Found poem

Found poems take existing texts and refashion them, reorder them, and present them as poems. The literary equivalent of a collage, found poetry is often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems or literature such as stories, novels, plays etc.

A pure found poem consists exclusively of outside texts: the words of the poem remain as they were found, with few additions or omissions. Decisions of form, such as where to break a line, are left to the poet.

Spoken Word Poems

Spoken word poetry is a word-based performance art where speakers engage in powerful self-expression by sharing their views on particular topics for a live audience, focusing on sound and presentation. Spoken word performances require memorization, performative body language (like gestures and facial expressions), enunciation, and eye contact with viewers. Spoken word poetry is a form of poetry that doesn’t have to rhyme, but certain parts can be rhymed to emphasize an image or give it a lyrical quality. Spoken word poems will sometimes contain elements of hip-hop, folk music, or jazz to enhance the rhythmic presentation.

Key characteristics of Spoken word poetry

* 1. Must be recited aloud
	2. Includes a variety of different types of poetry- including hip hop, jazz poetry, poetry slams, traditional poetry readings and can include comedy routines and 'prose monologues'.
	3. Performance oriented- not just reading a poem aloud
	4. Usually has a social message/theme
	5. Often about current events
	6. may draw on music, sound, dance, or other kinds of performance to connect with audiences

Slam Poems

**Slam Poems are a** form of performance [poetry](https://www.britannica.com/art/poetry) that combines the elements of performance, writing, competition, and audience participation. It is performed at events called poetry slams, or simply slams. The name slam came from how the audience has the power to praise or, sometimes, destroy a poem and from the high-energy performance style of the poets.

Key characteristics of Slam poetry

a. Original work

b. Meant to be performed/spoken out loud/listened to- not read off a page

c. Should be memorized

d. Doesn’t follow any traditional poetry features or format

e. Often competitive

f. Subject matter should have real life importance

How to create and write a found poem

1. Generate a list of words, phrases or sentences about a topic. You can do this by writing about the topic or by reading about the topic and writing down words, phrases and sentences about what you read. You can also do this by taking words from the world around you that you see or hear and writing them down.
2. Next, Circle words, phrases or sentences that are important, powerful, interesting, emotional or follow a theme.
3. Look for connections between what you have circled to figure out what you want your poem to be about.
4. Number the items you have circled in the order that makes sense to you.
5. Write out your circled words, phrases and/or sentences in the order you have numbered.
6. Add or change things as you wish to create your finished poem.
7. Think of titles for your poems

## How to Write Spoken Word Poetry

Writing spoken word poetry takes both skill and an ability to express emotion through written words spoken aloud. If you’re looking to create your own spoken-word piece, check out the following tips for writing this passionate oral art form:

