

Where I'm From

Poetry

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Grade Level	8th – 10th Grade	**Time Frame**	50 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	3-4 days

Essential Question

How can poetry help people understand one another? What is the value in knowing your family history?

Summary

In this lesson, students explore themes of community and identity by analyzing a poem and creating their own poem inspired by the themes. Through these activities, students reflect deeply on their lives and learn to apply a variety of literary devices that allow them to express their creativity and share their voices. This lesson is written with 9th graders in mind; however, it could be used for many grade levels. This is a multimodality lesson, which means it includes face-to-face, online, and hybrid versions of the lesson. The attachments also include a downloadable Common Cartridge file, which can be imported into a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Canvas or eKadence. The cartridge includes interactive student activities and teacher's notes.

Snapshot

Engage

Students watch a spoken word poem video and respond using the First Turn/Last Turn strategy.

Explore

Using their five senses, students brainstorm memories and experiences from their lives.

Explain

Using Categorical Highlighting, students read George Ella Lyon's poem, *Where I'm From*, and analyze it for literary devices and figurative language.

Extend

Students compose their own *Where I'm From* poem.

Evaluate

Students reflect on their writing process.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

WME301: Analyze how the choice of a specific word or phrase shapes meaning or tone in somewhat challenging passages when the effect is simple

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.2.W.1: Routinely and recursively prewrite (e.g., develop ideas and plan).
8.3.R.4: Analyze literary devices to support interpretations of a text:
- figurative language (i.e., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery, symbolism, idiom)
- sound devices (i.e., onomatopoeia, alliteration)
- verbal and situational irony

Attachments

- Audio—Where Im From.mp3
- Brainstorming Graphic Organizer—Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- Brainstorming Graphic Organizer—Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- Brainstorming Graphic Organizer—Where Im From.docx
- Brainstorming Graphic Organizer—Where Im From.pdf
- Common Cartridge—Where Im From.zip
- I Am From Example—Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- I Am From Example—Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- I Am From Example—Where Im From.docx
- I Am From Example—Where Im From.pdf
- I Am From Template—Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- I Am From Template—Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- I Am From Template—Where Im From.docx
- I Am From Template—Where Im From.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Where Im From.pptx
- Original Poem— Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- Original Poem— Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- Original Poem—Where Im From.docx
- Original Poem—Where Im From.pdf
- Padlet Presentation Rubric—Where I'm From - Spanish.docx
- Padlet Presentation Rubric—Where I'm From - Spanish.pdf
- Padlet Presentation Rubric—Where I'm From.docx
- Padlet Presentation Rubric—Where I'm From.pdf
- Poem Rubric—Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- Poem Rubric—Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- Poem Rubric—Where Im From.docx
- Poem Rubric—Where Im From.pdf
- Talk Moves—Where Im From - Spanish.docx
- Talk Moves—Where Im From - Spanish.pdf
- Talk Moves—Where Im From.docx
- Talk Moves—Where Im From.pdf

Materials

- Common Cartridge (attached)
- Brainstorming Graphic Organizer (attached; one per student)
- Flip Presentation Rubric (attached; one per student)
- I Am From Poem (Template) (attached; one per student)
- I Am From Poem (Example) (attached; optional)
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Poem Rubric (attached; one per student)
- Talk Moves (attached; one per student)

- *Where I'm From* Poem (Original) (attached; one per student)
- Highlighters (multiple colors)
- Pencils or pens
- Writing Paper

30 minutes

Engage (Face to Face)

Teacher's Note

In this lesson, students use their memories of growing up to compose an original poem. Some students may find it difficult to write about their past. The activities are meant to be reflective and can be healing for some, but you know your students best. You decide how best to proceed. One option to consider is to allow students to write about their present if they are in a good place to share.

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to follow along with this lesson.

Display **slide 3.** Read aloud the essential questions: *How can poetry help people understand one another? What is the value in knowing your family history?* Ask students to consider this question and volunteer their responses.

Display **slide 4** and read aloud the lesson objectives. Explain to students that they will analyze poetry and determine how literary devices support one's interpretation of poetry. They will also compose an original poem of their own.

Display **slide 5** and play the spoken word poetry video Hands by Sarah Kay.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=kqCMHcdYR_E

Sort students into groups of 3-5. Pass out copies of **"Hands"** by Sarah Kay to each student.

Tell students: *In this poem, Sarah recites her memories of her own hands and what hands mean to us as humans. Read through the words of the poem and highlight a few lines that "speak to you." Take a few minutes to write about what you chose and why you chose it in the margins of the poem.*

Display **slide 6.** Tell students: *You will use the* First Turn/Last Turn *strategy in this activity. First, each of you will share one of the passages you chose from the poem with the group. At this point, do not explain why you chose this passage. Share only the words from the poem. Each of you will then explain why you think your classmate chose that passage. You can also share any comments you would like to make about the passage. When everyone has responded to the passage you shared, it is your turn to explain why you chose that passage. The next person in the group now takes a turn and continues as before until everybody has had a chance to share a passage from the poem.*

30 minutes

Explore (Virtual)

Distribute a digital copy of the linked **Brainstorming Graphic Organizer** to each student. (The link creates a separate copy of the organizer for each student.)

Tech Integration

If preferred, you can instead distribute to students the attached PDF or Word version of the Brainstorming Graphic Organizer.

