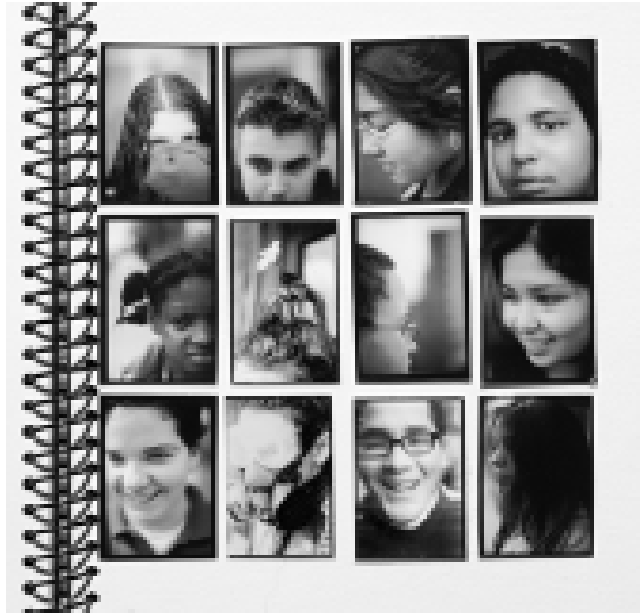


New Urban Arts



Poetry Workshop Planning Guide for Youth Mentors



New Urban Arts
Poetry Workshop Planning Guide
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author’s Note 3

Interview with Youth Mentor from New Urban Arts 4

Section 1: Youth Mentor Training and Orientation 5

 Youth Mentor Training Agenda 6

 Building a Learning Community 8

 Documentation and Evaluation 9

 Youth Mentor Agreement Form 10

Section 2: Youth Mentor Workshop Planning Guide 11

 Orientation 12

 Workshop structure 13

 Worksheet Planning Worksheets 14

 Warm Up Games 19

 Freewriting 21

 Writing Activities 23

 Journal Writing Questions 30

 Resources for Young Writers 31

Author's Note:

This Poetry Workshop Planning Guide was created as a resource for high school students who attend New Urban Arts, an afterschool arts studio for youth in Providence, RI. Through Afterzone, a new initiative of the Providence Afterschool Alliance (PASA) 4 active writers at New Urban Arts were selected to mentor Junior High students in developing a writing practice once a week after school for six months.

The rationale for creating this document was to provide Youth Mentors with structure and support, while also allowing them to find their own teaching style. Rather than devise a strict curricula for the program, New Urban Arts decided to uphold its arts mentoring model in which educators do not abide by formulaic teaching methods. The role of Artist Mentor is based on the belief that self directed learning is most effective in sustaining a creative practice, and is best supported through building a relationship with a mentor that encourages, challenges, and guides the student. This youth-led, relationship based approach to arts education serves New Urban Arts mission.

The Poetry Workshop Planning Guide exists within a "choose your own adventure" framework, in which Youth Mentors can choose and adapt freewriting prompts or writing activities to their liking. This gives young people the support they need to be successful, while also ownership in the workshops that they are leading.

The exercises compiled were inspired by various resources including writing workshops at New Urban Arts led by Artist Mentor Erica Carpenter, *The Adventures of Dr. Alphabet* by Dave Morice, *Unusual Ways to Write Poetry in the Classroom & the Community* by Michael Rohd, *Theater for Community Conflict and Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual* by Michael Rohd, *Third Mind: Creative Writing through Visual Art* edited by Tonya Foster & Kristin Prevallet, *Poetry for the People* by June Jordan, and *Young Chicago Authors' Say What Magazine*. Let us know if you feel a resource has not been credited. Note: Creative license was used with poetic terminology.

This manual has been developed by New Urban Arts' Program Director, Sarah Meyer, in cooperation with the following students: Rosa Cantor, Mary Adewusi, Pedro Gonzalez, and Elizabeth Keith, as well as the Executive Director, Tyler Denmead. Check back to www.newurbanarts.org for progress on this and other projects' implementation and please send your feedback to info@newurbanarts.org.

The following is an interview with Mary Adewusi, 16, Youth Mentor, about her role and experience leading a project through the support of this guide.

Can you tell me what you are doing as a part of this program?

We go to the YMCA and we do exercises with middle school kids to help them grow in their writing process and as poets.

What is your role?

I am there to listen and give positive feedback on their writing. You cannot become a great poet if everybody is telling you bad things all the time. Where are you going to get the confidence?

Can you give an example of an exercise you have led?

We recently did "I remember." The students write a line that begins with "I remember" for each year of their age. So, if they are 12, they write a 12-line poem. One student began with "I remember being scared watching Superman." Another started with "I remember spending time with my grandmother." They come up with great ideas and stories. It's so great to hear what they have to say. There is so much meaning. If you don't ask, you wouldn't know though.

You have been a mentee in our programs for a couple of years, and now you are a mentor. What perspective have you gained from mentoring?

