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
That ain’t been there before.
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 Recitation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem Title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message / Theme of Poem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Presence</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readability</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enunciation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Appropriateness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes/Comments

- [ ] 1st place
- [ ] 2nd place
- [ ] 3rd place
- [ ] Participation

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For a detailed rubric on poetry recitation, refer to the attached sheet.
# 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Presence</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stiff or agitated; lacks connection with audience; appears uncomfortable</td>
<td>Timid; unsure; body language reflects nervousness</td>
<td>Body language is at times unsure, at times confident</td>
<td>Comfortable; confident body language</td>
<td>Poised; body language reveals strong stage presence</td>
<td>Authoritative; body language shows compelling stage presence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice and Articulation</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No projection; slow pace; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations</td>
<td>Insufficient or excessive projection; monotone; paced unevenly; affected tone</td>
<td>Clear, adequate intonation and pacing</td>
<td>Very clear, crisp, effective use of projection, intonation, rhythm, and pacing</td>
<td>Very clear, crisp, mastery of rhythm and pace, skillful use of projection and intonation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatic Appropriateness</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem is overshadowed by excessive gestures and expressions; affected accents or inflections; acting out of poem; singing; over-emoting; inappropriate tone</td>
<td>Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of excessive gestures, expressions, and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone</td>
<td>Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery</td>
<td>Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; the poem’s meaning is well conveyed by delivery and gestures</td>
<td>Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem; all gestures and movements feel essential to poem’s success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of Understanding</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obscures meaning of poem</td>
<td>Doesn’t sufficiently communicate meaning of poem</td>
<td>Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem</td>
<td>Conveys meaning of poem well</td>
<td>Interprets poem very well for audience; nuanced</td>
<td>Masterfully interprets poem for audience, deftly revealing poem’s meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Performance</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective or inappropriate; does disservice to poem</td>
<td>Inadequate; lacks meaningful impact on audience</td>
<td>Sufficient; successfully delivers poem</td>
<td>Enjoyable; inspired performance shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience’s experience of the poem</td>
<td>Captivating performance—&quot;more than the sum of the parts&quot;; shows mastery of recitation skills</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Consider poem complexity in this category*
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.) |
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Focus</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(complete one row for each performance standard aligned to this MCA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artistic Process (and process components)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enduring Understanding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Essential Question</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehearse</strong></td>
<td>Theatre artists refine their work and practice their craft through rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Artists are influenced by personal experiences and aesthetics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing</td>
<td>Performance is Personal. Truly connecting with a character requires that we become vulnerable with these characters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benchmarked Student Work:** Click on the links below to view benchmarked student work assessed using the summative rubrics contained in this MCA

| ABOVE STANDARD STUDENT WORK Above Standard | AT STANDARD STUDENT WORK At Standard |

**NOTE:** This MCA format represents an update to the [National Coalition for Core Arts Standards Model Cornerstone Assessment template](http://www.nationalcoalitionforcoreartsstandards.org/) Copyright © 2013 State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) on behalf of NCCAS. All rights reserved.