

LESSON PLAN 1

TITLE

Where I'm From: Pre-Writing

MATERIALS

- ["I Remember"](#) by Joe Brainard
- Where I'm From Pre-Writing Questionnaire
- Paper, pens/pencils or laptops/ipads

OBJECTIVE

Students will complete the Pre-Writing Questionnaire.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can I tell a vivid story of where I'm from by including sensory details in my writing?
- How does describing my home and my community reveal who I am?

WARM-UP

Free-write: "You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot — it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive." -Maya Angelou

MAIN ACTIVITY

1. Students will read excerpts of *I Remember* by Joe Brainard and identify the sense(s) (sight, taste, smell, hear, touch) in each sentence. Students can use a system of colors, draw symbols or use abbreviations to indicate the senses. Some sentences may evoke multiple senses.
2. Students will share examples of each sense that they found.
3. Students will complete the "Where I'm From" Pre-Writing Questionnaire

I Remember (excerpts)

By Joe Brainard

5 senses: See-blue, Hear-red, Smell-green, Taste-purple, Touch-yellow

I remember looking very close at cotton candy and seeing that it was made up of little red "beads."

I remember making a three-dimensional map of the United States with oatmeal and paste.

I remember the only time I saw my mother cry.

I remember taking baths with my brother Jim when we were very young, back to back.

I remember seeing a 3-D movie once and wearing red and green cellophane glasses.

I remember trying to pull a band-aid off with one quick yank.

I remember that Penny's father always had a pipe in his mouth.

I remember once secretly planting some watermelon seeds out in the backyard but nothing happened.

I remember, out walking in the rain, people scurrying by with their faces all crunched up.

I remember hide-and-seek, and peeking while counting to a hundred.

I remember peach-colored evenings just before dark.

I remember a dream of meeting a man made out of a very soft yellow cheese and when I went to shake his hand I just pulled his whole arm off.

I remember walking home from school through the leaves alongside the curb.

I remember being talked about as though I wasn't there.

I remember Christmas tree lights reflected on the ceiling. I remember the pale green tint of Coca-Cola bottles.

I remember big black galoshes with lots of metal foldover clamps.

I remember red hands from falling down on gravel driveways. I remember when, walking single file from class to class, getting out of line was pretty serious.

I remember the sound of the ice cream man coming.

I remember once losing my nickel in the grass before he made it to my house.

“Where I’m From” Pre-Writing Questionnaire

The prompts below focus on home and the community where you live. Engage your senses and be as **specific and detailed** as possible in your responses.

1. If someone were to visit your home and community, what are three (3) specific sounds they would hear? *Example: the bells on the paletas carts*
2. What are three (3) specific smells in your home and community? *Example: the smell of tortillas from El Milagro*
3. What are three (3) specific things someone could taste in your home and community? *Example: my grandmother’s tres leches cake*
4. Imagine you are giving a tour of your neighborhood. What would you want visitors to see and experience? *Example: I would want to show them the colorful murals on 16th and 18th street and take them to the elotes street vendor near Harrison Park*

5. What do you consider three (3) unique places in your community?
Example: The National Museum of Mexican Art

6. What are your two (2) favorite things or places in your community?

7. What are your two (2) least favorite things or places in your community?

8. What is something that you see every day or almost every day in your community?

9. Who is someone in your community who everyone knows? Why does everyone know this person?

10. What are two (2) things you would like to change about your community?

11. Who are the role models, peacemakers, and others doing positive / inspiring things in your community? What specifically are they doing to improve things?

12. What are three (3) activities that you and your family do together?

13. Write one line of dialogue that someone you live with says all the time. Put it in quotation marks.

14. Describe a ritual or celebration of your family or community. For example: You might describe honoring the Day of the Dead, or how your family celebrates a birthday, a quinceanera, or a holiday like Christmas.

15. Describe summers in your community and at home. What do summers look like, sound like, smell like, taste like, feel like where you live?

16. Describe winters in your community and at home. What do winters look like, sound like, smell like, taste like, feel like where you live?

LESSON PLAN 2

TITLE

Writing a Where I'm From Poem

MATERIALS

- Students' Pre-Writing Questionnaire responses
- [NPR audio "Where I'm From"](#) (in English)
- Excerpt of the NPR transcript translated into Spanish
- Ruiz Elementary School student model poem
- Paper, pens/pencils or laptops/ipads

OBJECTIVE

Students will write a "Where I'm From" poem that gives a sensory experience of their home and community to readers.

WARM-UP

1. Introduce new vocabulary: **crowdsourced poem**. A **crowdsourced poem** is created entirely from words submitted by the public on a particular topic or theme. This is done through social networks like Twitter and Facebook, and by email. It can also happen in person at events! This process can happen in one day or over a number of weeks.
2. Students will [Listen](#) to the NPR segment "Where I'm From": A Crowdsourced Poem That Collects Your Memories Of Home (7:13) and write down and share one line that caught their attention.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Writing a Where I'm From poem

Using the Sensory Pre-Writing Questionnaire and adding new ideas, students will write a "Where I'm From" poem that gives a sensory experience of their home and community to readers. Students will each share one line.

Where I'm From

Written by 7th & 8th grade students at Ruiz Elementary School, Chicago, IL

I am from the smell of coffee brewing in the morning.
I am from the sound of waves colliding.
I am from playing in the alleys with my cousins.
I am from the smell of my dad's caldo de camarón.
I am from the sight of a beautiful arch decorated every holiday.

I am from a place where you hear gunshots at night and
you pray that it isn't someone you know.
I am from a place wondering if the sounds are fireworks or gunshots.
I'm from a place where if you don't yell your words get drowned out.

I am from the sweet smell of my mom's arroz con leche.
I am from the warmth of my abuelita's tamales on Christmas Day,
her pozole on New Year's Day.
I am from the sound of church bells on a Sunday morning.
I am from where people interact with each other
because of the great bond they created over the years.

I am from a place where gunshots are your nighttime lullabies.
I am from a place where you can follow your dreams.
I am from the sound of music playing outside in the street.
I am from where all kids don't make it out and the cycle repeats.
I am from a neighborhood where dreams can be pursued,
if you're willing to take that leap.