I have gained even more respect for the mentors here. I do not ever want to say the wrong thing to the students. They are in middle school and if you say the wrong thing, they could be scarred for life. When someone says something negative, that's what sticks. Mentors here have never said the wrong thing to me. Never. They are always positive and it always feels like the right response. That's amazing. Mentors here are making a choice too when they do it. That's what I never realized. They are choosing to do and say positive things.

Tell me about "Respect the Poet."

All these kids have great stories about their days... lives... There came a point when everyone was adding in though at the same time. We introduced "Respect the Poet," which is what anyone can say when a poet should be given the floor... When we should be focused and paying attention to what they have to say. Students like it because they want to be respected. They don't want their toes stepped on. It's also great because they can say it to us when they want more of our attention. In this space, on the level of being poets, we are equal.

Final thoughts about your experience?

Meeting these kids over there has influenced me. They are very thoughtful. There is so much meaning in what they have to say. I spend a lot of time with my younger brothers and sisters. I don't think too many people pay attention to what younger children say or do. They don't recognize that when they say and do things, they do it for a reason. I think it's important to sit and listen. There is something to be heard.

Section 1:

Training and Orientation

Opportunities for young people to be mentors are critical to the success of youth development programs. For these experiences to be successful, young people need critical support and structure. To train Youth Mentors, we offer two 3-hour workshops that include discussion and activities. The next two pages provide a series of questions for discussion and activities for reflection that will prepare youth for the responsibility of arts mentorship.

Mentor Training: **DISCUSSION**

- ❖ Why do you want to be a youth mentor for the Afterzone poetry program?

- ❖ How will this experience build on your personal creative practice?

- ❖ What makes a good mentor? (For example, being a motivator, an ideas person more than someone to tell them what or how to write).

- ❖ What was your most positive experience with a mentor/teacher? Most negative?

- ❖ Recall a time you felt listened to. What were qualities that person showed?

- ❖ What were you like in junior high?

Mentor Training: **ACTIVITY**

MAKE:

- ❑ Freewriting: I stopped running when . . .
Brainstorm free writing prompts of your own
- ❑ Make posters for the classroom (quotes about writing, etc).
- ❑ Altar: Using a shoebox, collage with text and images things they want to change about the world on the outside and what they want to change about themselves on the inside.
- ❑ Make nametags to wear during workshops.
- ❑ Develop first 5 weeks of curriculum using this workshop-planning guide and worksheets. Depending on your program attendance, mentors can lead workshops individually, in pairs, or collaborate as a group.

REVIEW:

- ❑ What makes a learning community? (Page 8)
- ❑ Workshop structure (Page 13) and planning guide (Page 19-30)
- ❑ Evaluation methods (Page 9)
- ❑ Contact Lists (Share contact info for Youth Mentors and staff)
- ❑ Importance of affirming your students ability to create
- ❑ Calendar and Expectations
- ❑ Sign Agreement (Page 10)

What Makes a Learning Community?

As Mary suggests in the previous interview, building a learning community is more than planning and facilitating workshop activities. There are several important elements that help young people grow as writers. Here is a beginning list for creating a community in your workshops:

Inclusion

A supportive learning environment must reflect diverse learners through respect for differences. We must agree to not exclude or disrespect anyone on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, class, gender identification or age.

Participation Expectations

Everyone must be expected to participate on some level, even if that means only reading a line from a poem. Students may choose to ask their mentors to read their poems aloud for them. Instruct students to write their name on the top if they want to be acknowledged as the author or to write their name at the bottom of the page to remain anonymous. An alternative option is to leave all poems unsigned. Pass the poems out at random to everyone in the group. This way, each participant reads one poem aloud.

Poetry Critique

Reading poetry helps students write poetry. After reading a poem, always discuss it by asking questions like “What did you like/not like about the piece? What parts stick out to you? Is anything unclear or confusing? What is the poet trying to say?” Point out specific writing techniques that make the poem strong, like repetition, alliteration, etc.

Poetry Feedback

It’s important to meet your students where they are at, in offering critique of their work. Liz Lerman’s “Critical Response” format gives feedback to the artist without agendas and biases intruding- critique should be for the artist to do their best work. The first step is affirmation: give the artist positive feedback about their work and moments that affected you. Next let the artist asks questions of their audience. Then, students can respond to the artist’s questions, and must ask permission of the artist to offer any opinions.

Documentation & Evaluation

1. Journals

Art making without reflection is like chewing without eating. All program participants, including youth mentors, will keep a personal journal to reflect on learning experiences, noting the artistic collaboration, identifying areas of programmatic improvement and describing personal growth. Time to doodle, sketch, reflect or write in composition notebooks will become a tradition expected at each workshop. The journals will be periodically collected by the Program Director periodically to assess the impact and success of the AfterZone program. Institutionalizing reflection time to journal throughout the program will encourage continuous awareness and evaluation of the collaboration process by all participants. Journals will be kept at the YMCA.

