**Spoken Word Poetry Assignment -**8th Grade Language Arts

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| *When asked, "When did you become a poet?" William Stafford replied, "That's not really the right question. The question is, `when did you stop?’“*  *We're all poets when we're little and some of us just try to keep up the habit." - Naomi Shihab Nye* |

In class, we will watch several examples of spoken word poetry that range from humorous to heart-wrenching. **You will write your own spoken word poem**. **The most important resource is your own thoughts and feelings.** THIS POEM MUST BE 100% YOUR OWN WORK. IF YOU TAKE ANY PART OF IT FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE, IT IS CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM.

This is a work-intensive, creative, engaging project that will require you to do work outside of school hours to effectively meet all the requirements. Do NOT try to do all the requirements at the last minute. The objective for this project is for you to write creatively, speak publicly, expand your ability to use your voice, and give a performance you might not otherwise attempt.

The process is broken down into steps to help you effectively manage your time. Not only will the final product be graded, but there will also be completion points for steps along the way.

All performances must be between **two to five minutes**. Here are your four presentation options:

* **Option 1:** Perform your spoken word poem in front of the class.
* **Option 2:** Record yourself performing your spoken word poem and upload it to youtube.com. Your video performance will be shown to the class.
* **Option 3:** Perform your spoken word poem in front of the class. Bring in music, pictures, slides, etc. to enhance your spoken word performance.
* **Option 4:** Use technology to construct a video of your spoken poem utilizing music, pictures, etc. to enhance the power of lyrics (i.e. *“To This Day”*). Upload it to youtube.com or e-mail it in a PowerPoint file. Your video performance will be shown to the class.

Students who choose options 3 or 4 will likely receive extra credit, since, if it’s done well, it will require extra work. The amount of extra credit is totally dependent on the quality of the presentation.

PowerPoint presentations and *YouTube* videos generally work. Most other technology cannot be counted on. **The teacher is NOT responsible for getting your technology to work** and won’t be giving credit for technology that doesn’t work. ALL POEMS MUST BE PRESENTED IN ONE OF THE FOUR WAYS LISTED ABOVE. NO CREDIT IS GIVEN OTHERWISE.

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| * **Notes on the use of music:** * *Choose instrumental music only.* (Lyrics will distract from your writing.) * Download from a *creative commons music website* to avoid copyright issues. The teacher does not need phone calls from angry parents, musicians or lawyers. <http://creativecommons.org/legalmusicforvideos> has useful information about why this matters. *Soundzabound,* part of the Pioneer Library, is a great option since it’s *“the ONLY royalty free music library which meets all the licensing and technology requirements needed for education!”* <http://www.soundzabound.com> |

In addition to the requirements listed on the front of the paper, you must also include the following:

* Use ***connotation*** frequently. Intentionally choose words with the best ***connotation*** for your poem***.*** You will need to show the *teacher at least two places* where you did this.
* Use **alliteration** *at least twice*.
* Use ***effective repetition*** of a ***phrase***. (3+ times in different places) Think of this like the chorus of a song.
* Use at least *two* ***similes.***
* *Use at least two* ***metaphors.***
* Choose and use at least **two** of following:(For example: 1 rhyme and one personification would be 2)
* **personification**

Please look at the Spoken Word Poetry Figurative Language and Poetic Device Definition list to help you remember what all the terms in **bold** print mean.

* **idiom**
* **hyperbole**
* **oxymoron**
* **symbolism**
* **allusion**
* **irony**
* **onomatopoeia**
* **rhyme**
* No swearing. You are not Mr. Van Daan.

Your final project will **also** be graded on your **performance** and prosody (pacing, rhythm, body language, gestures, etc.)

**TIMELINE:**

**Choose your topic and get it approved by**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.**

We will be doing some activities in class to help you choose an engaging and interesting topic. Pick a topic appropriate for a middle school classroom. It’s OK if we disagree with each other, but it’s not OK to deliberately pick something that would cause distress to one of your classmates. Life is hard enough, let’s be respectful of each other.

**Write, revise and polish the lyrics.** We will have writing time \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Review your lyrics, add ideas, and discuss your lyrics with friends and family. Spoken word is a performance art about building images and emotions. Make sure your language does that.

***Due Date:*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Poems Finished**. Your teacher will tell you what you need to do to submit it.

***Due Date:*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Presentation ready to go.** (Turn the page over to read about your options for this.)

* Practice with a neighbor in class on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* You will either perform or show your video to the class starting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Good luck. I’m excited to see your creativity!**