

# WORD!

*Spoken-word poetry is poetry that is written on a page but performed for an audience. Because it is performed, this poetry tends to demonstrate a heavy use of rhythm, improvisation, free association, rhymes, rich poetic phrases, word play and slang.*

A short list of lies I told myself  
When I turned 18:  
My parents can't tell me nothing  
I am a full-grown man  
My facial hair is on point  
My vote makes no difference  
I am learning  
The importance of voting my conscience  
How filling out a ballot  
Can create balance and eliminate nonsense  
From the system  
In school I was told voting  
Was my responsibility  
My job  
An optional choice that need be made  
No one taught me it was a right  
That so many people had fought for  
Put their life on top of the line for  
It's almost ironic  
How in the Information Age, we've forgotten  
The value of being politically engaged  
To force real change and sustain it  
We have developed into our own enemy  
It is time we named it  
Apathy  
A lack of feeling and passion  
Dulling outrage into inaction  
Constantly catching us slipping  
Always making us lose traction  
It's worst when we talk government  
Making commonplace mistakes  
About the House of Commons  
Misinformation is apathy's best friend  
Points us in opposite directions  
Fuelling confusion instead

So  
Let me remind you new adult citizens of a truth  
You will never work for the government  
The government works for you  
And when you vote you are the nation's CEO  
Every official elected with the task  
To represent you at the table  
You are the boss, they are the face  
Selected to put political positioning into practice  
Push policies into place  
Lawmakers hand-picked by the masses  
By you  
With a tick in a box  
Representing your thoughts on how  
This country should be run  
So when your time comes  
And their jobs are done  
Remember  
You could have picked your employees  
And if you did pick  
But still wouldn't change staff  
You can Tweet, write letters  
Hit town halls to make your demands  
Pay attention to their answers  
And when it's time to face the music  
You'll have a vote backed up by notes  
Get up and use it



# WORD!

## Culminating Activity

After you have listened to the spoken word recording, in groups discuss:

1. The speaker talks about how he had learned about voting as a responsibility. What did he learn later that really brought home to him the importance of voting?
2. What does he mean by “dulling outrage into inaction”? How do Facebook and other social media reinforce the truth of that statement?
3. On social media, you might respond to issues with a smiley face or other emoji, or give a thumbs up. Explain how you think the speaker might feel about that response to issues of the day?
4. Do you think he approves of social media as a source of information about government? Explain your answer.
5. What does the speaker argue is the relationship between you, the voter, and the lawmakers?
6. How can you as voters make a difference, according to the speaker?
7. What does the speaker suggest you do if politicians are not prepared to listen?

### Class Debate:

1. Divide into several groups and research one movement largely run by young people, which is trying to create change. Prepare a presentation to show what the group stands for, what they are trying to achieve. Consider how that group is dealing with politicians, and how politicians are dealing with that group.
2. In your presentations, discuss how effective the group is, and how they could become more effective.

### Individually:

1. In response to the speaker’s line, “when your time comes”, write a short poem or rap, draw a poster or create some other piece of art, about positive actions you could take to influence our politicians.