2. Attendance Records

Maintaining records of the participant attendance will provide information vital to evaluating the youth response to the program. Youth Mentors will take attendance daily and then staff will enter into an electronic database.

3. Meeting Minutes

The youth mentors will meet throughout the program for general check in and assessment to enable a constant evaluation during the implementation of the project. Meeting minutes can be recorded as a tool to evaluate the progress.

4. Surveys

At the end of the AfterZone Sessions, all participants and staff will complete a written evaluation of the program,.

Youth Mentor Agreement Form

I, _____, am committed to the After Zone Poetry Program. I recognize that I will be working from 4:15-6:00pm every Thursday afternoon from New Urban Arts 17th to June 2. (Note: The program will not occur when school is not in session; Feb 23 and April 20).

Under the direction of the Program Director, each youth mentor will:
Engage and guide a group of 5-8 junior high school students, weekly through these processes:

- ✓ Build relationships with young people
- ✓ Model creative process and build community within your mentoring group
- ✓ Create a learning environment clear of bias and judgment
- ✓ Create a safe environment for students to develop their creative practice and find their own voice
- ✓ Promote an atmosphere of collaboration and high expectations for each student
- ✓ Act as a role model, refraining from negative attitude and action while teaching.
- ✓ Document student work and student progress
- ✓ Prepare artwork for performances (March and June)
- ✓ Collaborate with partnering artists, teachers, students and organizations
- ✓ Exhibit personal process as a mentor through reflective activities

I understand that consistent attendance and punctuality will make my teaching experience more successful for both myself, and my students. If I cannot attend or will be late, I will contact Sarah with advance notice.

Upon successful completion of the program, youth mentors will receive an honorarium of \$200, unless repeated unexcused absences (3 or more) or failure to achieve the job description outlined above.

Your Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Section 2:

Designing A Series of Workshops

To avoid confusion and chaos, it is important to follow a workshop structure that develops rituals and traditions, as well as expectations and rules that all participants respect and follow. This guide provides resources to build a series of one hour and fifteen minute workshops

To support the relationships needed for young people to begin to grow as poets, we recommend at least 15 workshops. This guide provides worksheets (Page 17-21) for Youth Mentors to plan the 15 workshops. It provides numerous recommendations (Page 22-32) for Warm-Up Games, Freewriting Prompts, Writing Activities, and Journal Writing. Youth Mentors can review these recommendations to develop workshops of their liking. Or, they can use them as a basis to create their own ideas.

The first two workshops that Youth Mentors lead are orientation. Orientation builds trust and community, expectations for participation, and introduces students to the type of activities they will experience throughout the project. For Orientation, we have fully developed two workshops for Youth Mentors to implement (Page 14-15). For the remaining workshops, it's up to you!

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

ORIENTATION

Day One

1. Introduction (15 minutes)

- Pass out writing journals. Explain that these should not include information they don't want others to read because they will be kept here.
- Encourage students to decorate covers during discussion of project overview and review of calendar.

2. Interviews (30 minutes)

- Write 3 questions (be creative and original).
- In pairs with someone you don't know and ask them your questions.
- Introduce your partner to the group through the questions you asked.

3. Community Agreement (20 minutes)

- Ground rules are guiding principles that the group agrees on which describe the culture of the community being built over time and may deal with attendance, interruptions, decision making processes, group roles, starting and ending on time, participation expectations, breaks, noise level, etc.
- Once everyone agrees to the ground rules set, have each person sign the list. Place the ground rules in a visible place for the duration of the program.

4. Journal (10 minutes)

- Do you know why you're here? What do you expect from this program?
- Go around the circle and share answers.

Day Two

1. Freewriting (20 minutes)

- Discuss how to write organically, in the moment, without inhibition or relying on clichés. Explain what freewriting is.
- List things you've lost. List things you've found.
- Read one item from your list to the group.

2. Activity I & 2 (30 minutes)

- Play "I Spy" but instead of saying "I spy red," say "I spy the color of embarrassment" or "I spy a moonless night" instead of saying "black."

3. Journal (20 minutes)

- What role do words play in your life? What words do you use too often? What words do you never use?

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The following is a structure projected for workshops 1 hour and 15 minutes in length.

1. Warm-up Games	10 minutes
2. Announcements	5 minutes
3. Mentor Group Check in	10 minutes
4. Free Write	10 minutes
5. Writing Activity	30 minutes
6. Journal Time	5 minutes
7. Wrap Up/Clean Up	5 minutes

Questions to ask when developing a daily curriculum plan:

- ✓ Is there progression? Will my students be ready to do what I am asking them?
- ✓ Is there transition for one thing to the next?
- ✓ Are we doing too much of the same thing? (ex: writing in silence)
- ✓ What directions will they need to do an activity?
- ✓ What supplies will I need to have and how much?
- ✓ What is my back up plan in case the plan flops because I finish early or students don't receive the original idea like I had hoped they would?
- ✓ Consider your audience: What are my students like? How many people are in the workshops? What has worked well before?
- ✓ Am I ready to be flexible and redirect my plan to meet my student's needs?
- ✓ If one student doesn't want to do what I planned for the group, then what?

