



# Flow Poetry with ecoaborijanelle

## Overview

Join spoken word poet Janelle “ecoaborijanelle” Pewapsconias. Using flow poetry, you and your students will explore our Saskatchewan watersheds and water systems as a topic of focus for poetic expression and scientific inquiry.

The broadcast will include performances by the artist as well as opportunities to observe a collaborative writing process, practise induction and deduction, and assess the created piece based on their flow poetry skills developed.

## Artist Bio

Janelle “ecoaborijanelle” Pewapsconias (she/her) is a Nehīyaw Spoken Word Poet, Community Engaged Researcher, Social Innovator, and Public Speaker based in the Treaty Lands now known as Little Pine First Nation, Treaty 6 Territory on Saskatchewan. As a reserve-based artist, she practices, organizes, and builds her spoken word practice that continues the oral tradition and celebrates narratives of Indigenous survivance and strength\*.

She believes in ahkamemowin (“ahh-gkaa-mey-moo-win” 5 syllables) – meaning: having resilience and never giving up. Impassioned and determined, Janelle “ecoaborijanelle” Pewapsconias brings the message: “your words are alive, your words matter, let us tell our stories with care”.

**Strand:** Drama  
**Grades:** 5 – 8  
**Content:** 45 minute broadcast + hands-on activity

### **Classroom Setup:**

- Students can stay at their desks
- Data projector/projection system
- Audio/speakers

### **Materials:**

- Paper and pencil for a visual narrative lab report
- Access to internet to find images for resources

## **Curriculum Aims & Goals**

### **Aim:**

The aim of K-12 Arts Education is to enable students to understand and value arts expressions throughout life.

### **Creative/Productive:**

Students will inquire, create, and communicate through dance, drama, music and visual art.

### **Critical/Responsive:**

Students will respond to artistic expressions of Saskatchewan, Canadian and International artists using critical thinking, research, creativity and collaborative inquiry.

### **Cultural/Historical:**

Students will investigate the content and aesthetics of the arts within cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts, and understand the connection between the arts and human experience.

## **Creative/Productive**

### **CP5.5**

Demonstrate increased skills and abilities in use of the voice and one or more instruments.

### **CP5.8**

Create art works using a variety of visual art concepts (e.g., positive space), forms (e.g., graphic design, photography), and media (e.g., mixed media, paint).

### **CP6.9**

Create sound compositions that explore relationships between music and identity (e.g., influencing factors such as pop culture, cultural heritage, peer groups, personal and family interests, gender).

### **CP7.6**

Express ideas about the importance of place (e.g., relationships to the land, local geology, region, urban/rural environments) in drama and/or collective creation.

### **CP8.6**

Express student perspectives on social issues (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, sustainability, gangs) in drama and/or collective creation.

## Critical/Responsive

### CR6.1

Create personal responses to a variety of arts expressions (e.g., respond to music using poetry, or respond to visual art using music).

### CR7.2

Investigate and identify ways that the arts can communicate a sense of place.

### CR8.1

Respond to professional dance, drama, music, and visual art works through the creation of own arts expressions.

## Cultural/Historical

### CH5.2

Compare traditional and evolving arts expressions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists from different regions of Canada, and examine influences of pop culture on contemporary arts.

### CH6.2

Identify ways that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists express cultural identity in contemporary work.

### CH7.2

Investigate how Indigenous artists from around the world reflect the importance of place (e.g., relationship to the land, geology, region, urban/rural environments).

### CH8.1

Research and share insights about arts expressions that incorporate social commentary.

### CH8.2

Analyze the influence of social issues on the work of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists, and share results.

### CH8.4

Examine and respond to the work of artists who incorporate more than one art form in their work (e.g., combining poetry and music).

## Outcomes Tips for Teachers

Grade 5 – Encourage students to use their own photography of water to inspire their poetry in place of finding images online.

Grade 6 – Ask students to personify water and think of the natural ecosystems as bodies and utilize language to convey these concepts.

Grade 7 – Discuss with students the importance of land and water to Indigenous peoples in the past and the present. Ask them to share their opinions and allow room for perspectives to be re-evaluated.

Grade 8 – Encourage students to incorporate current social/political/environmental issues into their poetry about the water.

## **Timeline of Broadcast**

- Artist Intro & Bio Video and Introduction
  - View the LIVE Arts video of the artist
  
- Artist performance of '*Flow Poetry*' on the Prairies
  - Performance of spoken word poetry piece about the water system in Saskatchewan
  
- Artist lecture on '*Flow Poetry*' on the Prairie waters
  - Introduction to flow as a poetry device
  - Introduction to patterns of flow
  
- "Writing Watershed into Words" Poetry Lab
  - Create a word bank and list of rhymes based on the images of waterbodies within the prairies
  - Create 4-12 lines of flow poetry utilizing the word bank, list of rhymes
  - Speed read the poem and revise
  
- Review and wrap up
  - Lesson review and closing circle

# Teacher Guided Post-Broadcast Activity

## “Writing Watersheds into Words” Poetry Lab

60 – 120 minutes

The “Writing Watersheds into Words” Poetry Lab is the post-broadcast exercise for the “Flow Poetry with Spoken Word with ecoaborijanelle”. This activity is to offer space for observations of students’ water system and craft a piece of flow poetry (**think**) based on the bank of words and rhymes developed on their own. In **pairs**, the students will edit and speedread their 8-12 line works. As a large group, students will then **share** their piece with the class.