Tell students: *Sarah Kay shared her memories of growing up in her poem "Hands." Think about the memories you have of growing up. They can be good or bad; however, a mix of both is ideal. When you recall your memories, try to think about the small things rather than the large moments. For instance, Sarah talked about holding her father's hand. Some readers might think that is a small thing, but it made a large impact on her life and created lifelong memories for her. Create a list by brainstorming memories from your life. Use all five senses while brainstorming ideas. Be descriptive. Don't just say "a large slice of pizza," say "a pizza slice the size of my chest." Here are some ideas to get you started:*

- Familiar foods: a scene at the table
- Helping cook family dishes or meals
- Family gatherings
- Familiar sayings while growing up
- Family members
- Ancestors, family names
- Parents' work: Did you get to help them? Were you in the way?
- Memorable experiences (small or large)
- Family traditions
- Vacations
- Description of where you grew up: the geography, house, town
- Familiar music, movies, books, games

Teacher's Note: Brainstorming

If students have memories that do not fit into the categories listed on the graphic organizer, allow them to create their own categories.

40 minutes

Explain (Face to Face)

Display **slide 8**. Explain to students they will be listening to George Ella Lyon read her poem "Where I'm From." Ask students to close their eyes and just listen to the words. Play the audio recording on **slide 8.**

Pass out a physical or digital copy of the attached "**Where I'm From" Poem (Original)**" poem to each student.

Ask students to read George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From." Tell them, *"As you read, think about how the poet creates a sense of flow in the poem. How does the poet use word choice to bring her poem alive?"*

Display **slide 9.** Explain to students they will be using the Categorical Highlighting strategy to analyze the poem. The categories are listed below:

- Pink - repetition
- Yellow - specific, vivid verbs and adjectives
- Green - imagery words (think five senses)
- Blue- figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism, alliteration)

Optional: Differentiation

If students need further instruction on figurative language, the infographic "12 Figurative Language Styles for Creativity" can be used to help refresh their memory.

Display **slide 10.** Ask students to answer the following questions when they finish highlighting the poem.

- What parts of the poem stand out to you the most?
- What images come to mind as you read/listen to the poem?
- How does the author create a sense of flow and rhythm and movement?
- What inferences can you make or conclusions can you draw about the poet after reading her words?

When they finish answering the reflection questions, instruct students to: *"Go back to your brainstorm list and add more of your memories to it. Remember to focus on your word choice using specific verbs and vivid adjectives and adverbs. Think of ways to describe your memories using all five of your senses. What did it sound like? Taste like? Smell like? How did it feel? What exactly did it look like? Could you compare it to something using a simile or metaphor?"*

Allow students time to complete the graphic organizer.

60 minutes

Extend (Virtual)

Distribute a copy of the linked and attached **I Am From Poem (Template)** to each student. Depending on your needs, you can use attached Word version, the attached fillable PDF version, or the following link, which creates a separate copy for each student: I Am From Poem (Template)///. Using "Where I'm From," as a model along with the template, invite students tp write their own "Where I'm From'' poem. Students should go back to their brainstorming list and plug their memories into the template to create an original piece of writing. When they complete the template, ask students to write their poems in Google Docs or another word processing application.

Remind students to include literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and imagery in their poems. (Refer back to "12 Figurative Language Styles for Creativity" if needed.) Readers should be able to close their eyes and experience each poem's memories. Tell students, "*No one else sees the world as you do. You don't have to know where to begin. Just start and let your thoughts flow."*

Optional: Differentiation

You may want to provide more examples of the *Where I'm From* poem format. Two examples of poems written with a similar format are given below:

- "*I Am From*" by Shelby Blackwood
- "*Where I'm From*" by Melanie Poonai

Teacher's Note: Venturing from the Template

Allow students to venture away from the template if they choose to do so. Giving students more choice helps create a sense of ownership of their writing.

Digital Options [DELETE]

Here are the links to the infographic and template your students will need for this activity.

Infographic

"I Am From" template///

30 minutes

Evaluate (Virtual)

Distribute digital copies of the attached and linked **Poem Rubric** for the assignment to help guide students' reflections. List the steps for the reflection activity for students:

1. First, think about the steps you took in writing your poem.
    - Listened to a model poem
    - Analyzed the model poem for literary devices
    - Considered the literary devices used in the poem and how the use of those affected the rhythm and flow of the poem
    - Brainstormed ideas for your poem
    - Used the basic form of the model poem to write your own
2. Next, write your thoughts about the process down on paper. Think about how each step helped you write your poem.
3. Submit your reflection.

Resources

- *I am from* poem template. [PDF]. Life Path. https://www.lifepathsresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/Narrative-I-am-from-Poem-
- K20 Center. (n.d.) Categorical Highlighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/192
- K20 Center. (n.d.). First Turn/Last Turn. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/50
- K20 Center. (January 27, 2021). Online Discourse Etiquette [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPUXQAuhD3E
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- Lyon, G.E. (n.d.) *Where I'm From* [Audio]. George Ella Lyon. http://www.georgeellalyon.com/audio/where.mp3
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- YourDictionary. (n.d.) *12 Figurative language styles for creativity* [Infographic]. Yourdictionary.com. https://assets.ltkcontent.com/files/figurative-language-infographic_2020-10-29-081532.pdf?mtime=20201029011532&focal=none