



## Exploring Spoken Word: Post Viewing Lesson

**Grade Level:** 3-6

**Student Learning Objective(s):** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify elements of and create a piece of Spoken Word Poetry.

**Supplies Needed:**

- Writing utensils
- Paper
- Alternatively an electronic device
- Journal
- Handout with Sentence Frames
- Stock Images

**California Arts Standards Addressed:**

3.TH:Pr6	4.TH:Pr6	5.TH:Pr6	6.TH:Re7
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**Common Core Standards Addressed:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.D	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1.C	CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.C

**Step by Step Directions for Teacher**

**Warm Up:**

- Ask students to write in their journal a memorable moment or idea that they took away from watching PICK ME LAST. Have a few students share their ideas out to the class.

**Group Work:**

- Assign students into groups of 2-3 and share the stock photos (on page 3). Ask the students in their groups to discuss: what assumptions can you make about that person's mood or personality? Have them notice facial expressions, body language, clothing, and environment. Have a few groups share out for each photo.

- Explain to students that often time people make assumptions without knowing the full story or the whole truth. But if we could tell them how we truly feel, what would we say, and how would we say it? How would/could you tell someone that you are proud to be you in all of the ways that you identify? How can you tell the world or the person sitting beside you that you are not the problem, but maybe the problem lies with the society that perpetuates the problem?

**Exploration:**

- Write the “Spoken Word” on the board and provide students with 1 minute to write down what they think this means. Allow for 2-3 students to share out their responses.
- Watch the a Spoken Word video from this list:
- [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVu8Tlf\\_SXmBrwM83DH5S7DX1JC6IEFmh](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVu8Tlf_SXmBrwM83DH5S7DX1JC6IEFmh)  
(Transcripts of each piece are at the end of the lesson plan.)
- As you watch the video have the following questions displayed for students to answer
  - What is the speaker feeling and how do you know?
  - Why do you think this speaker is doing this poem?
  - What is the message the speaker is trying to get across?
  - How did it make you feel?
- Ask students after viewing the spoken word piece to rewrite their definition of Spoken Word. Ask: Did your definition change? Allow for students to come to the realization that Spoken Word is someone's TRUTH. Draw connections between poetry that is written to be spoken and poetry that is written to be read.
- Ask students and make a web of their responses: What are some things about our society or world that you want to improve? What are some things that you think students/teens need that they aren't getting?
- Hand out to students the handout, SPOKEN WORD--SENTENCE FRAMES (page 4) and give them time to craft their own Spoken Word Poems
- For students that are feeling like they want to share, organize an Open Mic at the end of class or for the next class where students share the poems they created.

**Closure:**

- Ask students to think about how art can be used to help share important issues in our culture. Have them think about a tv show, movie, song, etc that helps to convey and important issue. They can journal or share out loud to a partner or the class.

Stock Photos



## Spoken Word - Sentence Frames

Prompt	Your Response	Image
<b>I see...</b> <i>(name an issue affecting the world, society, our country, our school, or young people)</i>		
<b>Why...</b> <i>(ask a question about how the issue was created, how it still remains, or hasn't been changed yet)</i>		
<b>I don't understand...</b> <i>(what's confusing about the issue you chose?)</i>		
<b>I notice...</b> <i>(how does the issue affect others?)</i>		
<b>It makes me...</b> <i>(how does the issue make you feel or react?)</i>		
<b>It doesn't make sense how...</b> <i>(what's another thing that's confusing or unfair about the issue you're writing about?)</i>		
<b>I wish...</b> <i>(what do you think people should do to fix or help?)</i>		
<b>We need...</b> <i>(what do you think we need to do as a society, country, school, or community?)</i>		
<b>I hope...</b> <i>(What do you hope will happen in the future?)</i>		
<b>We can...</b> <i>(what do you think we can do as a community, society, or school to improve things?)</i>		
<b>We will...</b> <i>(what do you think your community, school or society will do to improve things?)</i>		
<b>Because we...</b> <i>(why do you think they'll improve?)</i>		

## Why Am I Not Good Enough?

1. Take a shower you don't want to smell.
2. Pick out an outfit that will blend in with the latest trends and won't make you a laughing stock of the school more than you already are
3. Put on some makeup so you can't even recognize yourself and your face tingles with an unbelievable issue. You can't satisfy otherwise you'll have ruined the hours of meticulous painting you apply to your face.
4. Don't forget to style your hair in elegant curls. You can't let everyone at school see how your hair frizzes up.
- 5 shove your feet into those toe pinching blood blistering converse that everyone at school is wearing. You cannot be the odd one out.

