



Creative Curriculums

SONGWRITING STARTUP!

BY CHANTAL JOSEPH

PA Standards Aligned:

CC.1.4.6-12.Q: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of writing.

9.1.3-5.A: Know & use the elements & principles of each art form to create works in the
arts & humanities



PITTSBURGH CULTURAL TRUST ARTS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
803 Liberty Ave | Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Telephone 412-471-6079 | Fax 412-471-6077
TrustArts.org/education

BRAINSTORM BASS

In music, the bass sets the rhythmic foundation for every song. In songwriting the foundation comes from the theme, subject or experience that you are writing about

Materials: paper & pens/pencils



Let's brainstorm an idea that you might want to write about. The more specific the better! For example, instead of "I'm writing about love", say: "I'm writing about my first crush" Focusing on emotions, about things in your life that affect you, and things in your life that are important to you can make lyric writing much easier.

I am writing about: _____

How does it make you feel? _____

What images come to mind?: _____

What senses are triggered? (smell, sound, etc): _____

What other descriptive words come to mind? _____

Remember, the more detail you use, and the more words/ideas you list the easier it will be to pick out lyrics later.

Next level: What's your favorite song? Can you figure out the theme or subject of the song?

BUSTA RHYME

Now that you have the basic idea for you song, let's learn about rhymes.

Materials: paper and pens/pencils



There are many different types of rhymes, but we are going to focus on four specific types.

Perfect Rhymes, Imperfect Rhymes, Internal Rhymes and End Rhymes.

<p>Perfect Rhyme:</p> <p>When the sounds of the final accented vowel and/or final consonant are identical, although the letters may be different.</p>	<p>love = dove king = bring</p> <p>by = eye new = you</p>
<p>Imperfect Rhyme: Also known as half rhyme or slant rhyme.</p> <p>When two words share just a similar vowel sound (assonance) OR a similar consonant sound (consonance)</p>	<p>heavy = plenty heart = star urgent= verdict</p> <p>sally= sells = seashells crazy = crocodile</p>
<p>Internal Rhyme:</p> <p>A. Two or more rhyming words within the same line OR</p> <p>B. Two or more rhyming words appearing in the middle of at least two separate lines OR</p> <p>C. One word at the end of a line rhyming with one word in the middle of the next line.</p>	<p>A. I went to town to buy a gown.</p> <p>B. I'd like to jump in the ocean, But don't dump me in.</p> <p>C. The sky was a rich shiny blue. I knew it was true but I stayed inside.</p>
<p>End Rhyme:</p> <p>When the final words in two lines or more rhyme.</p>	<p>I'm just going to stay home</p> <p>Deep inside I just want to roam.</p>

Practice your rhyming skills:

Perfect Rhyme: The CAR is not parked that _____.

Imperfect Rhyme (Assonance): Be careful of the loose piece on the GATE, I'm just afraid it might _____.

Imperfect Rhyme (consonance): She's a Good Girl but He's a Bad _____.

Internal Rhyme: Turn that FROWN upside DOWN. You are a queen, here is your _____.

End Rhyme: Sitting at the dock of the BAY.

First comes April then comes _____.

Now, look back at your brainstorming sheet and see if you can come up with some of your own rhymes.

Next Level: When you listen to music, see if you can identify the TYPE of rhyme the artist is using.

What are the rhyme types you hear in different genres of music?

MAKE A RHYME, MAKE A RULE

Now that you know several **types** of rhymes, let's explore rhyme **schemes**!

Materials: paper and pens/pencils



A **rhyme scheme** is the pattern of rhyme that comes at the end of each verse or line. Just like types of rhymes, there are many different rhyme schemes. For this activity, we are going to focus on two:

AABB

I cannot go to school **today (A)**

Said little Prggy Ann **McKay (A)**

"I have the measles and the **mumps, (B)**

A gash, a rash, and purple **bumps. (B)**

Sick—Shel Silverstein

ABCB

Just like moons and like suns, **(A)**

With the certainty of **tides, (B)**

Just like hopes springing high, **(C)**

Still I'll **rise. (B)**

And Still I Rise—Maya Angelou

To practice create rhymes, look back at your idea for your poem, and see if you can create a few lines using either the AABB or ABCB rhyme schemes. Then, experiment with others, such as ABAB, or AAA, etc

Although many poems do not use a rhyme scheme, most songs do. The two examples below use a combination of rhyme types and schemes to create very original songs. See if you can recognize what they are doing.

Now for a strong central democracy

If not, then I'll be Socrates

Throwing verbal rocks at these mediocrities

Nonstop from *Hamilton*—Lin-Manuel Miranda

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Find out what it means to me

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Take care, TCB

Respect—Aretha Franklin

Refer back to your past work, and see what you can create by combining different types of rhymes with different schemes. Practice reading the lines out loud to hear if they are conveying the emotion and message you intend. Experiment with your form and think about what genre of music your song would fit in. Once you have a verse, see if you can create a chorus, or a hook, if appropriate. These tend to be short and reinforce the theme of the song.

Next level: Most songs are 2—3 minutes, see if you can get yours to be at least that long. Practice saying it out loud. Remember, most songs have at least some lines or phrases that are repeated.

SPONTANEOUS SUPER SONGS

Let your imagination run wild and have fun making up theme songs for invented super heroes

Materials: 3 pieces of paper or index cards for each person, 3 containers, pens/pencils, and a timer



Gather up family and friends for some silly spontaneous song writing.

- ⇒ Get two containers (bowls, boxes, jars etc). Label them "1" and "2"
- ⇒ On the first card/paper, everyone writes the name of an original superhero (such as Super Sleuth or Gum Girl)
- ⇒ Fold those notecards/paper in half so you can not see what is written on them, and put into container 1
- ⇒ On the second card/paper, everyone writes an object they see in the room (such as lamp, chair, etc)
- ⇒ Fold those notecards/paper in half so you can not see what is written on them, and put into container 2
- ⇒ On the third card/paper, everyone writes a word that describes their favorite food (such as chewy or sweet)
- ⇒ Fold those notecards/paper in half so you can not see what is written on them, and put into container 3
- ⇒ After mixing up the cards, each person will take a turn blindly choosing one card from each box.
- ⇒ Set the timer for 2 minutes, and everyone tries to write a short theme song for their super hero that includes the names of the super hero, the object and descriptive word
- ⇒ You can construct your lyrics any way you want. Bonus points if you can use one of them in a rhyme.
- ⇒ You can change the game by picking something different for the second and third words, such as genres of music, articles of clothing, words to describe a car, etc

Next Level: Use family members names in the super hero names for a fun twist!