

The Quick Guide To: Spoken Word

As presented in an FYI training
led by the [Sacrificial Poets](#), March 2013



Goal:

To tell your story through a powerful performance that shows your audience the emotion and impact behind the experience you're describing.

Examples:



Sacrificial Poet Kane Smego
performing at the VCU Grand Slam,
Oct 2012.

Watch it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhczOB07rT8>



Jay Davis performing
"Favorite Color" at the
Brave New Voices Poetry
Slam, 2010.

Watch it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYaOuQJUI84>

Know Your Roots!

- Spoken poetry has been performed for centuries
- Modern spoken word, like hip-hop, draws from the influence of the Harlem Renaissance
- In the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, spoken word became popular through a group called "The Last Poets"

FYI is a CEFS initiative with numerous community partners; funded by W.K.Kellogg, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of NC, and a NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher subgrant of the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle

How-To:

The writing process is different for each person, so do what is best for you!

Here is one way to start the writing process for a poem:

1. Write a list of the ten most significant moments of your life – big moments, events, or small moments, connections, or impacts that stand out in your life and identity. (See example on next page)
2. Pick two different hobbies or interests of yours. Draw a column for each, and list 15 things that you associate with that specific hobby or interest. Ex: Basketball – hoop, free throw, slam dunk... (See example on next page)
3. Now, pick one event from your event list – that will be the experience that you are sharing through your poem. Pick one of the hobbies, and use those words and ideas to help describe your experience in a metaphor. (Ex: “Though it may be the color of Mars that runs through my veins/Venus remains closer to the sun/to her son...” –excerpt from “X Chromosome”, Kane Smego)
4. Write out a few metaphors that you can use from your list – and piece them together to form a poem that expresses your experience
5. Share, edit, and revise until you’re happy with your poem!
6. Ideas for spaces to perform include: events related to the subject of your poem, open mic nights, poetry slams, youth organizing rally events, etc.

Additional Resources:

Brave New Voices – a 2010
Documentary about Youth Spoken
Word Artists.

[http://youthspeaks.org/bravenew
voices/](http://youthspeaks.org/bravenewvoices/)

Watch the Trailer:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?f
eature=player_embedded&v=GRtVI
Eu40JY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=GRtVIEu40JY) - !



Working on a spoken word piece during the
Sacrificial Poets’ workshop at the FYI
“Storytelling towards Advocacy” training,
March 2013

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