

Grade 6 English Language Arts  
Week of March 8 – March 12

**Lesson 3: Spoken Word**

## Can Poetry (Spoken Word) Change the World?

**Spoken Word** or performance poetry is poetry that is specifically written to be performed. Have you heard of its relative, slam poetry?

**Slam poetry** is simply a business structure that creates spoken word competition for cash prizes.

So basically, all three terms (spoken word, performance poetry, and slam poetry) mean the same thing - poetry that is performed!

Watch a couple of examples. As you watch:

- Notice the presentation: the unique combination of vocal expression, movement, and physical gestures that makes a poem into a performance.
- Think about the themes of the poems: the **underlying message**, or **big idea**. It is the **critical belief about life** that the author is trying to convey.



**EXAMPLE ONE: CAN WE AUTO-CORRECT HUMANITY?:** <https://youtu.be/dRl8ElhrQjQ>

Which of the following performance techniques did you see?

- varied pacing and volume of words and phrases,
- expression,
- eye contact,
- selective use of gestures.

What is the poem's theme (underlying message/big idea/critical lesson) about correcting humanity? What big idea is the author trying to share?



**EXAMPLE TWO: TOURETTES:** [https://youtu.be/5eN\\_iXWCgzQ](https://youtu.be/5eN_iXWCgzQ)

Many people have TIC disorders. They might shrug their shoulders, clear their throats, or scrunch up their face. Sometimes, they have TICS for a short part of their life. Sometimes, they disappear or just come back once in a while. Some people have both body and vocal TICS (where they make sounds) for a long time, and some of those people may be diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome (or TS).

A person with TS can do or be anything he or she wants. In fact, it was a doctor who had Tourette's that "named it" and classified it. This spoken word poem is by a teen that has Tourette's. This makes the audience say "WOW!". Watch it to figure out why!

Why would the audience say wow?

What is the theme of this spoken word poem?