

SECTION

10

POETIC
PERFORMANCE



POETRY

FROM VERSE TO PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to another dimension of poetry and creative writing, known as performance. In this section, you will get to perform parts of some poems and bring them to life. You will also have the chance to turn poems into other creative expressions like songs, paintings or parodies. Moreover, you will try your hands on writing your own short poems, if you have not done that yet. By exploring these activities, you will become more confident in expressing yourself, learn to appreciate different ways to share ideas and develop your own creative style. These skills gained will boost your communication, problem-solving and creativity skills, making you more confident and effective everywhere you find yourself.

By the end of this section, you should be able to

- Perform parts of selected poems.
- Reconstruct a poem into another creative expression (song, painting, parodies)
- Create short poems.

Key Ideas

- Performing poetry refers to bringing the words of poetry to life instead of keeping them on printed pages.
- Poetry performance is also referred to as Spoken Word.
- Techniques used to enhance poetry performance include intonation, tone, tempo and volume.
- Reconstructing poetry into other creative expressions involves adapting or modifying them into other creative genres such as songs, paintings, drama or films.
- Short poetry creation is an art form that involves crafting brief and impactful poems of about nine (9) lines or uses about sixty (60) words.
- It focuses on simplicity, clarity and conciseness. Examples of short poems include Haiku, Limerick and Clerihew.

Poetry Performance

Performing poetry means bringing it to life not just reading it on a page. This is called spoken word. Reading poetry aloud helps people to understand and respond to it appropriately. Spoken word makes this possible by mixing poetry with storytelling in a creative way.

Poetry Performance

Poetry performance uses gestures and body language which are considered to be key in the performance. Techniques used to enhance poetry performance include changing your voice's pitch (intonation), how your voice sounds (tone), the speed at which you speak (tempo) and how loud you speak (volume).

Examples of Poems that are commonly performed:

1. Dirges
2. Eulogies
3. Odes
4. Lyrical poems

Activity 10.1

Time with a spoken word artist

- a) Your teacher will invite a spoken word artist, writer or musician to share their journey. Pay attention as they talk about:
 - i. How they discovered their talent.
 - ii. What motivated them to become a spoken-word artist.
 - iii. The skills and qualifications they needed; including courses in tertiary.
 - iv. The challenges they faced and how they overcame them.
 - v. Take notes or record key points (if you can).
- b) During the session, raise your hand to ask questions. Prepare questions beforehand. Examples: “What inspired you to start your career?”, “What advice would you give to young people who want to follow a similar path?”
- c) After the session, discuss in your group, what inspired you the most and how you can prepare yourself for your future career or talent.

Activity 10.2

Reconstructing and performing poems

- a) Get into groups of a minimum of three with your classmates. Each group should have learners of different learning abilities and talents.
- b) Open the browser of your tablet (e.g. Chrome) and search for poems that are suitable for acting or reconstructing e.g. Not My Business by Niyi Osundare
- c) Select a poem.
- d) Reconstruct the poem by following these steps:
 - i. Discuss the main message of the poem is.

ii. Discuss who the characters or voices in the poem are.

Make sure everyone understands the meaning and mood of the poem

iii. Transform the text by adapting the poem into a script that can be spoken aloud.

iv. Enhance the poem with dialogue where applicable.

v. Assign roles among your group members.

vi. Memorise your lines or practise reading with rhythm and expression. Decide on actions to match the words (e.g. walking, clapping, hand gestures or sitting).

e) Present your performance to the class using gestures, facial expressions and intonation to bring the poem to life.

You can post your work on social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, with approval from your teacher, so others can see.

Reconstructing Poems into Other Creative Expressions

Do you know that the poems you have studied can be adapted or changed into other forms such as songs, paintings, drama or films? Many of the songs you listen to such as hymns have lines and stanzas just like poetry. This is what is called reconstructing poetry. Poetry reconstruction, therefore, is adapting or modifying a poem into other creative genres such as songs, paintings, drama or films.

Read out the poem below carefully and study how it has been reconstructed into a picture right beside it.


POEM	PAINTING
<p>The Lonely Tree</p> <p>In a field so wide and free, Stood a tree, so lonely, Its leaves whispered in the breeze, Telling tales of memories.</p>	 <p>Painting of The Lonely Tree</p>

Table 10.1: An illustration of a reconstructed excerpt of Awoonor's The Cathedral

Follow the steps below to reconstruct your poems:

Steps In Reconstructing Poems into Other Creative Expression

1. Creating a painting from a poem:
 - a. Creatively arrange the poem on the page.
 - b. Give it a colourful background.
 - c. Add pictures or drawings.
2. Creating a play from a poem:
 - a. Bring interpretation to the poem.
 - b. Choose characters for the play.
 - c. Arrange the poem into a dialogue.
 - d. Read the poem aloud with actions if possible.
3. Creating a ‘mimic poem’ e.g. parody of a poem:
 - a. Choose a well-known poem.
 - b. Commit a good part of it to memory.
 - c. Study the style and tone of the original poem— rhythm, rhyme, length of lines, metre and so on.
 - d. Choose a subject matter for your parody that differs completely from the original.
 - e. Draft your parody, incorporating your new subject matter and style.
 - f. Read aloud to check if the sound mimics the original well enough.
 - g. Read to friends for peer review.