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Day 1&2 = orientation	Warm Up Game (10 min)	Facilitator
Day Three: Feb 2		
Day Four: Feb 9		
Day Five: Feb 16		
Day Six: March 2		
Day Seven: March 9		
Day Eight: March 16		
Day Nine: March 23		
Day Ten: March 30		
Day Eleven: April 6		
Day Twelve: April 13		
Day Thirteen: April 27		
Day Fourteen: May 4		
Day Fifteen: May 11		

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Day 1&2 = orientation	Announcements (5 min)	Facilitator
Day Three: Feb 2		
Day Four: Feb 9		
Day Five: Feb 16		
Day Six: March 2		
Day Seven: March 9		
Day Eight: March 16		
Day Nine: March 23		
Day Ten: March 30		
Day Eleven: April 6		
Day Twelve: April 13		
Day Thirteen: April 27		
Day Fourteen: May 4		
Day Fifteen: May 11		

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Day 1&2 = orientation	Freewriting Prompt _(10 min)	Facilitator
Day Three: Feb 2		
Day Four: Feb 9		
Day Five: Feb 16		
Day Six: March 2		
Day Seven: March 9		
Day Eight: March 16		
Day Nine: March 23		
Day Ten: March 30		
Day Eleven: April 6		
Day Twelve: April 13		
Day Thirteen: April 27		
Day Fourteen: May 4		
Day Fifteen: May 11		

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Day 1&2 = orientation	Writing Activity (30 min)	Facilitator
Day Three: Feb 2		
Day Four: Feb 9		
Day Five: Feb 16		
Day Six: March 2		
Day Seven: March 9		
Day Eight: March 16		
Day Nine: March 23		
Day Ten: March 30		
Day Eleven: April 6		
Day Twelve: April 13		
Day Thirteen: April 27		
Day Fourteen: May 4		
Day Fifteen: May 11		

WORKSHOP PLANNING WORKSHEET

Day 1&2 = orientation	Journal Question (5 min)	Facilitator
Day Three: Feb 2		
Day Four: Feb 9		
Day Five: Feb 16		
Day Six: March 2		
Day Seven: March 9		
Day Eight: March 16		
Day Nine: March 23		
Day Ten: March 30		
Day Eleven: April 6		
Day Twelve: April 13		
Day Thirteen: April 27		
Day Fourteen: May 4		
Day Fifteen: May 11		

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

WARM UP GAMES

Mentorship begins when we can create a safe space to be in together, outside worries of school, home, friends, etc. Icebreaking games can seem foolish or meaningless, but they actually serve an important role in workshop planning. This is a chance to get your students feeling present, feeling ready, and having fun. It's also a great opportunity to get to know one another better. The following are popular games you can try or rearrange to your liking.

- ❖ Whoosh game – go around the circle and say Whoosh vocally and physically, releasing all your energy to the person next to you. Go around the circle a couple of times. Then add the Whoa option. You can put up your hands and push a Whoa, back to your neighbor rejecting their Whoosh. This changes the direction of the Whoosh, sending it the other way. After a few rounds of that, add the Zip option where you can zip a Whoosh to someone else in the circle. They choose which direction to continue the Whoosh, but - one rule - they cannot Whoa or reject a Zip.
- ❖ Circle Dash – In a circle, without ever making a sound, make eye contact with people and then switch places with them. The person in the middle tries to take the person's place in the circle before they switch. If they can't get to their new place in the circle in time, they are in the middle. You start in the middle. One rule, you can't change places with the person next to you.
- ❖ Mind reading – pass around note cards. Each person writes down a random question. Collect the note cards. Later on, redistribute the same note cards. Tell students not to read the questions. Instead have them put the card up to their forehead and guess what the question was. Then on the blank side, have them answer it. Go around the circle and have them read the answers and questions together.
- ❖ Human Knot- have a group stand very close together. Tell them to reach their arms so all hands are jumbled and intertwined. Tell them to grab one hand for each of their hands, but not the one of the person next to them. Now they are a human knot and must use teamwork to untangle themselves into one circle without letting go of their hands.

