Concept of performance poem (your message):

Tell a story about you: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when your belief formed, or was tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

Be brief: Your statement should be between 500 and 600 words. That's about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

Name your belief: If you can't name it in a sentence or two, your essay/poem might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your poem about you; speak in the first person.

Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your poem aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

Framework (types of performance poems):

- I bet poem:
    - Think about a target. Someone or something that bugs you. A bully, an adult, an ex-friend, the media parked outside AHS, racism, sexism, etc. Then write to someone who represents that target. Begin each line with "I bet…"
        - For example, if I wrote to people who disrespect teachers, I might say...

"I bet you think I'm lazy just because I'm a teacher and I get the summers off.
I bet you think there was nothing else in the world that I could do as a career…"
and so on. Try to get at least 10 "I bet" statements, and then conclude the poem.

- Honest poem

- Rock Out poem: "Direct Orders"- *controversial*

    - similes about exuberance

- Open Letter to myself:

    - write a letter to yourself dated 5, 10 or 15 years from now

    - write a letter to yourself dated 5, 10 or 15 years in the past

- Instructional Manual for life:

    - numbered list of how to live your life with examples to support

- Three:

    - three best moments, three worst moments, three things you want to be, three best pieces of advice, three best memories, three worst memories, three symbols

Performances:

- **Choose a subject and have attitude.** No attitude, no poem! Feelings and opinions give poetry its "richness." Each poet has a unique perspective and view of the world that no one else has. It is important that a spoken word poem embodies the courage necessary to share one's self with the rest of the world. The key here is to build confidence. We must acknowledge ourselves as writers and understand what we have to say is important. Practice. Practice. Practice.
- **Pick your poetic devices**. Poems that get attention are the ones that incorporate simple, but powerful poetic elements. Repetition is a device that can help a writer generate exciting poems with just repeating a key phrase or image. Rhyming can enrich your diction and performance. (Check out other poetic devices while you're at it.)
- **Performance.** Spoken word poems are written to be performed. After your poem is written, practice performing the poem with the elements of good stage presence in mind. It is important to maintain *Eye Contact* – Don't stare at the floor. From time to time, look into the eyes of people in the audience to capture their attention. *Projection* is also crucial, so remember to speak loudly and clearly so that your voice can be heard from a distance. *Enunciation* helps the listeners to hear exactly what you say. Don't mumble. Speak clearly and distinctly so that the audience can understand what you are saying. *Facial Expressions* help animate your poem. You're not a statue: smile if you're performing something happy. Look angry if your poem is about anger. This might sound silly, but using the appropriate facial expressions help express various emotions in your

performance. *Gestures* such as hand motions and body movements emphasize different elements of your performance. Choose the right gestures for your poem.

- **Memorization.** Once you've memorized your spoken word piece, you can devote more time to your performance. Memorization allows you to be truly in touch with the meaning and the emotional content of your poem, even if you forget a word or a line you can improvise (freestyle), which is one of the most important elements of spoken word.
- **Time**: 3:10 (yes, three minutes, 10 seconds)
- **Power Poetry.** Spoken word must be, well, spoken.

Examples of Spoken Word Poetry:

- Honest Poem: by Rudy Francisco

- Totally Like Whatever, You Know?: by Taylor Mali

- Rock out poem: by Anis Mojgani. Be aware of profanity at beginning

- If I had a Daughter: by Sarah Kay. Watch for performance elements

- Pass On: by Michael Lee. Watch for multi media elements; performance elements

- Complainers: by Rudy Francisco. Watch for performance, tone of voice, repetition

- Shake the Dust: by Anis Mojgani (some controversial elements)- Notice repetitive structure.

- TED spoken word examples (various poets)

- An Origin Story: by Sarah Kay and Phil Kaye

- For Emmett Till: by Dominique Christina (historical

Compilation of work from Alex Spare, PowerPoetry.org, and This I Believe

No poet will ever take the written word as a substitute for the spoken word; he knows that it is on the spoken word, and the spoken word only, that his art is founded.

(Lascelles Abercrombie)

izquotes.com

Performance Presentation Rubric

Spoken Word Poem

Content (message): (80)

_____Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be _real_. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

_____Name your belief: If you can't name it in a sentence or two, your poem might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

_____Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your poem about you; speak in the first person.

_____Be personal: Written in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your poem aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

Presentation: (80)

_____ Organization--Use an organizational strategy to keep your presentation on track without reading from notes or the screen. Include an effective attention getter and conclusion

_____ Poetic Devices--Use repetition, rhyming, or other poetic devices to enhance your diction and performance.

_____ Physical Presence--Make **eye contact** with audience. Project and enunciate your words. Use facial expressions and hand gestures to emphasize key points.

_____ Memorization--In order to perform your poem, you have to memorize it. In order to show the richness of your poem you have to show passion and attitude. Care about what you are saying and show us why you care.

**_____ You are not allowed to miss on your assigned presentation day!

Visual: (20)

_____Background appropriate for content- enhances message

_____Supports poem content and sentiment

_____Clear and readable

Time: (20)

_____ Must be around 3:00 minutes in length. Your statement should be between 500-600 words. That's about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

TOTAL:_____/200