

Dear Teacher:

I have used this lesson with 6-12th grade students of all backgrounds and abilities. Every single time I ask students to write their own poem inspired by George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From" I am completely awed by the depth of their writing and by the details of their lives they share in their poetry. I love using this lesson early in the year to get to know my students and to help them connect to each other.

It's an amazing way to have students use their own voice and build community.
Happy Back to School Everyone!

Your Poem “Where I’m From”

Directions:

Read “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon

Using the poem for inspiration, brainstorm in your journal. Then use the format below to write your own poem in the space below.

Begin with: **I am from** _____.

Continue on the next line with: **From** ____ **and** _____. (Fill in each blank with items from your list.)

Continue with: **I am from** ____ **and** _____. (Fill in the blanks as you did before).

Be sure to use:

- Sensory details (sight, smell, taste, touch, sound)
- Thoughts and feelings
- Figurative language (metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification)

Continue this format until you have completed your poem. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AT LEAST 10 LINES!**

Mrs. Wollenberg’s Where I’m From Poem

I am from handmade pottery mugs with a spot to rest
your thumb
From Pizza Hut and Long John Silver’s
I am from the ancient white farm house on 21 acres at
the bottom of the long dusty lane
from shrieking swallows swooping out of the red barn
faded to gray
From the musical tinkle of water filling up the spring
house that I helped build when I was five.
I am from the Big Oak whose low spreading branches
finally couldn’t stay up after lightning struck again
I’m from cutting your own Christmas tree that you
planted from a seedling and from crying for every
emotion
From Ann and Clair
I’m from fast talking and chaotic conversation around
the table long after the meal has been cleared away
I’m from Don’t make me stop this car! And You want to
cry? I’ll give you something to cry about!
I’m from red velvet pews and magnificent stained glass
windows as the liturgy became a chant I could say in
my sleep.
I’m from Johnstown, PA - flooded three times but pulled
from the waters to revive
From Swiss Germany and Slovakia with halupki,
haluski, kielbasa and pierogi
From the time my mom almost drowned and the time
my grandpa almost killed the new bull
From red cracked photo albums filled with black and
white snapshots captioned in grandma’s spidery hand
That tells the story of where I’m from and where I’m
going

Your Where I’m From Poem By You

Poetry Rubric

Name:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Developing Skills	No attempt
Sensory Details	Poem includes at least three details that appeal to the reader's senses and writes them in figurative language	Poem includes at least three details that appeal to the reader's senses with clear precise language	Poem includes at least three details that appeal to the reader's senses	Poem includes one detail that appeals to the reader's senses but may not be clear	No sensory details are included
Thoughts and Feelings	Poem includes detailed, expressive and poetic language which clearly identifies many of the speaker's thoughts and feelings	Poem includes detailed, expressive language which clearly identifies the speaker's thoughts and feelings	Poem includes detailed language which attempts to identify the speaker's thoughts and feelings	Poem includes limited language which attempts to identify the speaker's thoughts and feelings.	No thoughts and feelings are included
Poetry Format	Poem is written with clear lines, stanzas and poetic censure	Poem is written with a clear lines and stanzas	Poem is written with some attempt at using lines and stanzas	Poem is primarily written in paragraph form.	Poem is written in paragraph form with no poetic phrasing.
Topic	Poem is about a specific detailed memorable event or object (Rule of Write About a Pebble)	Poem is about a specific event or object (Rule of Write about a Pebble)	Poem attempts to be about a specific event or object but the scope of the subject is still rather broad.	Poem is about a somewhat general topic with some attempt to narrow the focus.	Poem is about a general topic.
5 W and H	Poem includes clear and precise details to show Who, What, Where, When, Why and How	Poem includes clear details to show Who, What, Where, When, Why and How	Poem includes some clear details to show Who, What, Where, When, Why and How	Poem includes few details to show Who, What, Where, When, Why and How	Poem does not include details that tell Who, What, Where, When, Why and How

Was this poem peer edited? If so, by whom? What feedback did you get?

Was this poem edited by one of your teachers? If so, by whom? What feedback did you get?

Was this poem typed and added to your writing folder?

Write Your Poem Here:

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