- ❖ Toilet tissue - pass around a roll of toilet paper. Tell students to take a length of tissue. Only after all have taken some (do not explain how much or little to take) tell them for each panel they have to say one thing about themselves.
- ❖ One minute interviews - Line up chairs in 2 lines facing each other. Everyone take a seat. Do a 60 second interview of the person across from you asking them about the 4 F's. (Family, Friends, what they like to do for Fun, and some place they would like to go Far, far away.) After 60 seconds yell out switch, and everyone moves one seat over, each line must move in opposite directions from the other.
- ❖ Have you ever - Group stands in a circle. Each takes a turn asking a question, "Have you ever_____"(filling in the blank). Those who have, answer yes by walking to the center of the circle and slapping a "high five" with whomever else has done the action.
- ❖ Pass the Clap – In a circle, one at a time, turn to the person to your right and they turn to you. Clap at the same time. Then the person to your right turns to their right and claps at the same time as this person. Go around the circle, passing the clap. Try it again around the circle, going faster each time!
- ❖ Mass stand up - Have the crew sit in a circle, backs to the middle. Now, have everyone link elbows with the person sitting next to her. Then, try to stand up as a group.
- ❖ Heads Up/ Heads Down - Stand in a circle with your heads down. A Youth Mentor yells heads up, and everyone looks up and stares at someone. If the person you are looking at is looking back at you, you're both out.
- ❖ Divide the room in two with a long stretch of masking tape. Have students cross the line as statements are read that they can say yes to. The other side of the line represents the common ground between all participants. For example. Who is an only child? Who speaks a language other than English? Who is a vegetarian? Who plays a musical instrument? Who has a pet?
- ❖ Cocentric Circles- Split students into two groups—you need an even number. Then, have the two groups form concentric circles. The inside circle faces out, and the outside circle faces in. Everyone should be face to face with a partner. The facilitator will read a series of questions. For every question, each partner gets 30 seconds to speak. After each question, one of the two circles will be given directions to move, so everyone will get a new partner. Over the course of the game each player will have one turn with everyone else. (Ex: What is your favorite television show? Why? Inside circle move two spaces to your right. Where do you go to school? What do you like most about your school? Outside circle move one space to your right. Now have half the sets of partners switch circles. Then, move one space. When you get stressed out, which animal do you act most like? A rabbit, a tiger, a turtle, or a hawk? Why? Inside circle move two spaces to the left.)

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

FREEWITING PROMPTS

Once warm up games get the group ready for the workshop, freewriting exercises get the group ready for writing in the workshop. The real trick to freewriting is to ignore the inner editor who cares about spelling and making sense. Freewriting is the opposite. The only rule to freewriting is to not stop writing until time is up.

Tell your students to write anything that comes to their head, and if they get stuck, to repeat what they just wrote or write about not knowing what to say, just be sure not to pause, reflect or plan. Tell your students “Just keep writing and don’t stop writing.” Tell them not to cross anything out or worry about mistakes.

This process is like a runner stretching before a race, and it also will reveal things we didn’t expect to write. Perhaps a word, line, or even the entire entry can become a poem or the beginning of a story later on.

After you give your students a prompt to respond to through freewriting, give them a timed period to write for, which can be 2 minutes, 5 minutes, or even 10 minutes. Below is a list of prompts that you can use or rearrange to your liking. You may think of your own, or ask your students to bring in a freewriting prompt they invented.

- What are you pretending not to know?
- List lies you have told. List lies you’ve been told.
- The path of the past led to...
- My weapon is...
- What do you never write about?

- Pick a random place on the page and begin with: I only have enough space to...
- I should keep this a secret, but...
- I used to be ____, but now I am ____
- How did it all begin?
- When do you stop running?
- Begin each line with "now."
- Begin with a phrase that you negate in the same line (ex: to be or not to be, going in or coming out)
- This is for...
- List things you would never tell a stranger.
- Describe 3 kinds of rain.
- A man is not crying, but you know his heart is breaking. How do you know?
Write a 30-year-old man. Write a 60-year-old man. Write your father.
- Describe yourself without using the words me or I.
- Begin each line with the name of a person you care about.
- Write the story of your life in 2 minutes.
- Where is your heart?
- Read aloud Langston Hughes' poem, *My People*. (www.poets.org) Then answer:
Who are your people?
- Imagine that you're walking through the woods, and you find pieces of a broken rainbow lying on the ground. Write about the moment before.
- What do you need to do? What do you want to do? What do you refuse to do?
- When do you know you're grown?
- What moves you to shout?
- Where do you find comfort?
- Write a rule about anger and a rule about love.
- Define regret.
- Pass around a paper bag of marshmallows. Have students feel inside without looking, and then describe what they think it is.
- Write about something people never notice.

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

ACTIVITIES

Place and Identity

- ❖ I Remember
 - Write as many sentences beginning with "I remember" as your age. The memories do not have to be connected. Try to use detail that is fresh and meaningful.
 - Shape the memory sentences into a poem.
 - Share with your group. Discuss why you remember these things.

- ❖ Brief Autobiography
 - Write Brief Autobiography along the side of the page. Use B as the first letter of the first line, telling something about your life. Use R as the first letter of the second line, and so on. This is called an acrostic poem. The poem should be 18 lines.
 - Now using these 18 lines, narrow the poem down to 12 lines, 9 lines, then 5 lines, then 3 lines

- ❖ Scar Poem
 - List all the scars you have.
 - Chose the most interesting one and write about how you got it. Write one version that tells the truth and one that is a lie.
 - Read one and make the group guess which it is, truth or fiction.

