SPOKEN WORD POETRY

1. Write your poetry to reflect an observation you have about society, an important issue, or simply something from your own experience. Spoken word poetry makes a statement typically in a liberal fashion about something in modern society.

2. Write a rough draft of your poem, focusing only on the emotions and ideas you want to express. Do not worry about verses, rhyming or even complete sentences—simply get the feeling you want on paper.

3. Begin to craft your poem. It should consist of short rhythmic stanzas. Spoken word poetry is typically quite strong and blunt.

4. Choose strong words. If you are trying to say the word "say," you might try "spit" or "spew" for more impact. The more dynamic, the better. Do not be too formal in your presentation since formality is the antithesis to spoken word poetry.

5. Look for a few places to use metaphors or similes in your poem, which are common elements of any type of poetry and help add description. If one line reads "I felt empty," change it to something like "I felt like a hollow drum," which gives the listeners and readers a more visual sense of your emotions. Create original phrasings to express your ideas.

6. Read the poem aloud to yourself, then for a few friends. Read with emotion and passion: spoken word poets are performers. Find the rhythm and lyricism of your poem, and if some parts are awkward, revise as necessary.

7. Practice how you will deliver the poem; the way your voice will rise and fall, which parts will be read quickly, which parts slowly. What words will you emphasize? And what part will hand gestures play?