



Multimodal Narrative Writing

Thumbprint Autobiography



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Grade Level	8th Grade	Time Frame	3–4 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	Duration	150 minutes
Course	Composition, Creative Writing		

Essential Question

Who am I? What makes me, me?

Summary

In this lesson, students explore the essential questions "Who am I?" and "What makes me, me?" through multimodal narrative writing. For this creative composition, students engage in preliminary reflective writing and in an up-close look at their thumbprints. Throughout this creative writing process, students are also working with figurative language, question generation, and visual composition. Ultimately, students will compose a multimodal narrative that encourages visual literacy and re-think how a personal narrative can look. This lesson includes optional modifications for distance learning. Resources for use in Google Classroom are included.

Snapshot

Engage

Students complete a quick write and engage in a Think-Pair-Share session, then watch two videos about fingerprints.

Explore

Students reflect on and respond to the Thumbprint Autobiography handout. Using the Question Generating strategy, students will compose their own questions to answer in their Thumbprint Autobiography.

Explain

Students create an original Thumbprint Autobiography multimodal narrative using the pre-writing from the Thumbprint Autobiography handout and their own Question Generating questions.

Extend

Students publish their narratives by presenting their final work in a modified Gallery Walk to their classmates.

Evaluate

Students revisit their initial quick write and compose an additional reflective extension.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 8)

8.2.W.1: Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

8.2.W.2: Students will plan (e.g., outline) and prewrite a first draft as necessary.

8.7.W.1: Students will select, organize, or create multimodal content that encompasses different points of view.

8.8.W: Students will write independently over extended periods of time (e.g., time for research, reflection, and revision) and for shorter timeframes (e.g., a single sitting or a day or two), vary their modes of expression to suit audience and task, and analyze different perspectives.

Attachments

- [Lesson Slides—Multimodal Narrative Writing.pptx](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography Student Examples - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography Student Examples - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography Student Examples—Multimodal Narrative Writing.docx](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography Student Examples—Multimodal Narrative Writing.pdf](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography—Multimodal Narrative Writing.docx](#)
- [Thumbprint Autobiography—Multimodal Narrative Writing.pdf](#)

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Thumbprint Autobiography handout (attached)
- Thumbprint Autobiography Student Examples handout (attached)
- White printer paper
- Writing materials (pencils with erasers, colored markers, pens)

30 minutes

Engage

Begin by displaying **slide 2** of the **Lesson Slides** to introduce the lesson, then **slide 3** to show the essential questions. Move to **slide 4**. Ask students to complete a quick write as a bellringer over the questions:

What makes you unique?

What sets you apart from everyone else and makes you, you?

Give the students five minutes to write, then ask them to share one piece of information with a partner by using the [Think-Pair-Share](#) strategy.

Teacher's Note

To warm students up to share their quick write and engage in Think-Pair-Share, consider writing and sharing along with students. Going further, analyze a partner's fingerprint and share what was discovered. Be sure to provide guiding suggestions to students to think about, such as what is unique about their personality, goals, family, etc.

After sharing quick writes as a whole class, ask students which part of the human body is completely unique to each individual, guiding students to the answer of fingerprints. Tell students that they will be examining their thumbprints, and invite them to become acquainted with their unique prints by watching two videos.

Display **slide 5**. Play the first video, [How to Compare Fingerprints](#), until the 1:30 mark. Pause after each fingerprint part (the delta, loop, arch, etc.), and ask students to find these elements on their own thumb. As students are examining their prints for each different part, they may want to show and compare their findings with their Think-Pair-Share partner.

The second video, [Why Are Fingerprints Unique?](#), may be watched all the way through, and simply provides more context about the human fingerprint; this will help students think deeper and further about what makes them unique.

Teacher's Note

The combination of the quick write, Think-Pair-Share strategy, and two videos will serve as a brainstorming session for the multimodal narrative students will compose. Spend enough time in this Engage session to be able to refer back to these activities throughout the rest of this lesson.

40 minutes

Explore

While it may seem counterintuitive, rather than writing first, show students how their Thumbprint Autobiography will appear. Since this is a multimodal composition, the creation of the form takes a bit of time. This is where the in-depth analysis of the various grooves and elements of the students' thumbprints will pay off.

Display **slide 6**. Here is how the format of the composition should be created:

Teacher's Note

Before students try creating the lines of their thumbprint on their own, it is important for the teacher to model how to do it using a large Post-It, a whiteboard, or a document camera to show students how the teacher transfers the lines of their thumbprint onto paper.

1. Each student should have a piece of white printer paper. Ask students to draw a large oval, using pencil and pressing very lightly, and taking up as much of the page as possible, getting as close to all four sides as possible. This oval will serve as the border of the student's thumbprint. It is important to draw lightly, because this line will be erased later. For students who would benefit from a modification during this stage, there is a template provided on the **Thumbprint Biography** handout that may be printed to use or trace.
2. Once they have drawn the oval, ask students to begin to fill it with the lines of their thumbprint. The best way to start is to find the element on the print called "the core" (shown in the first video) and to draw that. The core is the central, "main event" of the thumbprint, and is a good place to start so that all other lines can radiate from it.
3. Advise students to find any other interesting elements of their thumbprints that stick out as unique and to draw those in next. Remind students that everyone is unique and therefore their thumbprints will look very different from each other; some students may have whorls and deltas and others may not.
4. Give students time to find all fascinating elements of their thumbprint, walking around the room and assisting where needed. During this stage, the teacher will likely be performing up-close observations of student thumbprints and helping to transfer the lines to their paper. Continually remind students to draw in pencil very lightly since the lines will be eventually erased.
5. The last step is to fill in the rest of the thumbprint with lines that will hold the writing. These lines should follow the same flow as the first shapes drawn in and repeat on top of each other. The space between the lines will vary in width, but it is best to keep them similar to the width of a sheet of notebook paper. If the space is too thick, there will not be enough room to fit the content written, and if the space is too small, there will be too much space to fill and too little room to write comfortably.