1. **Pick a topic you’re passionate about**. Spoken word performances are filled with emotion, so before you even start writing, make sure the subject you’re tackling is something you feel strongly about or can generate a lot of feelings toward. Spoken word poems can cover topics—however, there is usually a central focus to broader topics. For example, the topic of “family” might delve into how your grandmother inspired you, or how a close relationship with a cousin shaped you, or how your favorite teacher became like a parental figure to you. Spoken word poetry can also cover life experiences, like growing up in a broken home, or it can answer a personal question about yourself, like “What are you most afraid of?” It could be a unique perspective on social justice, the first time you experienced a broken heart, or a memory that’s stayed with you after all these years.
2. **Write the gateway line**. The gateway line is like your poem’s thesis—it lets the audience know what you’re going to be talking about. While your first line prepares viewers for your subject matter, the rest of the poem should be spent reinforcing, supporting, and expanding on that initial idea.
3. **Focus on sensory details**. You want the audience to be put right in the scene you’re verbally crafting for them, and the best way to do [that is to write vividly](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-vivid-descriptions-to-capture-your-readers). Write what you want the audience to be seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling throughout your entire piece, and use literary devices like metaphors or similes to create comparisons. You’re not just memorizing a poem to read back to people, you’re trying to immerse them into your world, if only for a moment. Vivid descriptions will create impactful, memorable images, which is exactly what you want when writing performance poetry.
4. **Use repetition and wordplay**. [Repeating certain lines or words](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-use-repetition-in-writing) in a piece can emphasize an image or idea for your audience. Repeated lines have staying power in a person’s mind and are effective in getting them to remember particular scenes. Wordplay is also used often, crafting a clever mix of pictures, feelings, and sounds for those watching and listening. Including some of this in your writing can give your poem a more sophisticated or creative feel.
5. **Make it sound good**. Spoken word poetry is written to be read aloud, so the way the poem itself sounds is just as important as the content of the written words. Poetic devices like onomatopoeia, [alliteration, and assonance are ways to introduce a more rhythmic feel](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/learn-about-alliteration-consonance-and-assonance) to the words you write. A rhyme scheme isn’t necessary, but rhyming particular words or lines together can enhance your message or story when used properly.
6. **Set your poem aside for a while, then revise it**. Sometimes when you get caught up in the emotion of writing a passionate piece, you realize there are things you could have said better. Walking away from the first draft of your poem can help you collect your feelings and revisit your work with fresh eyes, allowing any new thoughts, clarifications, or emotions regarding your topic to further shape how you deliver your piece.
7. **Watch others perform**. You can get a better feel for rhythm, structure, and cadence when you hear experienced spoken word artists do it. Watch some of the best spoken word poetry either live or on the internet to understand how to craft great lines with impact. Pay attention to how they use their space and the language they use—it may inspire you to approach your own [creative writing](https://masterclass.com/articles/creative-writing-vs-content-writing) more boldly.
8. **End with an image**. Your conclusion should wrap up your story for the audience, or leave them with a lingering thought or feeling. It could be one of hope, it could be one of pain, it could be one of a lesson learned—however you decide to conclude your piece, it should tie in with the message of the poem as a whole. What should viewers take away from this performance? What should they know about you after watching? You don’t need a neat ending, but you do need one that creates a lasting impression.

How to write a slam poem

Slam poetry Instructions

1. Think of an issue/event/experience that you care about or something that you feel very strong or passionate about. Brainstorm a few ideas for each so you have some to choose from.
2. Pick an idea from your list and do a 1-2 page free write on that topic. If you find it hard to write a lot about it stop and pick a different topic. If you can’t write freely about the topic you have chosen you don’t feel strongly enough about it. Think. Your poem should let people know about these questions, not as answers but by listening to your poem.
	1. Why is your topic important?
	2. What do people need to know about your topic?
	3. What do you want people to know about your topic?
	4. Why is the topic important to you?
	5. What do you want to say to people?
	6. What do you want them to get out of your poem?
3. Using what you have written, you can start by choosing/finding a few words/phrases from what you have written. (like a found poem)
4. Start writing down what you want to say. Write freely. Don’t worry about form or order yet. That can be worked on later.
5. Look at what you have written.
	1. Is anything missing? Is there anything that isn’t needed?
	2. Can you re-arrange it into an order that makes sense?
6. Read it out loud. Think about:
	1. Where do I need emphasis? What techniques can I use to make my point? (repetition, rhyming, tone of voice, speed of speech, volume so voice, pauses, hand movements, pictures, music, group speaking, props etc)
	2. Think about how and why you are using the techniques. How do they help the audience understand your poem and become emotionally involved?
7. Re write your poem putting in emphasis where needed.
	1. Write words in capitals for louder voices, put explanations in brackets for how to say words), use line breaks for pauses, use arrows for volume of voice etc.
	2. Add in flavour- examples, things to make your poem memorable and more powerful
	3. Think of pictures, music, props that might help to perform the poem
8. Read it out loud again (practice and revise until it is how you want it to be)
9. Repeat steps as needed until your slam poem is complete and ready to be performed.
10. Practice until you are ready to perform.

Tips on writing a slam poem

1.  Your slam poem is just that - *YOURS!-*But if you really want to be a top notch slam poet, authenticity is going to be core to your work. Its very easy to take some ideas and 'borrow' some performance techniques from other artists you see - but ask yourself: "Does this really make me a game-changing poet?" Your style should be based on your life, the person you are, and the message you want to carry. So think about who you are. Think about what you want to get out of being a slam poet or spoken word artist. And make sure those core beliefs resonate throughout your work.

