose a partner.
2. Choose one of the poems (or one of your own choice) and dramatize with a partner. Be prepared to present to class.
  - a. You can work with each other online.

Poems to Dramatize

Put Something In — Shel Silverstein

Common Dust — Georgia Douglas Johnson

We Real Cool — Gwendolyn Brooks

Entropy — Mark Otuteye

Father's Child — Andolyn Brown & Mark Otuteye

Another of your choice with permission of teacher.

**Put Something In  
by Shel Silverstein**

Draw a crazy picture,  
Write a nutty poem,  
Sing a mumble-gumble song,  
Whistle through your comb.  
Do a loony-goony dance  
'Cross the kitchen floor,  
Put something silly in the world  
That ain't been there before.

Draw a crazy picture,  
Write a nutty poem,  
Sing a mumble-gumble song,  
Whistle through your comb.  
Do a loony-goony dance  
'Cross the kitchen floor,  
Put something silly in the world  
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**Common Dust****Georgia Douglas Johnson**

And who shall separate the dust  
What later we shall be:  
Whose keen discerning eye will scan  
And solve the mystery?

The high, the low, the rich, the poor,  
The black, the white, the red,  
And all the chromatique between,  
Of whom shall it be said:

Here are the sons of Africa;  
Here lies the dust of Rome;  
Here lies the one unlabeled,  
The world at large his home!

Can one then separate the dust?  
Will mankind lie apart,  
When life has settled back again  
The same as from the start?

**We Real Cool****Gwendolyn Brooks**

THE POOL PLAYERS.  
SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We  
Left school. We

Lurk late. We

Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon.

## **Entropy**

**Mark Otuteye**

I didn't know so I asked my mama.  
Mama? How come it's so much easier  
To break something apart than to build?

I see men spend years raising a skyscraper  
30 minutes to bring it down  
In twin mushroom clouds  
Of stinging concrete blast and dust

In God we trust I heard a Christian say  
Trying to sell me a sermon of salvation  
Said the devil's the reason things fall apart.

After class I asked my math + physics teacher  
Why it seems to me there be a large minus sign  
Riding on everything.

Well son, entropy is increasing exponentially  
So soon there won't be anything beautiful  
Nothing will hold together

So mama I'm confused  
And I wanna hear from you  
Why things break down and ain't beautiful  
And why evil seems to have it so easy

She said baby  
That's something you can change  
She said, that's why I had you.

**Father's Child**  
**collaboratively written and performed by**  
**Mark Otuteye and Andolyn Brown**

[I am my father's child]  
Slim waist, thick hips, dark ink finger tips  
I am the product of two parents who once tried to change the world and ended up instead [with me.]

I am [1203 Hopkins Street]  
JJ and Keita ridin'two wheelers  
Gus tryin' not to step on a crack [and break his mothers back.]

I am 1410 South Pembroke Lane.  
I am [orange sunsets] and [blue sky] thrown overhead.  
Playin' basketball till we wear out the day and the stars gotta hold up the night.

I am heated tempers after Friday night rituals. Screaming voices behind the door. Violent images of love? [I am my father's child].

I am the daughter of a garbage collector. [Hard workin' protector]. Does he love me? Who cares he took care of me to make me into who I am.  
I am my father's daughter.  
I am a poetic [organizer,] apathy [despiser,] [collective eclectic poetic rhyme synthesizer] Heating poems in heart or in hand and I work with 16 of the coolest poets [in all the land].

I am Bynum, [bindin' them together] self and song.  
I am Black [Blow.] Me and dad playin' basketball. Dad says you gotta have killer instinct. [You gotta finish.] So I give him a shake and I'm gone in a dream at the net with the wind. And one, DAD. Count THAT

SSShhhhh. I am southern towns, freshly mowed grass, finely manicured hedges, hot sun burnin' off the misty haze. I am girl scout trips, god mothers singin' hymns [on the back porch]. I am Saturday mornin' pancakes, fishin' trips [and still waters].

[I am my father's child]  
I am the product of two parents who once tried to change the world and ended up instead [with me.]





## Poetry Out Loud Scoring Rubric\*

The scoring rubric is meant to provide a consistent measure against which to evaluate recitations. It is not intended to be comprehensive but serves as a companion to the evaluation criteria. We suggest you review it before the competition to get a sense of what you should look for in individual performances.