As you gaze into the bathroom mirror you see a stranger that somehow stole your reflection and replaced it with a completely different girl. Every part of your outfit is uncomfortable but even though you spend hours trying to look pretty you will never be as good as those other girls at school.

You are actually holding back a few tears but you feel like you are holding back a tsunami of emotion, you can't let anyone else know what you feel otherwise they will never respect you the same way they used to. Or did they ever? Why am I not good enough?

6. get off the bus.
7. Find a group of people you can walk to class with because heaven knows you can't just walk alone but you don't even like these people. They laugh and make fun of you. You know you shouldn't hang out with them but hey, they are the popular kids and you just want people to like you like they like them.

You are in the stocks as people throw judging tomatoes and hating heads of lights at your insecure little head you cannot stand up for yourself because you are alone trapped and defenseless and you cannot stand up for yourself because these popular kids are like the royalty of the school and apparently what they say and do goes.

You take each comment, each judgement, each assumption, each opinion, each strange look, each remark, each criticism, each review, each report, each assessment, and with it your self esteem plummets like a sinking ship. Down down down into the dark and dreary depths below.

You look at all the other girls your mind racing a mile a minute I wish I had her eyes, I wish I had her hair, I wish I was as skinny as her, I wish I had her perfectly straight white teeth, I wish that I had her social confidence, I wish as many boys like me as they liked her, why am I not good enough?

Your peers jealousy is a pollution that prevents a rainbow, the bulldozer that plows through the fields of once golden daisies the intangible objects that crushes your happiness like a bug. A's are getting you nothing but torment. Why am I not good enough?

I've been told I can't compare apples and oranges, I've been told I'm distorted. I've been told I have to be grateful for who I am but going through your middle school years you are on your own journey. To find yourself on a small jet where sometimes you cannot control what happens to you, the turbulence will throw you off course.

You tell yourself I just want people to like me, I just want to be accepted but skipping meals and marking up your wrist isn't going to fix that. you look at other girls wishing you were them but other girls are looking at you wishing they were you.

Society infers girls have to have skinny waists, tan skin, long silky hair, perfectly straight teeth, big butts, and etc.. Society infers girls have to wear tons of makeup to be pretty. Society infers girls have to wear skanky clothing and do inappropriate things with boys to be happy and considered cool.

But society is wrong you are loved, you are precious, you are beautiful, you are talented, you are capable, you are deserving of respect, you can eat that meal, you are one in seven billion and most of all you are good enough.

We pledge allegiance to your flag,  
of the United States of America,  
and to your Republic, for which it stands,  
one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and  
justice for who? For you? For some? Not for  
us! Not for our people, so please stop  
saying we equal which you're a flag of  
red white and blue in one hand you beat  
us and to wear black and blue with the  
other beat us and to wear none beat us  
until we can't walk straight then you  
put us in Chains if you're lucky but for  
the ones of us who are so lucky you tell  
us to put our hands up some cyclists a  
tribute to your privilege and then you  
pull the trigger pull the trigger into  
our bodies laid down on your ground pull  
the trigger into your Clippers empty  
pull the trigger until we make your  
evening news and then when our children  
cry we have to look our children in the  
eyes and tell them that they have to be

cautious that when they walk your  
streets they have to do so in fear that  
they have to spend an entirety of their  
life looking over their shoulder because  
you will hunt them down and you will  
bury them either in a prison system that  
aims to disenfranchise them where the  
dirt beneath their feet and this is all  
because of that same racism that you  
love to say no longer exist but we all  
know that that same racism is the reason  
that when we want to put a hood on we  
resist the reason that when we go to get  
these jobs we're dismissed at the door,  
the reason that when we go to shop, we're watching  
your stores that racism is the reason  
that us and your pledge of allegiance  
feels a lot like a root canal or whips  
impact that gets our flesh or baton to  
our head or a bullet in our back or tear  
gas and a black lives matter protest  
that racism is the reason that three



women clinched their purses as I walk  
through the entrance of this very  
building it hurts that I have to  
remember that the system I was born into  
his bill to work against me hearse that  
I have to remember hers that I have to  
remember  
Hurts that I had hearse that I actually  
have to remember that you will happily  
invest more money into the preservation  
of Wildlife  
then you ever willing to the  
preservation of black life let me ask  
all the question when y'all turn on your  
TVs and witness another black bunny lay  
down your concrete what do y'all see  
another murder, another sad story, another  
funeral, do you see the aftermath? I see a  
little child that lost their father  
another single woman trying to raise a  
man another broken home which leads to  
another child that grows up and suffers

the same fate as their father which  
means another black woman that outlives  
her adolescent son in this country right  
this is a culture that lacks equal  
rights for blacks and we love to say  
that black don't crack me while y'all  
shadow or melanin like glass my bag  
breaks for everybody you let our feet  
for every memory I try to be erased  
within your war zones it's like nice  
rebuilding my PTSD is on this way to the  
surface and my hate for this country  
reminds me that I'm for from patriotic  
so it's a little ironic that I, pledge  
allegiance, to your flag, of the United  
States of America, and to your Republic,  
for which it stands, one nation, under God,  
indivisible, with liberty and justice for  
who?

