



Dear Students,

Welcome to a close encounter of a literary kind, indeed, with art in all its forms. In these SpeakTogether creative arts toolkits, we will explore what happens when the written word meets visual art. Here at House of SpeakEasy, we believe that there are many different and valid ways of learning. You are familiar with the lecture style, where a teacher presents the material to you. In this way, each toolkit will be facilitated by your teacher. But in order to get the most out of each toolkit, you will be required to be an autodidact; that means being a self-learner.



Jason Reynolds on "Turn the Page"

Self-learning is pretty simple. To be a self-learner, you simply need to ask questions. And when you don't know the answers to those questions, you look for the answers! If you hear a word that you don't quite know, just look it up or ask your teacher! If you hear of an artist or an idea or a movement that you would like to follow up on, then write it down. Later, when you have some time, look it up! If you keep all your questions in a journal, pretty soon you'll have a catalog of all the things you've learned through our SpeakTogether toolkits.

At the heart of every toolkit is a true and personal story originally performed by an author on stage in front of high school students. These talks were recorded and the videos are now available to be shared with new audiences, like you. Each toolkit is inspired by the ideas and themes that arise from these authors' stories, including topics like coming of age, finding your voice, and making your own



Rachel Eliza Griffiths on "It's Now or Never"

path. After watching a video, your teacher will use the toolkit to guide you through a closer experience with the writer by providing discussion topics and questions, writing exercises, art-making projects, and supplemental reading materials.



Mahogany L. Browne on "The Road Not Taken"

One of the most important parts of each toolkit is the art-making activity. The activities can range from writing your own story or poem to completing a visual arts project. These activities may take only a few minutes in class or may require you to finish your projects at home. Regardless of the size of the activity, they will require your curiosity, imagination, and follow-through. Discipline and practice are fundamental to making art, and this is your opportunity to start thinking like a creator.

These toolkits have been designed with you in mind. Our hope is that you will be inspired to make your own art, develop your very own art practice, and maybe learn a trick or two about writing and making art in the process.

Sincerely,

NK Iguh
Manager of Education & Equity
House of SpeakEasy Foundation



Daniel José Older on "You Only Live Once"