	Weak	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent	Outstanding
<b>Physical Presence</b>	Stiff or agitated; lacks connection with audience; appears uncomfortable	Timid; unsure; body language reflects nervousness	Body language is at times unsure, at times confident	Comfortable; confident body language	Poised; body language reveals strong stage presence	Authoritative; body language shows compelling stage presence
<b>Voice and Articulation</b>	No projection; slow pace; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations	Insufficient or excessive projection; monotone; paced unevenly; affected tone	Clear, adequate intonation, even pacing	Clear, appropriate intonation and pacing	Very clear, crisp, effective use of projection, intonation, rhythm, and pacing	Very clear, crisp, mastery of rhythm and pace, skillful use of projection and intonation
<b>Dramatic Appropriateness</b>	Poem is overshadowed by excessive gestures and expressions; affected accents or inflections; acting out of poem; singing; over-emoting; inappropriate tone	Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of excessive gestures, expressions, and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone	Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery	Poem is enhanced by style of delivery; any gestures, expressions, and movement are appropriate to poem	Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; the poem's meaning is well conveyed by delivery and gestures	Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem; all gestures and movements feel essential to poem's success
<b>Evidence of Understanding</b>	Obscures meaning of poem	Doesn't sufficiently communicate meaning of poem	Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem	Conveys meaning of poem well	Interprets poem very well for audience; nuanced	Masterfully interprets poem for audience, deftly revealing poem's meaning
<b>Overall Performance</b> (Consider poem complexity in this category)	Ineffective or inappropriate; does disservice to poem	Inadequate; lackluster; does disservice to poem	Sufficient; lacks meaningful impact on audience	Enjoyable; successfully delivers poem	Inspired performance shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience's experience of the poem	Captivating performance—whole equals "more than the sum of the parts"; shows mastery of recitation skills

## Required Prior Knowledge, Skills and Vocabulary

### Toolkit for Spoken Word & Slam Poetry

**Spoken Word (n.):** A form of performance poetry that emerged in the last 1960's from the Black Arts movement. It owes its heritage most directly to the Beat Poetry of the 1950's and 1960's and the Jazz Poetry of the Harlem Renaissance (1920-1940). It calls directly upon the African American Oral Tradition for much of its aesthetic and spiritual power (Lorenzo 308).

**Slam Poetry (n.):** Spoken word poetry that fits into the aesthetic requirement of poetry slams, most notably, the three-minute time limit (Glazner 13). In this paper, the term "slam poetry" is used interchangeably with the word "slam."

**Poetry Slam (n.):** A competition of spoken word artists in which poets are judged by lay-people in the audience. Audience judges hold up cards scoring the poets from 0.0 to 10.0. Poets must perform their own work and must finish under a three minute time limit. Slam poets compete for cash (Glazner 13-14).

**Slam (n.):** A shorthand way of saying "slam poetry" or of referring to the structure, rules, and culture of poetry slams.

**Slammaster (n.):** The Master of Ceremonies at a poetry slam (Glazner 20).

**On deck (adj.):** A term from slam poetry that describes the poet who will perform after the next poet due on stage. For example, after each slam poet performs, the slammaster announces two names, the poet who is immediately next on stage, and the poet who will follow that poet in performance order. This allows the "on deck" poet time to compose him or herself and prepare for their turn on stage. The phrase is appropriated from Karaoke.

**To Kick (v.):** Appropriated from the rap music phrase "to kick a rhyme," meaning to rap. When used in this paper, "to kick" means to perform a spoken word poem.

Slam Poet (n.): Someone who writes and performs slam poetry. Like so many of the artists in the spoken word scene, slam poets often consider themselves to be both spoken word artists and social activists.

Collective (n.): A group of spoken word artists.

Piece (n.): A term borrowed from graffiti art and originally short for “masterpiece,” a piece is a written or performed poem. The terms “piece” and “poem” are used interchangeably in this paper (“Words”).

Group Piece (n.): The collaborative performance of a spoken word poem (Glazner 214). The term “group piece” is used interchangeably the term “collaborative piece.”

The Audience (n.): Those who come to see spoken word performances. Because spoken word poets perform their poetry in their own local communities, this term is sometimes used interchangeably with “community” in this paper.

Spoken Word (n.) vs. Freestyle Rap (n.): Rap is one of the four elements of hip hop culture (the others are DJ’ing, breakdancing, and graffiti art) in which a person performs poetry to music in such a way that the beat of the music forms the rhythmic pattern that his or her words fit into or onto (Rose 22). In freestyle rap, these words are created extemporaneously and fit into the rhythm of the music. In spoken word performance, even if music is involved, the words themselves constitute the rhythmic pattern. Consequently, spoken word artists are less concerned with fitting their words into or onto the rhythmic pattern of the music[1].

Spoken Word Artist (n.): A term which encompasses various types of oral performers: rappers, slammers, spoken word poets, and even some performance artists claim this title. Stanford Spoken Word Collective poets often use this term interchangeably with “spoken word poet,” “spoken word performer,” and “poet.”

To Stage (v.): As in drama, this term refers to the transitioning of a text into performance through the addition of movement, timing, and positioning of the performers.

To Cut (v.): To divide a single text into multiple voices. This is often done on computer word processors by bolding or color-coding poets’ lines.

Strategies for Inclusion (*Specially designed instruction and support for students with disabilities to provide equitable learning opportunities.*)

Differentiation Strategies (*Instructional approaches that respond to individual student needs and strengths to maximize student learning and success.*)

Resource:  
<https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/sites/default/files/Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Inclusion.pdf>

Resource:  
Scaffolding  
Choice of Resources Broken Down  
Vocabulary List  
Pairing less experienced actors with more experienced actors

Resources and materials needed *[for task implementation]*

Computers

Schoology or other learning management program

A classroom set of reproduced student tasks, checklist and rubric.