- ❖ Daily Ritual Poem
 - Log your daily (ex: Meals, Clothing, Travel, Something overheard or quoted). Include the mundane and the surprising for contrast.
 - Use time as a line break.

- ❖ Neighborhood Poem
 - List 3 public spaces in your neighborhood, List 2 neighborhood characters, List 3 familiar smells from your neighborhood, 3 familiar noises, 3 things you like, 3 things you dislike.
 - Now, write a poem about your neighborhood.

- ❖ Chameleon Poem
 - Fill out the following prompts to create a poem:
 - If I were a color I would be _____ because _____; If I were a sound, I would be _____ because _____; If I were a season, I would be _____ because _____; If I were an animal, I would be _____ because _____; If I were a time of day, I would be _____ because _____; If I were a city, I would be _____ because _____; If I were a hope, I would be _____ because _____.

❖ Poetics of Place

- Read "I Am" by Elizabeth Keith.
- Write your own version beginning with the line "I'm from..."

I Am, by Elizabeth Keith, Age 16

I am from Laban St.

I am from the room that I don't like, dragon pictures on the door, and the orphaned kitten me and my mother tried so hard to rescue from starvation.

I am from Laurel Hill.

I am from playing make-shift baseball in a crumbling driveway with the kids from second floor and using a leaf, a crack and a rock as bases.

I am Wallace St.

I am from the untamed rhododendron bush that was such a good place to imagine and the basement floor I used to draw chalk pictures on.

I am from Webster Ave.

I am from Katrina's pit-bull puppies, the funny fruit trees, the biggest maple tree on the block and going to Marissa's house.

I am from a moving van.

I am from "AAAH! Mom, there's a giant bug in the bathroom!!!" and seeing my first Rhode Island mosquito at the rest stop.

I am from the road.

I am from losing a frightened cat and then finding her again.

I am from Georgetown.

I am from the backyard where I learned to cartwheel

and the one where I caught a bull frog.

I am from the middle of nowhere and the trailer that came with it.

I am from the road.

I am from a moving-out room and "I'm not gonna move and you can't make me!"

I am from Wayland, Massachusetts.

I am from grinding away on the sidewalk in my first set of blades, the Winnie-the-Pooh story book I found under the Christmas tree, and the garage band my dad had.

I am from...

I am from...

Where am I from again?

❖ Me Poem

- Read "Little Round" by Li Young Lee.
- List the different sides to yourself. (ex: when I'm like my mom, when I'm curious, when I'm doubting, when I'm cocky).
- Write a poem about these sides of yourself in this form: My mother does... My curiosity knows... My doubt fears... My ego says...

Little Round, by Li Young Lee

Previously published in Say What Magazine, Young Chicago Authors

My fool asks: Do the years spell a path to later
be remembered? Who's there to read them back?

My death says: One bird knows the hour and suffers

to house its millstone-weight as song.

My night watchman lies down
in a room by the sea
and hears the water telling.
Out of a thousand mouths.
The story behind his mother's sleeping face.

My eternity shrugs and yawns
Let the stars knit and fold
inside their numbered rooms. When night asks
who I am I answer, Your own, and am not lonely

My loneliness, my sleepless darling
reminds herself
the fruit that falls increases
at the speed of the body rising to meet it

And my child? He sleeps and sleeps.

And my mother? She divides
the rice, today's portion from tomorrow's.
tomorrow's from ever after..

And my father. He faces me and rows
toward what he can't see.

And my God.
What have I done with my God?

(preparation or supplies may be needed)

Interactive and Hands-on

- ❖ Cut Up or Collage Poetry
 - Take a pair of scissors to your own poems, other people's poems, magazines, books, etc and cut the lines and phrases out.
 - Mix them up in a container, dump them out onto some clean surface and tape or glue the words in an order that works best for you.
 - Feel free to write in your own words where you feel the gaps are.

- ❖ Cross Out Poetry
 - Take a random sheet of printed text (newspaper, magazine, book) and begin to cross out or white out the words that you do not want to keep. By process of elimination you create a poem by leaving certain words and phrases on the page.

- ❖ Zipper Poem
 - Look at a photo or image from a book or magazine and write a poem.
 - Then "zipper up" the poem with a partner, weaving word by word to create a new piece. Edit and adjust as desired.

- ❖ Postcard Poem
 - Read Mark Strand's poem, "Place You've Never Been" (Find this poem online at http://www.diacenter.org/prg/poetry/94_95/strand.html)
 - Collage a note card with magazines and text.
 - On the other side, write a postcard to someone of your choice beginning with the line "I am writing from a place you have never been."

- ❖ Call & Response Poem
 - Use song titles as writing prompts and then afterwards play the songs.

- ❖ Message Poem
 - Cut a strip of paper measuring 1" x 24", grasp it by the ends and twist one end 180 degrees. Bring the ends together and glue them.
 - Write a message to yourself, a reminder, a promise, a wish or a secret.

