

TALKING POINTS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: ADAPTING HISTORY

Show & Theater Company:

Adapting History by Dahlak, a hip-hop-rooted performance artist, spoken word poet, actor, musician, and writer.

Art Form:

Spoken word poetry with a hip-hop flair.

Context:

- Dahlak (full name Dahlak Brathwaite) is a spoken word poet. Born in Sacramento, he tours the country performing his poetry for audiences.
- ? What is the difference between spoken word poetry and rap or hip-hop?
 - Sometimes, hip-hop has a musical beat to it and spoken word poetry does not. Hip-hop also often follows more traditional song structure and rhyme patterns, while spoken word poetry may be more freeform. But even these “rules” are sometimes broken! Dahlak’s work is a little of both.

Main concepts:

- *Adapting History* looks back at some of America’s most innovative music styles, including gospel, blues, jazz, R&B, and more.
 - ? What do you know about these genres and their origins?
 - ? How old do you think these musical styles are?
- This show talks about the history of America through its music.
 - ? What is your personal “musical history”? What songs, artists or genres, are important to show who you are?

Special things to look for:

- This is a one-person show, which means Dahlak plays multiple characters. Watch for how he acts as a new person using not only costumes but also his body language and voice. How does he change the way he moves and speaks to portray different people?
- The story is told in four parts. Is it helpful to break the story down like this? Why or why not?

Virtual Theater Etiquette:

As you watch this show, try to immerse yourself as you would if you were at the theater in person.

- Find a quiet space to watch.
- Respect your space – in the theater, we don’t put our feet on the seats in front of us or jump and down in our chairs; wherever you’re watching this, treat your space with the same level of respect.
- Limit distractions.
- Use the restroom before the show starts so you won’t miss anything.
- Put any other electronic devices away.
- Clap when you see something you love!