

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

Hip Hop Poetry

Artist: Stacy “Reach” Smith

Workshop Description

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How powerful are your words? Words build empires and destroy civilizations. Words from the tongue of a loving parent can help heal the saddened heart of a child; words from the mouth of an angry sibling can cut to the core of the soul. Words shape opinion and policy and simply help us make day-to-day decisions about life. Words are the most essential tool for effective communication and the way we combine our words will make you a hip hop poet.

Learn to become a hip hop poet with Stacy “Reach” Smith, winner of the Next Up contest (a national Rap talent search) sponsored by Toyota Scion. Reach will frame his lesson by introducing students to the pioneers of the art form in an audio/video presentation which explores the social conditions in

which the art form was birthed and evolved.

He will also perform one of his signature poems and define the elements that make a good slam poem. As students complete instructional writing and performance exercises, they will develop a fundamental knowledge of theatre arts, public speaking, and creative writing, combined into a fun and exciting display of hip-hop filled def poetry.



Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Receive instruction and structure that will allow them to explore, discover, and develop their individual voice as a writer and speaker
- Conceive, write, and refine a short story/poem which they will share before their peers

Behavioral Studies:

- Knows how a culture’s rules reflect its values and beliefs

Language Arts:

- Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas

Special Points of Interest:

While the origin of the spoken word may spark heated debate within poetic circles, it is with little debate that the credit for poetry slams belong solely to Marc Smith.

Special REQUIREMENTS:

paper pad and pen for each student

Artist Bio: Stacy “Reach” Smith

Reach, born Stacy D. Smith, hails from Kansas City, Mo. Five short years after being introduced to Hip-Hop culture Reach began writing and reciting rhymes at the tender age of thirteen. After nearly a decade of honing and perfecting his craft he helped to form a local independent Rap label, Kingdome Records. In 2003, he began a blistering campaign to garner exposure with a brief stint on a national tour (2003 Vans Warped Tour) and a self-released EP in the summer of 2003. Reach released his

debut album, *Joys, Disappointments & The In-Between.*, in the Fall of 2004. In 2005 he was named the winner of the Scion Next Up contest (a national Rap talent search) sponsored by Toyota Scion. In the Summer of 2008 he was named the 2008 Pitch Music Award winner in the Hip Hop category. Reach has taught for the Ewing Kauffman Foundation’s Youth Leadership Workshop, and conducted a 6 week Hip Hop residency through UMKC’s Upward Bound



Stacy Smith

Vocabulary

Pronunciation: The way a word or language is customarily spoken

Enunciation: To articulate; pronouncing with clarity

Projection: The acoustic phenomenon that gives sound a penetrating quality

Emphasis: Prominence given to a syllable, word, or words, as by raising the voice

Body Language: The gestures, postures, and facial expressions by which a person manifests various physical, mental, emotional states and communicates nonverbally with others

Spoken Word: Spoken word is po-

etry written first and foremost to be HEARD. It puts a dual emphasis on writing and performance, encouraging poets to focus on what they’re saying and how they’re saying it.

Poetry Slam: The competitive art of performance poetry

Consequence: The seen or unseen result that naturally follows every thought, statement, deed, or condition.

Perform: To portray a role or demonstrate a skill before an audience

Tone: The quality or character of sound

Range: The gamut of tones that a voice is capable of producing.

List of Resources

MUSIC

Our Souls Have Grown Deep Like The Rivers; Rhino Entertainment Co.
ISBN 0-7379-0062

BOOKS

Bumrush The Page: A Def Poetry Jam
Publisher: Three Rivers Press 10/01
ISBN: 0609808400

VIDEO

Slam Nation starring: Saul Williams; directed by Paul Devlin
The phenomenon of the poetry slam originated in Chicago in the 1980s, where young writers would perform their verses in competitive form at bars and coffeehouses before a live audience.

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Hold a Q&A session similar to Reach’s, where students respond with voice and performance elements. For example, ask a student to show the manner in which he/she might stand and speak to express vulnerability or anger. Then ask other students to explain how effective he/she was and how they might improve. Ask the students to identify those whose presentation came across clearest, and why.
2. Conduct an open-mic poetry reading so that the students can share what they wrote in the workshop.
3. Have the students publish a body of student poems that can be shared with the school as well as their friends and family.