The lesson plan can include land based elements like a nature walk and visit to the water during the arts lab and sharing activity.

## Prepare for the Activity

- Prepare at least 4+ images of water bodies within your watershed in your area. Google has several images to share with your class, but the most impactful will be real life images of waterbodies within your region.
- In addition to the images, a nature walk near a body of water can support the relationship-building between students and nature. Please take appropriate bottles of water, outdoor wear, and notetaking/visual art with a writing tool to record their observations.
- Also, please consider bringing special stationary for students who may not be able to bring their own from home. All our words matter.

## Proposed activity schedule

- 1) Invite students to sit in their desk or comfortable space to observe, think, and create a poetic 'narrative lab report' to tell the story of their process and findings.

Narrative Lab Reports tell the story of their process and findings by addressing four questions:

- What was I looking for?
- How did I look for it?
- What did I find?
- What do these things mean?

Students can utilize their notes, reflections, and other supplementary material from the teacher to deduce, reflect, and create a narrative lab report.

- 2) Begin the session by reviewing the topic of 'flow poetry' and how pattern can be found within this style of poetry.

*Flow poetry is a term to describe writing that makes sense in the story, structure of the poem, and language within and between sentences and paragraphs.*

*Pattern in flow poetry can be presented as:*

- *Line length*
- *Rhyming on beat*
- *Stanza format*
- *Flow of the words*
- *Ideas*
- *Smooth even movements*

- 3) Review the poetry samples/slides in the video of "Flow Poetry on the Prairie" by ecoaborijanelle with students. Utilizing the smartboard or markup features of the slides, analyze and identify the flow within the piece.

- 4) In this portion of the arts lab, we will take our nature walk near water or present the images of the bodies of water within your regional watershed. Teachers will facilitate the creation of a word bank and add to the bank with rhyming words.
- 5) **Think** - On their own, students are to utilize their writing pads and tools to create a piece of work to reflect what they are witnessing. Alternatively, students can draft a spoken word piece or an improv 60 second story based on drawings or doodling. Students should be given a goal for the number of lines, depending on their capacity. It can be a short poem in a simple pattern e.g. AABB, ABAB, ABCB, AABBC, haiku, free style, etc.

Reinforce the process by asking students to see the world and images around them and create characters, small stories, or wild narratives about the water body and living organisms around them.

**Freewriting** is writing/creating/keeping pencil to page for a set amount of time. Start your group with a timed session, even just 10 minutes could have a productive outcome. Encourage students to write non-stop and to let their writing “flow” from one idea to the next. Writing many words and connecting ideas is a practice of writing by poets and other writers.

- 6) **Pair** – In pairs, students are to share their writing or created piece to practice their narrative reports of their experiences. Students are to listen to their partner, lend ideas and feedback, and read their work with their partner, as well as, receive constructive feedback.

Reinforce the paired activity by asking students to describe “how did I look for it?”

- 7) **Share** – In the large group, ask students to share the story of their narrative report writing or piece. This is the opportunity for students to practice spoken word and public speaking techniques.

Reinforce the class activity by asking students to describe “what did I find?”

- 8) Conclude the arts lab by reflecting on the lessons learned throughout your lesson plan, and relates the class to the larger, real-world connection by answering the question, “What do these things mean?” in relationship to the focus of your class curriculum.

**Polished artworks and poetry pieces can be put on display. For further writing or art prompts about protecting and celebrating our relationships with water, please join ecoaborijanelle throughout the month of April 2021 for daily art prompts!**

## **Supplementary information**

- **@30forthewater.** Join #30ForTheWater on Instagram and social media for daily poem and art challenge prompts all throughout the month of April! Open all year, art works will be shared on the Instagram story for viewing of all participants across North America.  
<http://instagram.com/30forthewater>
- **The Four Levels of Flow in Writing.** What it means when writing flows, from a teacher's perspective. <https://www.grammarflip.com/blog/the-four-levels-of-flow-in-writing-what-it-means-when-writing-flows>
- **National Poetry Writing Month (NaPoWriMo).** National Poetry Writing Month is a creative writing project held annually in April in which participants attempt to write a poem each day for one month in the United States of America and Canada. In April 2021, the League of Canadian Poets is celebrating with the theme of resilience. For more updates visit their website. <https://poets.ca/npm/>
- **Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin.** Since 1993, Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB) has promoted stewardship and sustainability of the Saskatchewan River Basin. <http://www.saskriverbasin.ca/>
- **Rhyme Zone.** A language arts reference tool and comprehensive search engine for words. Includes the functions of a rhyming dictionary, thesaurus, and spelling checker.  
[www.rhymezone.com](http://www.rhymezone.com)
- **Structure in Poetry.** The structure of a poem refers to how it was crafted. A poem with strong structure allows the reader to move easily from beginning to end, helping to create a particular response within the reader.  
<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/article-structure-in-poetry#:~:text=The%20structure%20of%20a%20poem%20refers%20to%20the%20way%20it,how%20it%20should%20be%20read>
- **Thesaurus.** An online source that lists words in groups of synonyms and related concepts.  
[www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)