

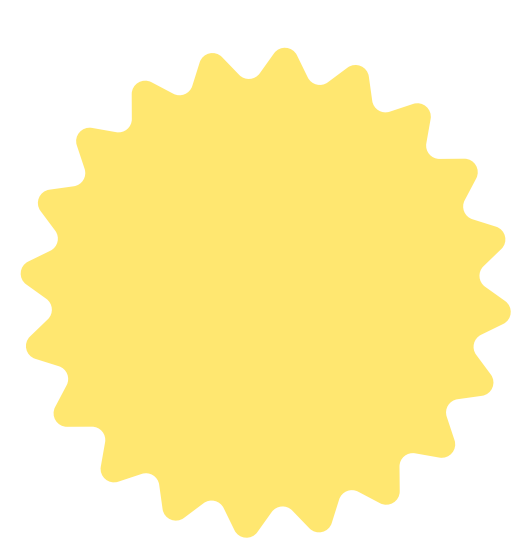
Holy Guacamole!



Study Guide



Holy Guacamole, it's a Poetry Show! is a kinetic feast of words and song for students K-7, written by former Canadian SLAM champ and Juno-nominated musician Brendan McLeod



The show offers students the opportunity to revel in the thrill of word play while grounding the fun with practical lessons about rhythm and figurative language

(Plus it has a dinosaur rap, hilarious haikus, and... THE BANJO!)




Bio


Brendan McLeod is an award-winning writer and musician. He's the author of a novel, a poetry collection, and five theatre shows. He's the founder of the Juno-nominated folk group The Fugitives, who have also been nominated for multiple Canadian Folk Music and Western Canada Music Awards. A former Canadian SLAM poetry champion, he was the Poet of Honour at the 2012 Canadian Festival of Spoken Word. He has taught spoken word at Langara College, and is an active youth educator.



Pre-Show Activities



Holy Guacamole seeks to encourage students as young creators to develop their own unique voice, experience literature as an art form with a life off the page, focus on the five senses, and (most especially!) attend to figures of speech.



Though figures of speech aren't typically taught until grades 5-7, the show aims to familiarize students with concrete examples of hyperbole, alliteration, rhyme, and onomatopoeia, in order to provide an early, easy, and fun introductory to the concepts, so when the time comes the students aren't just ready, but excited. In order to prepare the students for the performance here are some suggested activities:



Introductory Activities

Box of Doom!

Students take random non-poetic texts out of a box and perform them with an ear to specific emotions (*say it like you're angry, like you're in love, like you're starting a revolution!*) This gets the students used to thinking of text lifted from the page.

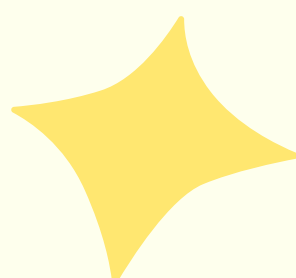
(A similar exercise can be done with **haikus**).


Turning homework into poetry is any typical book report, journal entry, Science and/or Math answer written from the perspective of the subject under investigation. Sample assignments such as: *what is mitochondria most afraid of? What's a typical day in the life of the number 7? Write a monologue in the voice of your dog* encourage students to bring their creativity to normal student affairs.

(**Poem journals** and **directed freewrites** are also a great way to make poetic expression part of the norm leading up to the show).



Finding Their Voice




Letter exercises, where students write a letter to themselves from the point of view of someone they know well, and then answer back in their own words, is good for discovering what makes their voice original, and attuning to the voice of others. 

Writing their own raps, about an actual experience from their own life, is again, a good way to creatively value their own experience.

Writing movie segments about moments from their life, is a great way for them to focus on dialogue – how they talk, how others talk, and how that use of language shapes their experience.



Further Materials



Here are some video materials students might find interesting leading up to the performance:

Videos of Brendan's Juno-nominated music group The Fugitives:

Where Do We Go, Boys: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HskbFUt3BEA>

No Words: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m0X-E2Kkws>

Videos of Brendan McLeod:

Exultation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28SkvvGaGv8&t=19s>

A-Z Rap: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOSYsw6lkxg>



Post-Show Activities



Discussion Questions

-Why do you think Brendan uses different forms, like haiku, rap, free verse, and rhyming couplets? How do you think he decides on each form? How are they different from one another?

-*Holy Guacamole* dealt with many different figures of speech; can anyone name one of them and what it is? What made that one stick out in your mind?