Teacher's Note

For students who are struggling with making their thumbprint "perfect," it is helpful to act as a supportive guide and remind them that the formation of the lines on the thumbprint can be very flexible. Truly, the teacher will not really know what each student's print looks like, so the real point of this formation is to draw in enough lines to hold content, not how closely the lines resemble the actual thumbprint.

Once students have completed forming their blank thumbprint, it may be set aside. Using the Thumbprint Autobiography handout (print and copy the attached handout for students to use), students will do pre-writing for this multimodal narrative by answering both the guiding questions and generating their own.

Teacher's Note

Until this point, students have been brainstorming and getting immersed into the theme of individuality. Moving into the stages of more concrete writing, this would be a good time for the teacher to introduce or review the narrative mode of writing, and more specifically to address that an autobiography is a work written by the author about his or herself. This autobiographical narrative will tell about the student's life experiences—highs and lows, ins and outs. Inform students that the following writing will be used to compose their narrative.

Display **slide 7** and distribute the **Thumbprint Autobiography** handout.

Since a narrative tells a story and an autobiography gives information about the life of the author, all content written for this composition will tell the story of the writer. Therefore, there are guiding questions that may be considered and answered on the attached Thumbprint Autobiography handout, and also the opportunity for students to engage in the [Question Generating](#) strategy to compose questions of their own to answer.

First, ask students to write out, on a separate sheet of paper, the answers to the guiding questions in complete sentences, providing as much information as needed to tell their story. As a homework or end-of-day assignment, students will go a step further and generate their own questions to answer for their narrative. For this lesson, the Question Generating strategy should work like this:

Teacher's Note

Tell students to only write about things they don't mind sharing.

1. Give students an element of inspiration on which to focus. For this lesson, provide examples such as either guiding questions or an image of a fingerprint displayed at the front of the room.
2. Next, ask students to generate questions that pertain to their story. These should be questions that they not only would be able to answer about themselves, but would be passionate about answering. Students may start by looking for a gap in the existing guiding questions. After giving students time on their own to compose their questions, set aside time for Think-Pair-Share discussion.

40 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 8**. Now that students have their blank thumbprint ready to fill and the content for their autobiographical narrative written, it is time to combine the two. Ask students to use light pencil strokes to fill in the lines of their thumbprint with the answers to the questions provided and generated.

Teacher's Note

During this stage, the teacher may ask students to get even more creative by drawing symbols or pictures, or incorporating figurative language into their thumbprint. For example, a student who generated a question to answer about a sport they play may describe their basketball skills by using onomatopoeia or a simile. A student who wrote about their favorite book may draw a symbol from the text.

After all content is drawn in pencil, the writing should be gone over with permanent color or pen. There are many options to use here, including felt tip pens, colored pencils, and thin-tipped markers. Some students may choose to go over most of their words in black, and save bolder colors for specific words, symbols, or figurative language.

Remember that it was important to draw the initial lines lightly in pencil. Once all content is written in permanent ink or color, the student's last step is to go back over the initial pencil lines and erase them, leaving only the lines of their unique thumbprint formed by their story in their own words.

30 minutes

Extend

As an extension, provide students with the opportunity to display their Thumbprint Autobiographies and to read the work of others in a modified [Gallery Walk](#). Display **slide 9**. To make this conducive to a class period and physical layout, desks may be arranged in small or large groups (one large circle also works well, if possible). Ask each student to place his or her Thumbprint Autobiography on their desk. This activity works well with music playing; you can play calming music for the period that students are reading the project in front of them, then when you stop the music, they move to the next desk to read a new narrative. This modified Gallery Walk works similarly to musical chairs, except in this version the opportunity is presented for students' stories to be read and learned.

Teacher's Note

Providing small stacks of Post-It notes around the desks works well for peers to leave positive comments on the Thumbprint Autobiographies as they are read.

Optional Modifications For Distance Learning

If conducting this lesson in an online or distance learning environment, you may choose to omit the Gallery Walk activity. You can substitute an activity with a website such as [VoiceThread](#). With VoiceThread, you can upload the images to the site beforehand. Then, students can choose whether they would like to make a quick video, a voice memo, or a written note to give feedback on other students' posters. [Download all attachments](#) to use this lesson in [Google Classroom](#).

10 minutes

Evaluate

Display **slide 9**. Ask students to complete this lesson by returning to their first quick write over the questions:

What makes you unique?

What sets you apart from everyone else and makes you, you?

Students should revisit their writing and extend it by writing about what they learned or remembered about themselves during this process. This final reflection can simply be an extension that remains in a composition book, or they can turn it in as a full paragraph to accompany the final Thumbprint Autobiography.

Evaluate students' Thumbprint Autobiographies by using a rubric. You can modify the rubric to have specific requirements (certain number of questions answered, specific instances of figurative language used, etc.). Rubrics to modify may be found [here](#).

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Gallery walk / carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/118>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Google Classroom. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/628>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Question generating. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/167>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-pair-share. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). VoiceThread. Tech Tools. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/2932>
- Life Noggin. (2015, January 22). *Why is every fingerprint unique?* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-OI95dpNSM>
- Ray Forensics. (2010, November 22). *How to compare fingerprints - The Basics* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrpTqKkgygA>
- Rubistar. *Create rubrics for your project-based learning activities*. ALTEC at University of Kansas. <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>