- ❖ Calendar Poem
 - Tear a page from a calendar.
 - Write on it what makes time go by fast for you. What makes it go slow?

- ❖ Centos Found Poem
 - Take 100 lines from other places and create your own poem

- ❖ Chance Poem
 - Cut words from magazines and put in a hat. Select each word one at a time and make a poem with what you get.

- ❖ Switch Poem
 - Chose a setting in school (cafeteria, locker, etc)
 - Write anything about school – the way teachers teach, the way students learn, how students interact, what the school looks and smells like, etc.
 - After a few minutes of writing one person calls switch. Read your last line to the person next to you. They must incorporate it into their writing and visa versa. Vary the interval before switching again (sometimes 2 minutes, sometimes 7 minutes.
 - Read the texts aloud to your neighbor. Discuss: What parts of the process did you like/ not like? What do you like about the story/not like? What did you learn?

- ❖ Free Association Circle
 - What are the first words or thoughts that come to mind after hearing the word youth? Share around the circle, record on a poster board.
 - Look at the words collected and select words that stand out. Where do these words take us? Where do they come from? How do they describe youth? Do they describe you?
 - Individually, select one word from the collection and free write a monologue, poem, rant or revelation.

❖ Chart Poem

- Write down 5 words that you would use to describe yourself.
- Together as a group, create a table listing six broad categories across the top on the board (ex: animals, neighborhood, music, home, self, world, nature, weather, places, colors). Together, fill in the columns with descriptive words. (ex: cracked sidewalks, rain water, etc).
- Chose four of the words in each column. Those words, combined with their original five words will compose their poetic pallet.
- The first words of the poem must be "I am.." (ex: I am rainwater and cracks in the sidewalk. I am small in the land of the free.)
- Try it again with the words I was or I will be.

❖ Group Poem

- Write six versions of the same story. The story has to involve an unusual occurrence.
 - Version 1- news report about the event; straight forward, answer the questions who, how, when, where and why.
 - Version 2- first person narrative from most central character's point of view.
 - Version 3- first persona from an eye witness's point of view.
 - Version 4- tell the story in the voice of someone who was not there but heard through the grapevine.
 - Version 5- Tell the story from the point of view of someone looking back 25 years later.
- Get into a group of 5. Read aloud each version. Select 1 as a group and then perform as a group poem. Designate character transitions and line breaks.

❖ But, If, Or Poem

- Read Rosa Cantor's poem.
- Write 10 sentences that begin with **If**. Example: If I never moved. If age really didn't matter. If this never changes. Next change the first word from the line as shown below:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. If to But | 6. If to But |
| 2. Stays the same | 7. Stays the same |
| 3. If to Or | 8. If to But |
| 4. Stays the same | 9. Stays the same |
| 5. If to And | 10. If to Or |

Untitled by Rosa Cantor, age 16:

But I never moved
If I never aged
Or I was younger
If only I could fly
And I was a monkey
But age really didn't matter
If life was longer
But I was never able to die
If this never ends
Or this never changes

❖ Accidental Poetry

- Read "Secrets Inside" by Sarah Meyer. It is a series of four lines written from freewriting prompts which are broken down and rearranged. Ask if anyone can guess the code in which it was originally written? Read the original in order and explain the structure on the board. Discuss the gap between language and meaning.
- Take four lines from previous freewrites written in workshop, and break each line into three sections. Number each line, and then create a new order through adjustment to the current equation. Edit as needed.
- Read it aloud to the group in stanza form, and see if anyone can guess your code. Then read the original version. This exercise is like when musicians improvise progressions within chord structures- you stumble upon "accidental poetry."

Secrets Inside, by Sarah Meyer

My heart lives inside itself
(I should keep this a secret)...
I used to be a girl.

My people congregate towards community,
outside the box of the day.
But my heart bothers and breathes
with a clumsy waltz, dreaming
of a less scary day, a much better day.
living outside the list of left to do.

I am left without drive to dance --
no agenda, aware of those watching and lying.

"They pack much heat in a soft heart."

ORIGINAL:

prompt (I should keep this a secret but...)
I should keep this a secret
but my heart bothers and breathes
for a less scary day, better day.

prompt (I used to be ____, but now I am ____)
I used to be a girl
with a clumsy waltz, dreaming

prompt (I should keep this a secret but...)
I should keep this a secret
but my heart bothers and breathes
for a less scary day, better day.

prompt (I used to be ____, but now I am ____)
I used to be a girl
with a clumsy waltz, dreaming
but now I am left without drive to dance
aware of those watching and lying.

prompt (Who are your people?)
My people congregate towards community
not attention, not agenda, not pretension.
They pack much heat in a soft heart.

Character, Scene and Dialogue

❖ Perspective Poem

- Read "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens (you can find the poem at <http://www.poets.org>).
- Write a poem in which you talk about the same thing in many ways.