-*Holy Guacamole* tackles subjects from climate change to his dog Bernie to random facts. It's pretty clear you can write about anything. What do you want to write about?

-Seriously, be honest, did you like his outfit?



Figures of Speech

Extended metaphor exercises: Students write a poem or story about, say, their best friend, and compare them to a doctor, or parent, or house. Another really cool exercise (which totally works, believe me, I was surprised too) is to give students a random group of weird objects (scissors, bus pass, chair cover) and ask them to write a poem comparing it to their life. If that doesn't work, get them to write a poem about how it has nothing to do with their life.

Hyperbole battles where each student is given an "I am so HAPPY/TIRED/INTERESTED/ ANY OTHER ADJECTIVE..." statement and told to finish it with the wildest hyperbole imaginable, then present it in the same form as an MC battle, is a really fun exercise.

If students are struggling, students can write an **excuse poem** where they write out all the excuses they can think of as to why they do not want to write. Put them together, and boom, you have a poem, which invariably contains a ton of hyperbole.



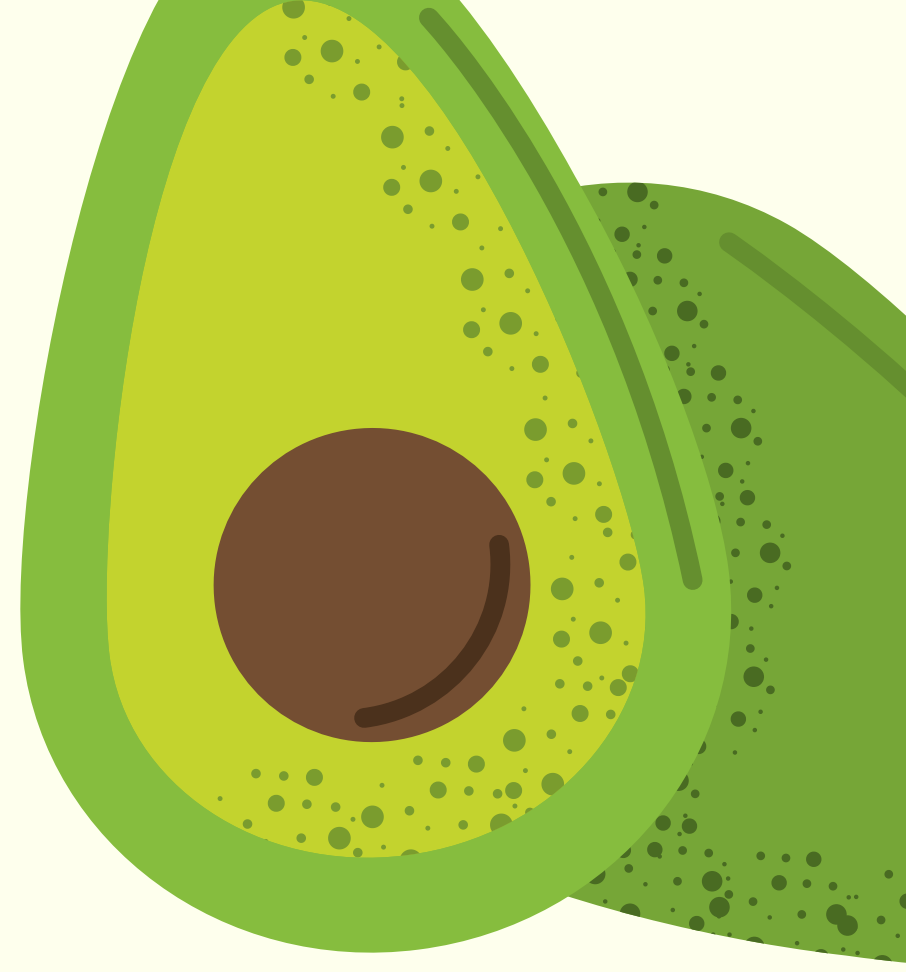
The Five Senses

Walk around the school, where the students record their sense experiences while they look at rocks and trees and trashcans, etc and turn them into a poem. Thoughts outside the box are great -- they can be encouraged to compare that trashcan to an emotion, for instance.

Colour poems, in which students write about how a colour looks, tastes, feels, smells, and sounds. The same can be done for poems about any objects, animals, or people.

'Show don't tell' exercises, in which students take whatever sentences they wrote in the previous draft, but instead of stating their feelings, have to relay them through their senses or other means of poetic description.

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Thank you for having me at your school!
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