

WHERE I'M FROM

FOR THE TEACHER

<p>Adapted by: Jen London Subject: English 8/8 Honors Suggested dates to be taught: First two weeks of school (can be used as a way to assess student writing as well as a “get to know you” activity) or the beginning of a poetry unit</p>	<p>Common Core Standards: RL.8.4, W.8.4, W.8.5, W.8.6, SL.8.1a, SL.8.6, L.8.2c, L.8.5b</p>
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1. Materials

- “Where I’m From” assignment due date sheet
- “Where I’m From” poem copy (for students to analyze together as a class)
- Student-written example of poem
- Writing process information sheet
- “Where I’m From” planning family portraits worksheet
- “Where I’m From” planning details worksheet
- “Where I’m From” planning template
- Computers/publishing software
- Projector/white board (or SMARTboard)

2. Objective(s): Students will know/be able to...

- Students will be able to demonstrate how to effectively use the writing process.
- Students will be able to produce a poem based off of George Ella Lyon’s poem “Where I’m From”
- Students will be able to read and analyze the poem “Where I’m From” as a class by using close-reading and “marking the text” strategies. (to be done on the blank copy of the poem)
- Students will be able to produce a published piece of original writing using publishing software/computers.

3. Content and Procedures (Based on 50-minute periods)

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Where I’m From” poem analysis (teacher-guided) • Share sample poems • Begin working on 2 planning pages <p>HW: 1. Finish planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLANNING DUE • Discuss “Where I’m From” poem requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emphasize descriptive adjectives • Start “Where I’m From” rough draft in class <p>HW: 1. Continue work on rough draft</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue “Where I’m From” rough draft in class • Conference with teacher <p>HW: Finish writing rough draft</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEER EDIT (no rough draft = no participation points) • Continue working on rough draft revisions of poem after peer edit <p>HW: Make any changes to rough draft; be prepared to type in computer lab</p>	<p>Computer lab — type final drafts of poems & peer review</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin sharing poems in class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each student gives at least 2 comments ○ Teacher shares his/her poem first to “break the ice” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue sharing poems 	<p>(IF MORE TIME IS NEEDED)</p> <p>Continue sharing poems</p>		

4. Practice/Application

- Students will practice analytical reading skills by doing a close reading of the poem as a class. They will also repeat this when they share their poems aloud.
- Students will apply the peer review process outlined in the Writing Process information sheet to help improve one another's writing.
- Students will apply their close reading skills during the sharing time.

5. Evaluation of student learning

- **Formal:** Students will turn in their rough drafts/peer review notes with their final drafts to demonstrate an understanding of the writing process.
- **Formal:** Students will present their poems to the class by reading aloud in addition to turning in the hard copy of the poem.
- **Informal:** The teacher will guide the students through a close reading of Lyon's poem. Students will offer feedback as the poem is broken down line by line.
- **Formal:** Students will turn in the final typed drafts of their poems.

6. Homework

- Day 1: Finish planning pages
- Day 2: Continue work on rough draft
- Day 3: Finish writing rough draft
- Day 4: Make changes to rough draft; be prepared to type in computer lab

7. Modifications

- SPED students (or any other students struggling) can use the **TEMPLATE** page to help plug their ideas from the planning into a structured poem. They should still write out the poem in their own words, but the template will serve as a guide for them to see the structure of the poem.

WHERE I'M FROM

"If you don't know where you're from, you'll have a hard time saying where you're going."

Wendell Berry, among others, has voiced this idea that we need to understand our roots to know our place in the world. George Ella Lyon wrote a poem called "Where I'm From." The poem lends itself to imitation and makes a wonderful exercise of exploration in belonging.

George Ella Lyon's poem "Where I'm From" is full of details and anecdotes that make her unique. Where *you're* from can never be the same as where someone *else* is from. Once you start writing, you'll be surprised at how unique you truly are and, hopefully, you'll look at your background and history in a way you never have before. And, the best part? You will not only produce a poem, but you will produce an artifact that you can share with your family, friends, and classmates to show the world where you're *really* from.

Goal: I will describe my background through poetry. Through planning and drawing, I will create a list of places I've lived, details about my family and its heritage, my home(s), and everything else that makes me unique. I will show I can do this by writing a poem called, "Where I'm From," which will contain biographical information about myself.

DUE DATES:

- **Pre-Write:** _____
- **Rough Draft:** _____ (by the end of class)
- **Peer Review:** _____ (you **must** have your rough draft complete when you come into class to participate in peer review)
- **Edit and Revise:** _____
- **Final Copy (print out two):** _____
- **Sharing! 😊** _____

We will **all** be sharing our poems in class on _____ (yes, even the teacher will share!).

- **Everyone must comment at least twice** to receive participation points. Some of you will comment more than once – that's fine! This will push us all to be better listeners and writers.