Activity 10.3

Recreating already-existing poems

1. Form a group of five with your classmates. Your group should have members with different academic strengths, so everyone contributes.
2. As a group, search for short, interesting poems using the browser of your tablet and select at least one poem.
3. Read the poem together to help everyone understand it better.
4. Copy the first two stanzas (if the poem you selected has more than two stanzas).
5. Discuss and decide with your group how you want to recreate the poem
You can choose any two of the options given below:
 - a. Painting: Turn the poem’s ideas into a picture or drawing.
 - b. Mind Map: Break down the poem’s themes, ideas and emotions into a diagram.
 - c. Song: Turn the poem into lyrics and create a tune.

- d. Novella: Expand the poem into a short story, adding details about characters or setting.
6. Write down a plan for your work. For example:
- a. What steps will you take to ensure the outcome depicts what you intend?
 - b. What materials will you need (e.g. paper, markers, instruments)?
 - c. Make sure your plan has deadlines so you can finish on time.
 - d. Start creating your artistic piece. Be systematic: focus on one part of your project at a time.

Activity 10.4

Poetry exhibition

1. With your teacher, plan how your group will exhibit your work.
2. As a group, rehearse explaining your piece. Think about:
 - a. What inspired your group?
 - b. How does your creation connect to the poem?

Example

Poem: “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost

Painting: Draw two roads in a forest, one with footsteps and one without footsteps (vividly painted), showing the choices described in the poem.

Creating Short Poems

A short poem is a poem of about 9 lines or a poem of 60 or fewer words. Some can be more than or less and may still be considered short. Qualities of short poems include conciseness, clarity and simplicity. Examples of short poems include Haiku, Limerick and Clerihew.

A Step-By-Step Guide to Writing Your Own Short Poem

Step 1: Choose a theme. Select a theme for your poem. Here are some examples: nature, love, friendship, seasons, dreams, adventure

Step 2: Select poetic elements: Choose at least two poetic elements to include in your poem. e.g. Simile, metaphor, alliteration, personification and rhyme

Step 3: Brainstorm Ideas: Write down a few ideas related to your theme. Think about images, feelings and words.

Step 4: Write Your Poem. Here’s a structure to help you get started:

Title:

Line 1: (Introduce your theme)

Line 2: (Describe an image or feeling)

Line 3: (Use a poetic element)

Line 4: (Continue the description or introduce a new idea)

Line 5: (Conclude with a strong image or feeling)

Example Poem

Title: Harmattan's Touch

Line 1: Harmattan wind lands gently,

Line 2: Painting us in fine white dust,

Line 3: Like whispers in the air,

Line 4: Skin feels dry and cracked,

Line 5: Embracing the season's hold.

Activity 10.5

1. Form a group of five and list some of the poetic devices you learned in your previous lessons.
2. Each member of the group should select at least one of each of the following poetic devices and explain them to the group, giving examples: Metaphor, rhyme, metre, and symbolism.
3. Based on your knowledge of poetic devices, we are going to create our own poem. Follow these steps as you do so:
 - i. Think of what you want the poem to be about. What is the story behind that?
 - ii. How many lines do you want the poem to have (maximum)?
 - iii. Write down the story behind the poem.
 - iv. Creatively rewrite this story. Think of a better and more creative way to say what you want to say. Use as few words as possible. As you do so, remember to incorporate the poetic devices you have just discussed in your group.

For example:

I had been taught to think positively and to look out for the positive side of things. Then one day when I was walking, the wind started bowing. I had permed hair, and I had parted my hair in the middle and combed it down beautifully. Unfortunately, the

wind started blowing my hair into my face and just when I was about to get angry, I decided to look at the positive side of it. I asked myself: What if the wind was just admiring me and it wanted to give me a hug? I started smiling because it made sense. I felt proud, but I knew that if I told my friend that the wind hugged me today, she would not understand. I then concluded that, the hair that was left on my face was not to ruin my hair but as evidence, so everyone believes it if I told them that I had been hugged by the wind.

The Resulting Poem

The breeze came hugging
 Admiring my beauty
 But knowing your snagging
 Left this cutie
 Right here in my face

4. In groups, write down the poetic devices you used in your poem and how they affect your work?
5. Now that you know how to write a poem, keep practicing by writing another poem using the same process. Write your poem beautifully on a designed a manila card for exhibition.
6. Plan an exhibition for your work and invite other teachers to come and witness. The following could guide the process of planning:
 - i. What is the theme of the exhibition?
 - ii. What are you going to display for the exhibition?
 - iii. Are there other works or exercises that could be used for this exhibition?
 - iv. Do these other exercises go with the theme?
 - v. Must the works be re-written boldly so others can, see?
 - vi. Do we need a colour theme?
 - vii. Which resource persons will be involved?

Review Questions

1. Carefully read S.O.H. Afriyie –Vidza’s Hearty garlands and perform the poem using appropriate body language, gestures, intonation, tone, tempo and volume in front of your family and friends. Scan this QR code to watch a video to guide you in your performance.



2. Create sketches/rap songs out of existing poems and record a video while performing them.
3. Choose a poem that inspires you and create an image based on it. Give the painting a beautiful caption. Share your artwork with friends, family or people in your community and gather their feedback.
4. Write a short African poem on a theme or themes that depict any of our core values as a nation. Share your artwork with friends, family or people in your community and gather their feedback.
5. Reflect, write and share what your highest and lowest points have been so far, studying literature. How do you hope to improve upon the latter?
6. What new things have you learned by studying literature?
7. How has literature impacted your life?

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