

# Lesson Plan

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**Grade Level:**  
9-12



## "Metaphor, Microphones, Poetry Out Loud!" Curriculum Outline

**Scope**  
Number of sessions:  
5

Time of sessions:  
45 minutes

NCTE Standards:  
1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10,  
11, 12

### Classroom Sessions

#### Session #1

*Discussion: Overview of Poetry Out Loud, History, Goals (5 min.)*

A brief description of the history and mission of the Poetry Out Loud Organization will be presented.

#### Key points:

- The benefactor's grant;
- National Endowment for the Arts;
- Poetry Foundation;
- State Arts Agencies;
- In 2006-07 >100,000 students participated;
- Helps master public speaking skills, self-confidence, learn literary heritage;
- Poetry/Slam is competitive, POL is a competition;
- Assimilation and imprinting through memorization and recitation.

#### *Discussion: Introduction to Voice and Presence (8 min.)*

A basic presentation will be conducted of the elements and mechanics of voice and body conveying the power to command an audience. Demonstrate examples of posture, stance, upper torso, dealing with your hands, vocal projection into the audience, clarity, focus, and intensity through the use of power and negative space (the intensity of quiet and broadened tempo).

Ask, watch any politician, what differentiates them from others? (Command of themselves and their audience's attention.)

**MUST PRACTICE !!!**

Iowa Poetry Out Loud



A Division of the Iowa  
Department of Cultural Affairs

[www.iowaartscouncil.org](http://www.iowaartscouncil.org)

*Group Discussion: Introduction to the Creative Process (it is truly Magic !) (7 min.)*

Students will learn a process of literary creativity from a presentation of concepts that will enable the individual to tap into their creative potential through external, formulaic means. Through relaxation exercises and attentiveness to the inner voice; through techniques of visualization and use of media texts; by invoking mantras and “bursts of meditation.” Editing of session-derived content (on-the-spot poetry developed during the discussion) will be conducted in a spontaneous, adaptive manner.

Questions: What inspires you? What do you admire in others? Do you keep a journal? Do you write and then edit? Do you never edit?

*Group Discussion: Poem Deconstruction (20 min.)*

Students will participate in a group discussion using a poem from the Poetry Out Loud anthology as an integrated text.

Topic: Research Joy Harjo through Google, Wikipedia, bookstore, [www.joyharjo.com](http://www.joyharjo.com); elemental deconstruction of *Eagle Poem*.

(Homework: students should review Poetry Out Loud handbook for poems to select)

(Homework: students should research Joy Harjo and *Eagle Poem*)

Session #2

Review: Basic elements from Session #1 (2 min.)

Principles of Deconstruction, the creative process, voice and presence as introduced on day #1 will be applied here in a workshop format.

Questions: What poem is right for me? What is its message? What is its impact? How does it speak to me? Can I convey its message to others?

Workshop: Poem selection from the Poetry Out Loud anthology (12 min.)

Students will focus on the selection process of the poetry available in the Poetry Out Loud anthology.

Workshop: Stage Presence (15m)

A coaching workshop will be conducted where students recite a selected poem and receive instant, constructive feedback on presentation style; integrity of the poem by their interpretation (understanding of the poem and appropriate dramatization or not); physical presence; voice and articulation. Emphasis will be placed upon stage presence and impact as described in the “voice and presence” discussion of Session #1.

Creative Development: The Blackbox Visualization Technique (10 min.)

The Blackbox technique is a visualization technique that requires an imaginary blackbox for each student from which will be extracted objects they visualize with closed eyes: a typewriter, a car, a cat, a paper plate - each object is recorded in a list on a piece of paper. At the end of the visualization, the blackbox is discarded and the students use their list of found objects as subject elements in a poem they will create.

All students and the facilitator sit around a table or at their desks, close their eyes and imagine a black box in front of them. The idea is to empty the mind and open oneself up to free-thought; to imagine something inside the box, anything, any size. Once an object is identified the student pulls it from the box with their hand and places it on the desk in front of them. The student then opens their eyes to write down the object and begin again with the imaginative play. Five or six items should be identified in this manner.

