Teacher Resource

Slam Poetry

EPISODE 68
25th November 2026

KEY LEARNING
Students will explore what slam poetry is, including its history.

CURRICULUM
English – Year 7
English – Year 10
Drama - Years 9 and 10

Examples:

English - Year 7 (v9.0)
English - Year 10 (v9.0)
English - Year 10 (v9.0)
Drama – Years 7 and 8 (v9.0)
Drama - Years 9 and 10 (v9.0)

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN High story as a class and record the main points of discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What is slam poetry?
2. Why do you think Arantza describes slam poetry as “more accessible” than poetry that students normally read in class?
3. What do the poetry movements described in the story (Jazz Poetry, Beat Poetry and the Black Arts Movement and Slam Poetry) have in common?
4. Describe the impact and intention of this line in Arantza’s poem: *"Listen to her heartbeat, and to pour that oil until I can no longer hear her pulse."* Why does Michelle find it moving? What does it reveal about how family traditions are passed down?
5. What do you think the intention of Blake’s poem is?
6. Compare Arantza’s poem about family and cultural heritage with Blake’s poem about AI and schoolwork.

Activities

- **Slam Poetry Timeline:** Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one era mentioned in the story:

  1920s: *Jazz Poetry (Harlem Renaissance)*
  1950s: *Beat Poetry (post-WWII protest)*
  1960s: *The Black Arts Movement (civil rights & advocacy)*
  1970s: *Early Rap & Hip-Hop*
  1984–Today: *Chicago’s first Poetry Slam to modern digital/viral slam poetry*

  Each student researches one key poet/artist from their era, finds a short age-appropriate quote or rhythm example and presents a 2-minute summary explaining what artists were expressing at the time and how their artist fits into the movement.

- **Sensory Poem Writing:** Inspired by Arantza’s poem about her mother cooking, students write a short performance poem (8-12 lines) built around a family ritual, meal or everyday memory.

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- **From Page To Stage:** In pairs or small groups, students take a traditional written poem (such as a short sonnet, a ballad or a classic poem studied in class) and transform it into a slam poetry performance by analysing the meaning of the poem, changing its language and pace to suit a live performance. Ask students to print their poem double-spaced and annotate it with performance cues:

  // *= Dramatic pause (let a big line sink in)*
  UPPERCASE *= Louder volume or sharp vocal punch*
  [whisper] *= Drop your voice to pull the audience in*
  >>> *= Speed up to build excitement or urgency*

  Perform the piece in front of the class (or record it on a tablet), then discuss how changing the delivery altered the poem's mood and meaning compared to reading it silently.

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