

Name:

Day One

Spoken Word

Part 1: Silent read

→ What are the connections between poetry slam and rap? Read silently.

In poetry slams, contestants must write and perform their own poetry. Poetry slams are not just about what a poem says. Slam puts the emphasis on how a poem is performed.

The National Poetry Slam is the largest performance poetry event in the world. One year, the National Poetry Slam was held at the Cantab Lounge, near Boston, Massachusetts. The event featured five days of open mic competitions and performance workshops. Over 300 performers attended. At the end, the winner was a team called Slam Nuba from Denver, Colorado.

Rap is a very different kind of spoken word poetry. Rap is performed in time to a musical beat. Rap originated in the 1970s at house parties in New York City. At first, parties were hosted by DJs who spun records. They created beats for people to dance to. DJs then started free-styling, performing lyrics over the beats of the music. Eventually, popular DJs began recording their own tracks. Rap music was born!

Jay-Z is a rapper who rose to fame in the late 1990s. In 2010, he wrote a book called *Decoded* about growing up with rap in Brooklyn, New York. In an interview on *The Daily Show*, he told why he wrote *Decoded*. “The basis of the book is that I care about the culture and rap and it being a respectable form of art.” Jay-Z argues that the poetry in rap is “trying to use words to find fresh angles into the emotions that we all share.”

Source: “Exclusive–Jay-Z Extended Interview,” *The Daily Show*, November 17, 2010.



Day One Spoken Word

// one minute

Part 2: First timed read

WPM _____

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Part 3: Comprehension and discussion

What are some things that are similar about poetry slam and rap?

What is free-styling?

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Part 4: Phrase-cued reading

- Read the passage **out loud** in phrases to your partner.
- Pause at each / mark for a phrase.
- Also pause at each // mark that shows the end of a sentence.

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I read the passage in phrases out loud to my partner.