WRITING PROCESS

Step 1: Planning/Brainstorm/Family Portrait

Think about what makes you *YOU*. Answer the questions and fill out the Family Portrait form.

Step 2: Rough Draft

Handwrite a rough draft of your poem. As long as you incorporate the “*I am from*” repetition, the form of the rest of the poem is up to you. Make sure to give it a title. “I Am From...” or “Where I’m From” is fine.

*If you are really struggling to come up with your own structure, ask me for a template.

Step 3: Edit and Revise (use a red pen)

Revise your poem. This means you are looking for places where you should be more specific, descriptive or could include a poetic device. Can your reader visualize what you are describing? Use your **five senses** and **poetic devices** (metaphors, similes, alliteration, onomatopoeia, personification rhyme) to help create a sense of being there.

Bad example: *I am from fried chicken and corn bread.*

Good example: *I am from juicy, crispy chicken – buckets full and Kentucky Fried, from Granny Mae’s top-secret corn bread factory, kept on lock-down at Fort Knox.*

Edit your poem. You are now looking for convention errors. Circle any words you think may be spelled incorrectly. Underline words that need to be capitalized. Add punctuation where appropriate.

Step 4: Peer Review (use a pen)

Have a partner read your poem/you read a partner’s poem.

- **Mark** any area that needs **clarification** or is **confusing** to you with a (?) **question mark**.
- **Circle** any **misspelled** words.
- **Underline** words that should be **capitalized**.
- Put a ☆ star next to any areas that could use more **descriptive language**.

At the bottom, draw a **2x2 comment box** and give the following feedback:

+ 1 positive comment (What did you like? What did they do well?)	- 1 comment of improvement (What could they do better? What was confusing? Where were they making the most errors?)
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Step 5: Rewrite

Now that editing and revision is completed, rewrite your poem by hand (no typing), fixing all that was marked in the previous steps. You may also add or change things that your reviewer did not suggest; this is your opportunity to get everything in the poem you want.

Step 6: Final Draft

Type your poem. Include your title, name and date at the top. The font should be size 12 and easy to read.

WHERE I'M FROM

by George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush
the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up! and Pipe down!
I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cottonball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments--
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.

WHERE I'M FROM (student samples)

Sample #1

I am from Texas
where deep in the heart lies Austin.
I am from the sunny Saturday afternoons
of Texas Longhorn football games.
I am from sports
and the lessons that I learn from these games
I play with all my ability and enjoy the victories.

I am from my family, friends,
and awesome food.
I am from my grandmother's warm pies
and my parents' cooking, from which
I grew to be a large boy.
I am from Texas barbeque
which smells and tastes like none other.
Although I cannot have it right now
I can still remember.

I am from Tennessee
where I live at the Foothills of the Smokies
and enjoy hiking on clear days.
I am from lessons in literature
and the sounds of a saxophone.
I am from the "try your hardest"
and "never give ups."
I'm from my hard work
and the present as I continue on life's journey.

Sample #2

I am from hairspray
From braces and rubberbands.
I am from lightning bugs
Fluttering in the summer night sky.

I am from Belle
The cute little puppy
We rescued from the pound
And Smoky the cat
Whose death still touches my heart.

I am from Papaw's goulash
And Momma's pumpkin pie
From Dad's overbearing
Protectiveness of his little girl.

I am from outrageous
Eleven foot Christmas trees
And joyous Thanksgiving feasts.

