

## PART TWO

### LESSON 1: “SHOW UP” BY JOE DAVIS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SHOW UP?

Joe Davis’s spoken word piece “Show Up” boldly communicates and explores what it means to **show up** for each other. The powerful words convey important messages about caring, supporting, and connecting with people and communities. It clearly connects to the message of the 2023 WITNESS theme of *Reawakening Love*.

“Show Up” was first performed over four years ago. It eventually led to **SHOW UP: The Music Project**, a 5-track EP of original music and poetry from Joe Davis in collaboration with over a dozen artists, activists, and community members. The **SHOW UP Music Project** is about what it means to show up unapologetically, authentically, and fully present in this historic moment.

Students will view a video of a performance, reflect on the meaning of Joe’s words through discussion and writing, and create a Graffiti Wall to communicate and express their own thoughts and ideas about **showing up**.

#### YOU WILL NEED:

- Video Recording of “Show Up” from the online VocalEssence Classroom Resource Hub, also located via this link: <https://youtu.be/PXC4EKKD0ko>
- “**Show Up**” **Lyrics Sheet**, included with this lesson
- Copies of the **Viewing/Listening Log** worksheet, included with this lesson

#### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “SHOW UP?”

**STEP 1:** Anticipate the message in the poem called “Show Up.” Based on the title, ask students to think about and share what the poem will be about.

**STEP 2:** Read the opening lines out loud. Ask students for additional thoughts about what the poem is expressing.

**STEP 3:** Before watching the video of “Show Up” featuring Joe Davis and The Poetic Diaspora, distribute copies of the **Viewing/Listening Log** to students. Read the step-by-step directions together. Explain/clarify how to work through the steps and how you will signal them to move on to the next step.

**STEP 4:** Students will watch and listen to the performance, following the sequence on the **Viewing/Listening Log** worksheet, and write words/short phrases/thoughts to **DESCRIBE** what they see and hear. Take time at the end for students to complete their worksheets.

**STEP 5:** After listening, have students partner up, share what they wrote, then discuss:

- What message(s) is the poet communicating?
- What words or phrases caught your attention? Do you know why?
- What issues, causes, events, do you think are important enough to show up for?
- Together choose one item from your discussion that you are willing to share in class.



JOE DAVIS LOVES WORDS, MUSIC, AND...CLOTHING! THE “SHOW UP” MOVEMENT REFLECTS THIS WITH A LINE OF HOODIES.

#### MINNESOTA STANDARDS CONNECTIONS...

Music, Artistic Foundations:

**Standard 3:** Demonstrate understanding of the personal, cultural, historical contexts that influence arts areas.

Artistic Processes  
(Respond or Critique)

**Standard 1:** Respond to or critique a variety of creations and performances using artistic foundations.

**Standard 3:** Demonstrate understanding of the personal, social, cultural, historical contexts that influence arts areas.

English Language Arts: Reading:

**Standard 1:** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it.

Writing:

Gather relevant information from multiple...sources and integrate the information...

**STEP 6:** Reconvene as a class and ask the students to share their selected thought, question, or insight.

- While students report out their shared comments, encourage others to listen **and** jot down comments that they found interesting to the question “What Does It Mean To SHOW UP?” **They will use them for the next activity.**
- Finally, read to students (or ask for student reader) what author Joe Davis says about the meaning of “Show Up.” (**see sidebar**)

**OPENING LINES OF “SHOW UP”  
BY JOE DAVIS**

*“We were each called to this place,  
This time and this season.  
You may not yet know the rhyme  
or the reason  
You may not feel, think, or believe  
in the same thing I believe in,  
But we’ve all been asked to  
SHOW UP.”*

**WHAT DOES JOE DAVIS  
SAY ABOUT WHAT IT  
MEANS TO “SHOW UP”?**

*“To show up means to be wholly present to what matters most to each of us, to show up for family, friends, and community to create the world we long to live in together. In the midst of this ‘Triple Pandemic’ of racial injustice, economic inequity, and COVID-19, we need to show up now more than ever. We contribute to the collective flourishing and well-being of humanity when we create space to unapologetically express our fullest, most authentic selves.”*

FROM: [HTTPS://JOEDAVISPOETRY.COM/SHOW-UP-THE-MOVEMENT](https://joedavispoetry.com/show-up-the-movement)

## RESOURCES & IDEAS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

Since Joe Davis first created “Show Up,” the poem has generated great interest and enthusiasm. There is now a whole movement called “*SHOW UP*” *The Movement*. Visit the website at <https://joedavispoetry.com/show-up-the-movement>.

There are multiple performances available beyond the video listed above and included in the VocalEssence Classroom Resource Hub.