-Ronald Vinson

Hair by Elizabeth Acevedo

My mother tells me to fix my hair. And by “fix,” she means straighten. She means whiten. But how do you fix this ship-wrecked history of hair? The true meaning of stranded, when trusses held tight like African cousins in ship bellies, did they imagine that their great grand-children would look like us, and would hate them how we do? Trying to find ways to erase them out of our skin, iron them out of our hair, this wild tangle of hair that strangles air. You call them wild curls. I call them breathing. Ancestors spiraling. Can’t you see them in this wet hair that waves like hello? They say Dominicans can do the best hair. I mean they wash, set, flatten the spring in any loc – but what they mean is we’re the best at swallowing amnesia, in a cup of [Spanish], dreaming because we’d rather do that than live in this reality, caught between orange juice and milk, between reflections of the sun and whiteness. What they mean is, “Why would you date a black man?” What they mean is, “[Spanish]” What they mean is, “Why would two oppressed people come together? It’s two times the trouble.” What they really mean is, “Have you thought of your daughter’s hair?” And I don’t tell them that we love like sugar cane, brown skin, pale flesh, meshed in pure sweetness. The children of children of fields. Our bodies curve into one another like an echo, and I let my curtain of curls blanket us from the world, how our children will be beautiful. Of dust skin, and diamond eyes. Hair, a reclamation. How I will break pride down their back so from the moment they leave the womb they will be born in love with themselves. Momma that tells me to fix my hair, and so many words remain unspoken. Because all I can reply is, “You can’t fix what was never broken.”

## Knock Knock ~Daniel Beaty

As a boy I shared a game with my father. Played it every morning 'til I was 3.  
He would knock knock on my door, and I'd pretend to be asleep  
'til he got right next to the bed, Then I would get up and jump into his arms.  
"Good morning, Papa." And my papa he would tell me that he loved me. We shared  
a game. Knock knock.

Until that day when the knock never came and my momma takes me on a ride past  
corn fields on this never ending highway 'til we reach a place of high rusty gates.  
A confused little boy, I entered the building carried in my mama's arms. Knock  
knock. We reach a room of windows and brown faces behind one of the windows  
sits my father. I jump out of my mama's arms and run joyously towards my papa  
Only to be confronted by this window. I knock knock trying to break through the  
glass, trying to get to my father. I knock knock as my mama pulls me away  
before my papa even says a word.

And for years he never said a word. And so twenty-five years later, I write these  
words for the little boy in me who still awaits his papa's knock.

Papa, come home 'cause I miss you. I miss you waking me up in the morning and  
telling me you love me. Papa, come home, 'cause there's things I don't know, and I  
thought maybe you could teach me. how to shave; how to dribble a ball; how to  
talk to a lady; how to walk like a man. Papa, come home because I decided a  
while back I wanted to be just like you. But I'm forgetting who you are.

And twenty-five years later a little boy cries, and so I write these words and try  
to heal and try to father myself and I dream up a father who says the words my  
father did not.

Dear Son,

I'm sorry I never came home. For every lesson I failed to teach, hear these words:  
Shave in one direction in strong deliberate strokes to avoid irritation  
Dribble the page with the brilliance of your ballpoint pen. Walk like a god and  
your goddess will come to you. No longer will I be there to knock on your door, So  
you must learn to knock for yourself.

Knock knock down doors of racism and poverty that I could not. Knock knock down  
doors of opportunity for the lost brilliance of the black men who crowd these cells.  
Knock knock with diligence for the sake of your children.

Knock knock for me for as long as you are free, these prison gates cannot contain  
my spirit. The best of me still lives in you. Knock knock with the knowledge that  
you are my son, but you are not my choices.

Yes, we are our fathers' sons and daughters, but we are not their choices. For  
despite their absences we are still here. Still alive, still breathing  
with the power to change this world, one little boy and girl at a time.

Knock knock  
Who's there?  
We are