Space in which to rehearse

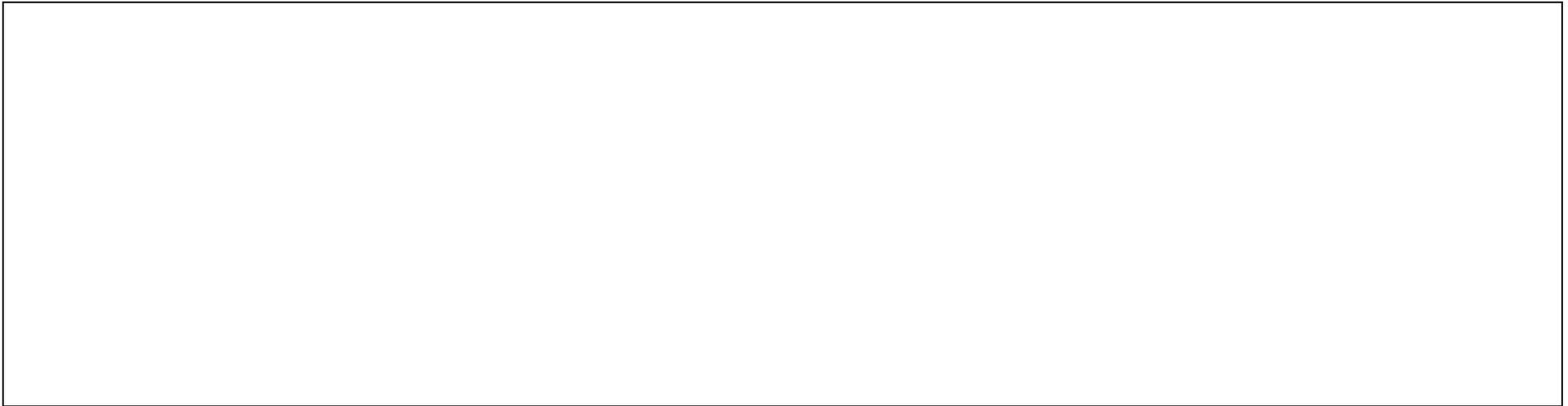
Means to video-record the presentation in one of the following formats: .mp4, .mov, .avi, wmv

Assessment Tools (rubrics or other measures used to score evidence of student's progress toward meeting the standards documented within the instructional tasks)

Final Presentation Rubric

Teacher/Peer Critique

Prior to using this Model Cornerstone Assessment (MCA), all students should have received scaffolded instruction that would prepare them to achieve proficiency in this assessment. • This Model Cornerstone Assessment may be used in a variety of ways including: lesson planning, instruction, pre- or post assessment, formative, intermediate, or summative assessment, data for professional development, or in any way that the teacher might find useful.



Assessment Focus					
(complete one row for each performance standard aligned to this MCA)					
Artistic Process (and process components)	Enduring Understanding	Essential Question	Anchor Standard	Grade Level Performance Standard	Type of Assessment Tool (e.g. checklist, teacher observation, rubric)
Rehearse	Theatre artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal.	How do theatre artists transform their initial ideas?	Refine and complete artistic work.	Demonstrate an understanding of narrative function by creating poetry performance which clearly communicate story and character.	TH:Cr3.1.III.b. Synthesize ideas from research, script analysis, and context to create a performance that is believable, authentic and relevant in a

					drama/theatre work.	
Creating	Students combine and apply artistic and reasoning skills to imagine, create, realize and refine dramatic and theatrical works in conventional and innovative ways and to understand the works produced and performed by others.	Why are strong choices essential creating a drama or theatre piece?	Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.	Work that is shared is work that can be improved upon. You need to be willing to adapt even the things you like most.	TH:Cr3.1.III.a Use physical and vocal exploration for character development in an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work.	
Responding	Artists are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics.	How can the same work of art communicate different messages to different people?	Create meaning and intent in your work.	Support and explain aesthetics, preferences and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions.	TH:Cn10.1.III.a Examine an issue through multiple perspectives in a drama/theatre work.	

Performing	Performance is Personal. Truly connecting with a character requires that we become vulnerable with these characters.	What is the process of creating my own written work? What makes slam poetry different than any other kind(s) of performance? How do I value my own performances?	Being vulnerable as a character means knowing what the character has difficulty revealing, and revealing it to the audience in a way that asks them to support you.	Being emotionally responsible while maintaining vulnerability as a performer is a difficult balance.	TH:PR6.1.11 Present a drama/theatre work using creative processes that shape the production for a specific audience	
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Benchmarked Student Work: Click on the links below to view benchmarked student work assessed using the summative rubrics contained in this MCA	
<p style="text-align: center;">ABOVE STANDARD STUDENT WORK Above Standard</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AT STANDARD STUDENT WORK At Standard</p>

NOTE: This MCA format represents an update to the [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards Model Cornerstone Assessment template](#)  
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