❖ Conversation Poem

- Write a conversation where no one is saying what they mean. Contrast their body language and verbal language.
- Have other people act out your scene to see if it works.

- ❖ Linked Poem
 - Describe a room or place using details that will reveal the place but never using the name of the place. Use any tense but only one tense.
 - Skip a line and now write a series of questions you want to ask of someone. The person can be alive or dead, a close friend or a stranger. The name of the person cannot be mentioned but the relationship should be able to be gathered by the questions.
 - Skip another line. Describe a room or place next to the room or place described earlier. Use details that will reveal the place, but you cannot use the name of the place. You must stay in the tense used before.
 - Under this description skip another line. Write an answer you wouldn't expect from the person you wrote the questions to in section 2.
 - Read the whole thing aloud when you are done. See if connections can be made to the scenery and dialogue. Edit until it does.

From the Page to the Stage

- ❖ Verbal Text vs Written Text
 - Read your poem aloud to a partner. Does the way you read it match how you wrote it on the page? Make changes in line break and punctuation or in pausing and pace to match both the spoken and written text.
- ❖ Physical Text
 - Develop the physical text of your poem through staging gestures, movement, and facial expression. In pairs, choreograph the performance of the poem. Make notes in the margins of the page.
- ❖ Verbal Text
 - Develop the vocal text of your poem by highlighting the page according to expression needed to convey (ex: anger = pink, withdrawn = blue). Use marker to underline words that need infliction or emphasis.
 - Use slashes to remind yourself where to pause, use 2 slashes // to symbolize an extra long pause.
 - The way you perform a poem should reveal the written text, rather than cover it. Ask yourself what the intention is behind your words, in order to develop how you want these words.
- ❖ Rehearsals
 - After you practice in pairs, allowing the partner to cue you on your lines and gradually memorize the poem, then practice your performance to the rest of the group in the workshop. Craft an invitation to hear the poets speak. (ex: make some noise for Ben!) Have the student's peers applaud him as he takes the stage.
 - Be sure to establish the authority of the speaker with rules like no talking during the performance, and incite the audience to really applaud and appreciate the courage of the poet to share. Consider assigning audience members with roles as a listener, for example, looking out for repetition.

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

JOURNAL

At the end of a writing workshop, designated time to journal will bring a feeling of closure, as well as serve as a tool for ongoing documentation of the program. Below are questions you can use, but feel free to invent new questions of your own.

- ❖ What do you think so far?
- ❖ Have you surprised yourself yet?
- ❖ By the end of the year, what do you want to learn?
- ❖ Who are the best storytellers in your life? What made their performances memorable? Meaningful?
- ❖ What does art do?
- ❖ What is the best part of this program so far?
- ❖ What are your strengths as a writer?
- ❖ What have you learned so far?
- ❖ What ideas reoccur in your writing?
- ❖ Does your art reflect current situations in your life? Is it an escape from your life? How?
- ❖ What do you know about writing?
- ❖ Favorite thing you did? Least favorite thing you did?
- ❖ How has your writing changed since you started? Why do you think it has changed in this way?
- ❖ Has this program changed how you think about the world around you?
- ❖ Has this program changed how you think about yourself?
- ❖ What has challenged you the most?
- ❖ Write down three new things you did this year.
- ❖ Reflect on what we did today, or what we didn't do.

Poetry Workshop Planning Guide

Resources for Young Writers

BOOKS FOR YOUNG WRITERS

Teen's Guide to Getting Published by Dunn

The Young Writer's Guide to Getting Published, Sixth Edition, Writer's Digest Books, 2001. Tells you all the magazines and contests that accept writing from young authors, and also gives a lot of practical advice.

To Be a Writer: A Guide for Young People Who Want to Write and Publish, by Barbara Seuling, Twenty-First Century Books, 1997.

What's Your Story?: A Young Person's Guide to Writing Fiction, by Marion Dane Bauer, Clarion, 1992. About all the elements of writing a good story.

The Young Author's Do-It-Yourself Book: How to Write, Illustrate, and Produce Your Own Book, by Donna Guthrie and Nancy Bentley, Millbrook, 1994.

Book-Write: A Creative Bookmaking Guide for Young Authors by Michelle O'Brien-Palmer and Shannon Rubin, Micnik, 1992. Another guide to making your own books.

How a Book Is Made, by Alike, HarperTrophy, 1988 (picture book). Follows this popular author-illustrator through the stages of creating and publishing one of her books.

The Young Person's Guide to Becoming a Writer by Janet E. Grant

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUNG WRITERS

PUSH is dedicated to new authors and new voices
<http://www.thisispush.com/>

Speak Up Press publishes a journal of teen writers
<http://www.speakuppress.org/>

Teen Ink
<http://www.teenink.com/>

Teen Poetry Café
<http://www.freshangles.com/expressions/poetry/>

TeenLit
<http://www.teenlit.com/>