I am from French immigrants
From 1692 and New Paltz, New York

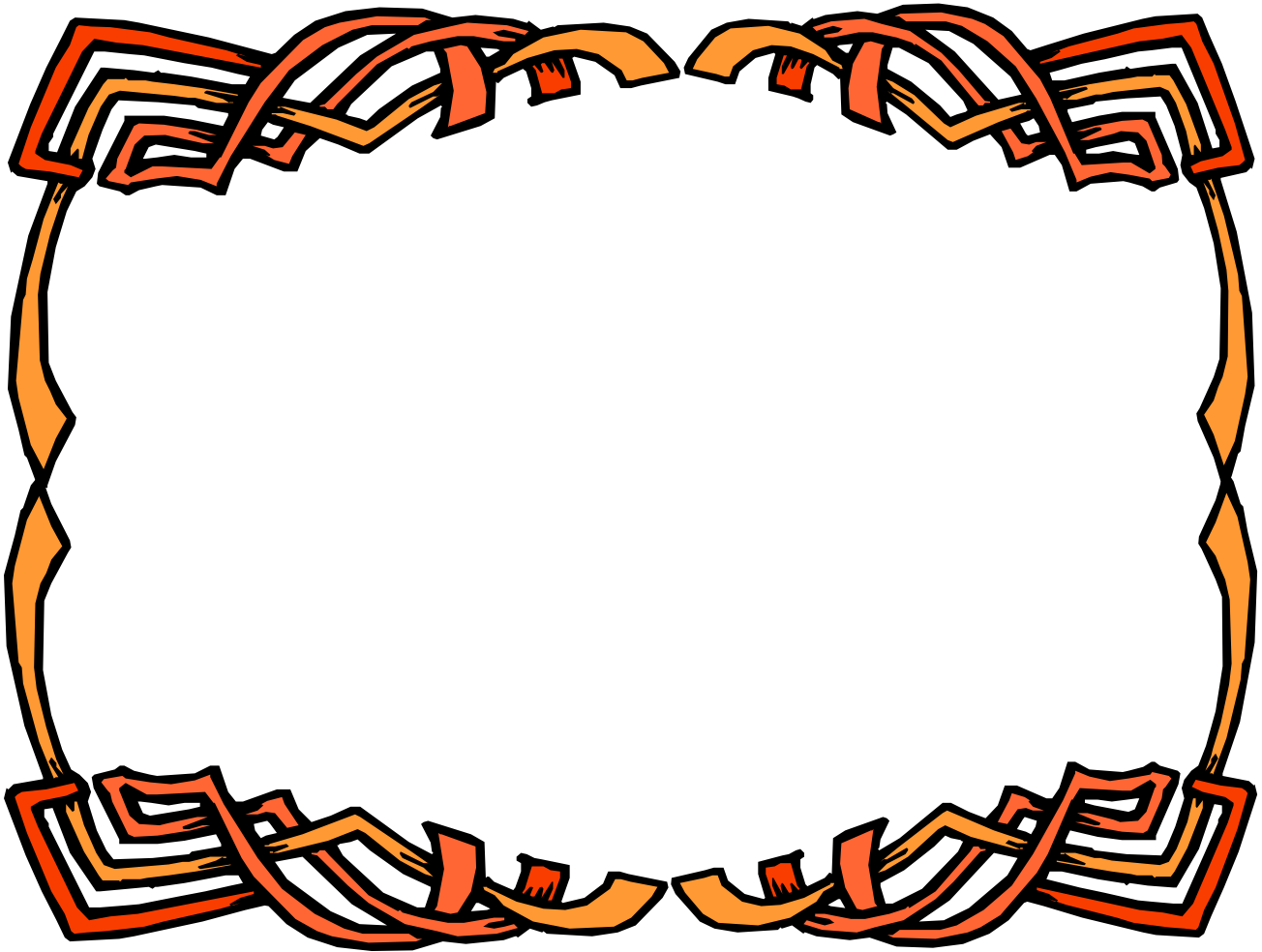
I am from Louis Bevier and Marie Le Blanc.

I am from the American dream
From broken despair and gained hope
I am the present, past, and future,
History in the making.

PLANNING: FAMILY PORTRAITS (PART 1)

Please share a special family memory that represents your unique cultural heritage.

Step 1: Draw your memory. Stick figures are acceptable. It does not need to be colored.



Step 2: Describe your memory/picture

PLANNING: DETAILS (PART 2)

Answering the following questions will help prepare you to write your “Where I’m From” poem.

1. Describe where you live. What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? (This could be your actual house, or it could be another place that represents where you are from – neighborhood, city, state)

2. What objects or belongings can be found in your home or room? (List at least three.)

3. What are the names of people in your “family” (they could be alive or deceased, they do not need to be blood relations)? Try to go back as far as you can in your family tree.

4. List two or three family traditions.

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5. What phrases, words or sayings are important to you or to members of your family?

6. What are some beliefs that represent where you are from? (religious/spiritual/cultural)

7. What foods are important to you or your family?

8. List 2 or 3 important childhood memories.

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9. Describe the weather where you are from.

10. What do people do where you are from?

11. What are your favorite things to do?

PLANNING: TEMPLATE

First Stanza:

I am from (specific ordinary item) _____
from (product name) _____
and (another product name) _____
I am from the (home description) _____
Adjective that describes the above home description _____,

It (tasted, sounded, looked, felt –choose one) _____
I am from the (plant, flower, or natural item) _____,
the (plant, flower, or natural item) _____
(Description of natural item) _____
I'm from the (family tradition) _____
and (family trait) _____
from (name of family member) _____ and (name of family member) _____
and (another name) _____
I'm from the (description of family tendency) _____ **and**
(Another family tendency) _____

Second Stanza:

From (something you were told as a child) _____ **and**
(another thing you were told as a child) _____
I'm from (representation of religious or spiritual beliefs or lack of it)
_____,
(further description of spiritual beliefs) _____
I'm from (place of birth and family ancestry) _____,
(Two food items that represent your ancestry) _____ and _____.
From the (specific family story with a detail about a specific person) _____

the (another detail of another family member) _____.
I am from (general statement with DETAILS about who you are or where you are from)