At the end of this technique each student should have a sufficient abstraction of working elements to creatively build metaphor or guiding objects within a poem.

Close: Crowd Outloud Haiku (1 min.)

Crowd Outloud Haiku is a closing affirmation in reciting a selected haiku spoken in unison. One last minute to loosen up and break away with a good feeling.

Crowd Outloud Haiku is a chant or mantra technique for community, for the entire class to build a team rapport. All students stand in a circle before leaving the classroom and repeat in unison the haiku that the facilitator recites. The session then ends.

(Homework: review poems for selection)

### Session #3

Review: Basic elements from Session #2 (2 min.)

Review the elements from the Stage Presence workshop. Review the Blackbox visualization technique.

*Group Discussion: Poem Selection and Performance (25 min.)*

Students will participate in an open discussion of the poem review process to reinforce bridge-building criteria that will provide a pathway to poems that can relate to real life contexts.

The discussion will revolve around the poem as an outgrowth of the student's personality. To connect to a poem and speak to the poet's intent, an individual needs some basis, something in the poem to relate to. The poem selection process can take the student beyond simple research and become a journey of personal growth.

Workshop: Creative Imagery for a Dramatic Poem (12 min.)

Random Word Selections is an alternative to the Blackbox technique using readily-available real-world texts to provide words and ideas to a new poem. Its approach is different from the Blackbox however, in that it relies upon an external vocabulary builder (a newspaper or magazine) to incite fresh ideas and provide unique word associations.

All students and the facilitator will sit around a table or at their desks and review newspaper headlines, looking for juxtapositions, contradictions and uniqueness. Each writes notes on a separate piece of paper and uses these notes as material to generate new ideas and a poem. Students share their lists and poems out loud at the end of the workshop.

Close: Crowd Outloud Haiku. 1m

(Homework: memorize one stanza of selected poem)

#### Session #4

Review basic elements from Session #3 (2 min.)

A review from Session #3 will be conducted; including the relevancy and understanding of the poem selection process, and the utilization of a random word selector.

Alter-Ego Poetry Performance (6 min.)

Alter-Ego Poetry Performance is a freeform creative activity that emphasizes and strengthens a reader's immersion in a poem, and sensitizes each reader to the multiple voices a poem might have. This is an opening to the inner voice of the poem and ultimately, the poet. The technique uses a point/counterpoint recitation of a poem. The student will gain awareness of multiple voices within a poem through sharing the recitation process with another student. Poem used will be *Eagle Poem* by Joy Harjo.

Each student will pair up with another reading partner to read *Eagle Poem* by Joy Harjo. Students will be given queues by the facilitator to double-up the recitation, adding emphasis and depth to the poem. The doubling of the recitation is an imprinting technique in gauging meter and performance volume.

Workshop: Vocal Performance and Stage Presence (31 min.)

This activity is a workshop that builds upon the Session #3 discussion: Poem Selection and Performance. Using a poem from which the students have memorized one stanza, emphasis is upon performance and stage presence with real-time coaching and feedback.

Students will recite memorized stanzas from a selected poem and receive feedback from the facilitator. Emphasis is placed upon the performance and interpretation of the poem and the truth of the poet's message. Aspects of stage presence as presented in prior sessions will be reviewed and reinforced as appropriate.

Close with a Crowd Outloud Haiku (1 min.)

(Homework: Continue to memorize selected poem, fine tune based upon today's feedback.)

#### Session #5

Class performance of one stanza from a selected poem (39 min.)

Using equipment brought in by the poet/facilitator, students will have the opportunity for an in-class performance of their selected poem with microphones and amplification.

The microphone, stand and amplifier will be placed in one corner of the classroom and each student will recite a memorized (hopefully!) poem or stanzas from a poem.

Realtime open-class evaluation follows each performance.

Close with a Crowd Outloud Haiku. (1 min.)