



Cinema/Chicago Education Program Screening : *Louder Than a Bomb*

Directors : Greg Jacobs, Jon Siskel

99 minutes

In English. Not rated

Please use the below synopsis, study ideas and questions, and helpful websites to lead your students in preparation and post-screening discussion. Following the film, students in the audience are required to respond to the screening with a one page essay that is sent to Cinema/Chicago. *

Synopsis

Four teams of supremely talented Chicago high school students harness the ecstatic power of words as they prepare to compete in the world's largest youth poetry slam right here in Chicago.

Study Ideas/Questions

1. Which student in the film do you find the most captivating? Why are you drawn to this student? Is it their poetry, their personality or both?
2. Nate's mother comments that he was a quiet child, yet he is a strong writer and performer. How do you think poetry can help someone find their voice? Is there something that you do (writing, music, dance, film) that helps you speak your mind and express yourself?
3. Slam poetry is said to have been invented in Chicago in 1984. Research (using some of the links provided below) the slam poetry timeline and history. How has it changed? How has it become more mainstream and/or become popular?
4. What are similarities between slam poetry/spoken word performance and hip-hop/rap? How are they different?
5. A single line or phrase from a poem can be inspiring. Is there a particular poem or moment in the film that inspires you or is most memorable for you? Discuss why.
6. Why do you think the Louder Than a Bomb program and competition is important and helpful for students? Are there any art programs in your school or community that offer a creative outlet for participants?
7. Compare the poets in the film to famous poets like T.S. Elliot, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Frost, or Sylvia Plath. How are their poems different or similar. What makes a poem a "slam" poem or appropriate for spoken word performance?
8. This film is a documentary. Do you think the filmmakers did a good job documenting the subjects and Chicago? Do you think they accurately depicted Chicago and Chicago students?
9. In the film, Kevin and Big C. are spoken to by their teachers about their attitude and behavior toward the rest of the team. How is slam poetry, and Louder Than a Bomb not only an individual activity but also a group activity?

10. Speaking your mind and expressing your emotions can be difficult. The Louder Than a Bomb competition has a saying, “The point is not the points. The point is the poetry.” Why do you think they stress this saying? Why do you think it’s an important saying to those who are participating? How does it take away some of the fear of performing?

Useful websites

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poetry_slam

http://www.slampapi.com/new_site/background.htm

<http://www.poetryslam.com/>

<http://www.cinemachicago.org/education/>

*Teachers who do not facilitate the completion of this requirement will not be invited to attend future Education Program Screenings