### HERE ARE LINKS TO OTHER PERFORMANCES:

- <https://youtu.be/A3fD9bMvBOI>  
Joe performs “Show Up” at the 2020 Boom Slam! Teen Poetry Slam. Video recorded and edited by Anthony Ramos of ADR CREATIONS. This is an early version of the piece.
- <https://youtu.be/Q2w2VLeguQ8>  
This is the second single from the SHOW UP music project featuring artists Joe Davis, Traiveon, Imani Waters, and Courtland Pickens with youth choir KNOWN MPLS in a Gospel version.
- <https://joedavispoetry.bandcamp.com/track/show-up>  
A recent audio recording with electronic accompaniment + singers.
- <https://joedavispoetry.com/show-up-the-movement>  
This link includes more information about “*Show Up*” The Movement.

# LYRICS FOR “SHOW UP” | BY JOE DAVIS

## Verse 1:

Show up from wherever you are from.  
You can come here to be free.  
Bring your full self, both your head, and your heart.  
Your hands, and your feet.  
And anything and everything, infinitely beyond any duality,  
your sexuality, gender, race, age, or ability,  
we all have the ability to be.  
Without you, I’m incomplete. Without you, there is no “we”.  
I need you not just to survive, but to thrive.  
Come fully awake and alive with potential and possibility.  
I need you to show up.

## REFRAIN:

You may be hurting or afraid – Show up!  
We’ll gather healing along the way – Show up!  
We will be strong, we will be brave – Show up!  
Dream of the world we will create – Show up!

## Verse 2:

Join me at the table, it is wide and there is lots of food to eat.  
So show up, and be fed, and feed others, satiating a different kind of hunger,  
fueling the fire in our bellies.  
No matter what the journey you are on,  
no matter where you’ve been, or what you’ve done,  
all will be well, because we’re all welcome.  
You’re invited to respond, and in joyous song or contemplative nod,  
to laugh, cry, dance, write, breathe and bleed into the margins,  
and follow the call, to the farthest reaches of who we are.  
Whether you walk, run, crawl, or even if you fall in love,  
just show up.

## REFRAIN

## Verse 3:

Show up, to answer a prophetic call to justice –  
to transform both the soul, and the body that the soul inhabits.  
Show up with all your awkwardness, bad habits,  
show up with your doubts and questions,  
know here, you can ask them.  
Show up with your wounds and scars, we all have baggage.  
But just know that together, we can unpack it.  
This is no mistake – you are not here by accident;  
You are here to share the stories of your sacred passage.  
You are the only you that ever has been.  
You are not the magician – you are the magic!  
So show up. This place here, where there is no grace period,  
There’s only grace, period.

# LYRICS FOR “SHOW UP” | BY JOE DAVIS

(Continued)

Bring your fears and insecurities, let us marvel in mystery.  
Let us listen to each other to life with deep, holy listening.  
Do you hear it? Do you hear it?  
That’s the sound of the genuine within you.  
The spirit’s stirring near you, but if you don’t show up,  
how can anyone hear you?  
Show up, even if you don’t know for certain.  
You may have to treat the healing which this world is searching.  
This grand universe, we are but small workers with a big purpose.  
Because of our hearts, widening the circle,  
hearts that are open, hearts that are broken,  
so a little light can shine through, a little hope for the hopeless.

## **Bridge**

I came with the swag that was so unique,  
fly the flag and embrace the freak.  
Bring your off pitch singing and your ugly feet,  
you’re a piece of the puzzle, and the puzzle is peace.  
Like that, y’all, that’s all, you don’t have to act hard,  
you can just relax, kick back, take the mask off.  
That costume costs a lot, don’t watch how your thoughts come off the top.  
Don’t wait ‘till you got it all down, you might dig it like a volleyball,  
found life when you only thought death was,  
guess what, you messed up, you’re extra!  
Don’t diss the disbelief, don’t miss the mystery,  
your history’s history, without you, this place is incomplete.  
Your feet are speaking loudly by bringing you here.  
Your presence is worth more than a thousand speeches.  
Your intentions have been made clear,  
your mere body is a statement, your flesh is a hedge of protection.  
Each moment you spend here is an invaluable investment.  
Remember, your usual silence is not a good look.  
Your shrinking violent routine is bringing violence to the scene.  
So wake up, partner up, study up, listen up,  
keep up, read up, look up, don’t give up. And most importantly, show up.

## **REFRAIN**

Wherever you go, simply know: the spirit of this place goes with you.  
So go, readied with sleeves rolled up, always growing, never fully grewed up.  
Ready with all your heart, mind, body and soul – to show up.

# VIEWING/LISTENING LOG

*Watch, Listen, and Describe a Performance*



- 1. Do Not Write** for the **first minute** or so. Just **LISTEN\WATCH** and take it in. Get the feel for the rhythm, words, how the performer says them, and the musical sounds.
- 2. Keep Listening AND Start Writing** to **DESCRIBE** what you notice: words, phrases, ideas, instruments, performers and performance. Include any thoughts that pop into your head about what it means to “Show Up.” Keep writing until the end of the video. Details are great!

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3. When the video is over, read what you’ve written. **CIRCLE** the thoughts, words, ideas that stay with you. What was most interesting, memorable, or important?
4. Talk with a partner. Compare notes and discuss your descriptions **and** any thoughts or insights about the meaning of the poem.
5. Together decide on one idea/description/insight you will share with the class.

Your Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_