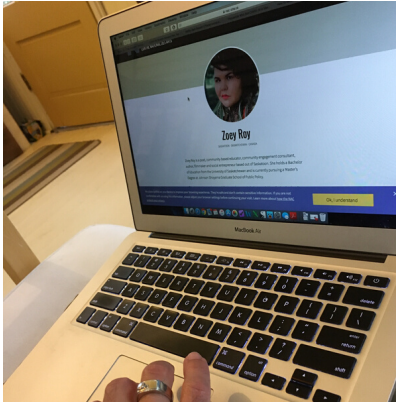
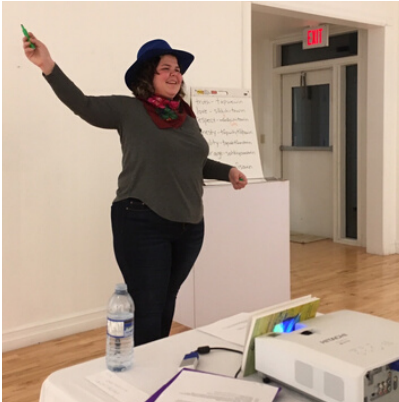


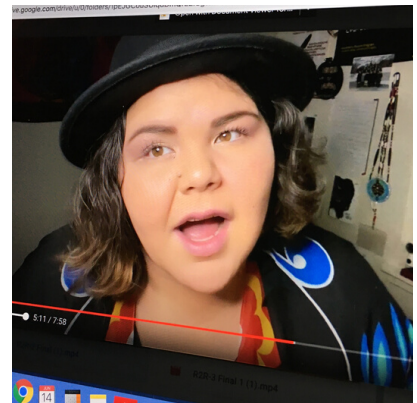
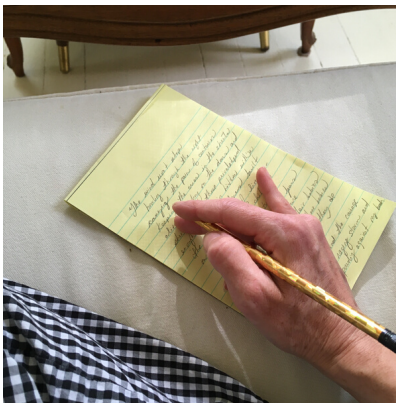
# COMMON WEAL COMMUNITY ARTS

# Artful Isolation Activities

## Week Ten: Spoken Word with Zoey Roy



**Zoey Roy** is an award winning artist and arts educator, currently pursuing a PhD in community based education. Zoey is passionate about elevating youth voices through creative expression and ensuring people of all ages know that they matter. She does this through creative projects across Canada and around the world.



### Share your voice through the power of performative poetry!

**What is Spoken Word?** Spoken word is a form of performative poetry that uses the aesthetics of sound through rhyme, repetition, improvisation, and word play. With its roots in oral traditions, spoken word poetry may contain elements of rap, hip-hop, storytelling, theatre, and jazz, rock, blues, and folk music. Spoken word poems frequently refer to issues of social justice, politics, race, and community. "There were poets long before there were printing presses, poetry is primarily oral utterance, to be said aloud, to be heard."\*\*

**Why Spoken Word?** Our Southern Artist Director, Shaunna Dunn, has been working with Zoey through the *Respond to Racism* program since 2018. While on the road in rural Saskatchewan, she witnessed first hand how Zoey uses poetry and voice to empower youth, demonstrating how this art form can support the vocalization of subject matter that is important and personal. Zoey has always used poetry as a tool of self discovery, helping her make sense of the world. She shares her work in a vulnerable way to reach the creative human within us all. Teaching poetry is inspiring to Zoey because she gets to stay in connection with people and offer relevant and innovative approaches to creativity in community.

**Suitable For:** Ages 7+ (note that younger elementary aged children will need support).

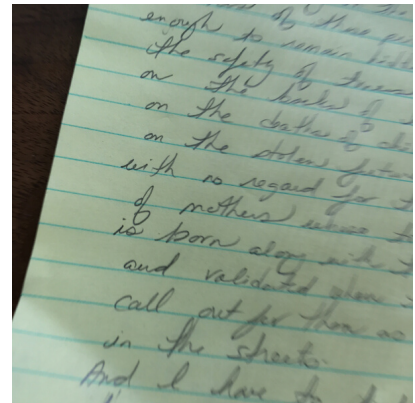
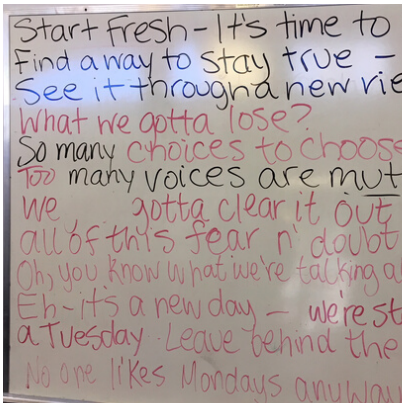
\* Adapted from the definition found on [poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org).

\*\* Knight, Etheridge (1988). "On the Oral Nature of Poetry". *The Black Scholar*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis. 19 (4-5): 92-96.

**What You'll Need:** Something to write down your thoughts (paper, computer, tablet or phone).

### Getting Ready:

- Check out these powerful examples of spoken word poetry [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). What do you notice about how rhythm, cadence, and intonation are used? What is unique about these poems and how they make you feel?
- Find tips on writing spoken word [here](#) and [here](#).
- For this exercise you are going to take a stance on something that is important to you and share it in the form of creative writing. Take time to consider a subject you find meaningful. Subjects may be as complex as a major social issue, such as racism, homophobia, homelessness, and sexism, or explore topics like your relationships with friends and family.



### Activity:

- Begin by jotting down thoughts to the following questions:
  - What do I **think** about this subject?
  - How do I **feel** about this subject?
  - What am I going to **do** about this subject?
  - How do I **connect** to this subject?
- Use your notes to fuel your writing, creating the first line of your poem based on your responses to the first question, then build from there. Your poem can take any form. If you're feeling stuck, here are some tips:
  - Write a bunch of words that are fun to say, then you can craft a storyline to surround them, focusing on the rhythm and rhyme of the poem.
  - Consider, what is in your mind's eye? Use concrete words and images to express what you see.
  - As you are writing, begin to speak the words out loud. How do they move? What is the natural rhythm, speed, flow of the words *and* ideas? Remember that you're creating a poem to speak aloud. Practice with words until you find your flow.
  - If you lose your momentum, go back to that first line again. If you run out of rhyming words or want to build more on your concept then you can go to [rhymezone.com](http://rhymezone.com).
  - Looking up synonyms and other poetry formats will also be helpful for you.
- Once you've written your poem down, start to bring your voice to it. Read it happy. Read it like you're making a news report. Read it like you're reading a sad letter. Read it as fast as you can. Read it as slow as you can. How do these different approaches affect how the poem feels?
- CHILL OUT. It will not be "perfect." Just own it.

### Reflection:

- How does speaking your poem out loud make you feel? How does sharing your ideas through poetry differ from talking about them directly?
- When you feel ready, find a safe way to share your voice and your poem. This might be sharing with a loved one or a video recording to watch yourself. Listen to and learn from your voice.
- Share your poems with us via Facebook or Instagram, tagging [@skcommonweal](#) and using the hashtags [#cwspokenword](#) and [#cwneighbours](#).