2.  You are writing a poem that will be performed-You should keep in mind that you're writing to perform and *someone* is going to hear you (and hopefully *listen* to you).  All this means is that after you finish your piece, you should take the time to read it out loud a whole bunch of times. Listen to the flow of your words, listen to the poem's rhythm and understand how each stanza, each line and even each syllable leak into the proceeding components. Poetry should...well, it should sound poetic. It shouldn't sound like an essay that would be boring.

The point of performing is you want to carry a memorable message and entertain & delight while doing so. A strong performance is persuasive. Being persuasive doesn't mean doing what everyone else does because you might have thought someone's message resonated with you. Being persuasive means finding your own niche and riding it to help connect with your audience. When you walk off stage after performing a slam poem, the audience should feel like they just got punched - with reality. Keep that in mind when you're putting the finishing touches on your piece.

3.  The best way to project honest emotion is to paint a vivid picture-When you paint a picture of your experience with words then you don’t have to tell people how you are feeling, they will be able to determine it from your descriptions. Show don’t tell. You should try to help the audience actually feel what it was like to walk in your shoes. You should use the 5 senses and imagery.

4.  Concrete language is vital for hitting your audience in the gut-It's that moment you say something so ingenious...well, so ingenious that its *actually poetic.* Don’t be overly abstract or cryptic. Be direct.

 5.  Poetic devices & poetry tools are your friend-Poetic devices are the crux of what separates a poem from just being an essay. These are some tools that will be useful.

* Rhyming, Repetition, Alliteration, Metaphors & Similes, Hyperbole, Assonance, Onomatopoeia, Personification, Attitude, Imagery, Meter, Rhythm. A lot of these tools help with the emphasis of certain lines and points; they also help an audience feel what you're describing rather than just hear you.

6.  The content of your slam poem can (and should) outweigh your performance style-Delivery is a huge part of slam poetry but stage performance doesn’t really mean much unless you're delivering something special. The best performer in the world could probably get on stage and talk about a peanut butter & jelly sandwich, and even if its cool in the moment, its probably not going to affect their lives too much. On the other hand, if a poet delivers words that actually mean something it's going to stick. Its really that simple. When you're writing a spoken word piece, you should be focusing all of your effort into each word - into each syllable even - to ensure you're putting out a quality poem that is representative of who you are. If you're truly doing that, the performance should fall into place more naturally for you.

7.  Your slam poem should have a point and a purpose beyond just your observations and feelings-Ever ask yourself why you're even writing and performing slam poetry? You probably write slam poetry for one or more of several reasons: 1) you just love poetry and you always have; 2) its a creative outlet that allows you to be yourself; 3) confiding in a pen is easier than confiding in a friend; 4) you truly desire to touch lives and make a difference; 5) you have a story or message that you want heard. There are definitely other reasons you write, but most are likely along these lines. That's great. That means you're headed in the direction of accomplishing what you're looking for. What makes slam poetry so good is that you remove the audience from their norm. You add a layer of perspective and the best way to do that is to go really deep on your subject. Use your poem to create a journey and make sure that you have a purpose. Keeping that purpose in mind and not losing sight of it while you're writing will help keep your poem 'tighter'; more focused on conveying your message. It's wonderful to talk about how you felt or the emotion you might have experienced. But draw on and from those emotions. Make conclusions. Relate those emotions to other aspects of life. Think BIG. You'll write better for it. You'll perform better for it. You'll probably look back and consider yourself a better poet for it.

8.  You'll need to memorize this - it's called *Spoken Word* for a reason

9.Finally, as your scripting your masterpiece, keep in mind that you're writing something to share with people. When you share something meaningful, it’s important to connect with your audience. Eye contact, that real connection, will deepen your poetic verses and further emphasize your words. Memorizing your poem will make it so you can have that connection you need. If you're reading off a sheet of paper, you won't be able to read the room. You'll lose sight of whether or not people are paying attention. If that happens, you're probably not going to be remembered (at least not in the kind of way you want to). So memorize your poem. Please. Then you can see how people react and adjust your body language and mannerism to accommodate that while you're performing