

Lesson Plan

“Finding our Voice”

5- day Beginners Guide to Writing

**OBJECTIVES:**

Teach, Learn, Inspire

Sit in a circle with any age student(s), using Linda Christensen’s book Reading, Writing, and Rising Up and Teaching for Joy and Justice as a guide, begin rethinking writing

Open up lines of communication

Teacher and student(s) do work together on equal terms

Make writing about yourself and your story

Find your personal voice

Make writing fun and enjoyable

Learn from each other

Collect writings and make a personalized book for everyone

Day 1:

### **Name Poem**

The beginning of our story begins with our name. What is the story behind your name?

Why were you given that name? What nicknames did you have?

Discuss out loud

- Read "[My Name](#) 
- Read poems and short stories on page 12-13
- Writing Prompt: What parts of yourself reflect your family's history? How do you carry your family history with you? In what ways does it live with you? This could be focused on your name, but it could be many other things as well. What does it mean to come from your family? Where does your family come from? What is significant to you about your family?

Read story outloud to group

Group members can give positive feedback after each reading

Fill out "I Am" Worksheet

Read outloud

Write "I Am" Poem

Read poem to each other:

Identify what like about each poem

Day 2:

**Where I'm From**

Rotate and read each poem, looking at models (*JJ*, pp. 30-32).

1. Discuss commonalities and differences
2. What's notable about the form?

Write For My People Poem

Share with group

Watch Knock Knock video on utube

Have copy of Knock Knock poem along with video

Read some "Where I'm From" poems from the text 22-26

Notice use of imagery to tell a story and create a picture in your mind

Write another poem

Day 3:

### **Sweet Learning**

Read aloud from text:

“In My Father’s Kitchen” and “Abuelita” on page 29 of Reading, Writing, and Rising up

Have an open discussion about what Laura learned in father’s kitchen and what Alejandro learned from grandmother.

Make a list of own sweet learning experiences

Before writing a story go back to Laura’s and Alejandro’s story and notice how story was put together.

Notice the dialogue, character description, and setting description. Include these elements as they tell their story about a sweet learning experience.

Think about “Learning without words” Maybe interview someone who taught you something and incorporate that into your story

Write a story or a poem

Share with group

Day 4:

### **Drawing and Modeling**

Bring paper and crayons, marker's, colored pencils and using whatever supplies you want draw a map of one of the neighborhoods you grew up in.

As you draw, label the streets and neighbors' houses.

Expand the map to include to school.

Put an X in the spots and write quick little stories about spots in neighborhood.

After have a list of stories pick one to expand upon.

Before you begin writing turn the lights down and go through a guided visualization.

Go through the setting. Imagine the room or playground or where the memory took place.

What does it look like? What does it smell like? What sounds do you remember? Who else was there? What did they say?

Try and see, hear, smell and taste the memory.

Create a movie in your head.

Begin writing the story as if you are talking to a friend. Don't be afraid of making mistakes.

Everything can be cleaned up in revision.

Day 5

**Edit our Stories**

Writing Prompt: Favorite meal, describe setting, share recipe, how and why was it your favorite meal

Read Elements of Fiction on page 40-41 in Reading, Writing, and Rising Up

On page 42 go through the Narrative Criteria Sheet

Mark elements on draft

Use colored pencils to identify each of the elements

Begin redrafting the story

My Name, by Sandra Cisneros, In the book *My House on Mango Street*

*In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, song like sobbing.*

*It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse –which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female-but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexican, don't like their women strong.*

*My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it. And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but don't want to inherit her place by the window.*

*At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name-Magdalena-which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza.*

*I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.*

# I am poem



I am \_\_\_\_\_

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_

I see \_\_\_\_\_

I want \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I pretend \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

I touch \_\_\_\_\_

I worry \_\_\_\_\_

I cry \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I understand \_\_\_\_\_

I say \_\_\_\_\_

I dream \_\_\_\_\_

I try \_\_\_\_\_

I hope \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

# Writing an "I Am" Poem

## MODEL

### FIRST STANZA

I am (2 special characteristics you have)  
I wonder (something of curiosity)  
I hear (an imaginary sound)  
I see (an imaginary sight)  
I want (an actual desire)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

### SECOND STANZA

I pretend (something you actually pretend to do)  
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)  
I touch (an imaginary touch)  
I worry (something that bothers you)  
I cry (something that makes you sad)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

### THIRD STANZA

I understand (something that is true)  
I say (something you believe in)  
I dream (something you dream about)  
I try (something you really make an effort about)  
I hope (something you actually hope for)  
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

## EXAMPLE

I am polite and kind  
I wonder about my kids' future  
I hear a unicorn's cry  
I see Atlantis  
I want to do it all over again  
I am polite and kind

I pretend I am a princess  
I feel an angel's wings  
I touch a summer's cloud  
I worry about violence  
I cry for my Gram  
I am polite and kind

I understand your love for me  
I say children are our future  
I dream for a quiet day  
I try to do my best  
I hope the success of my children  
I am polite and kind.

*Knock Knock ~Daniel Beaty*

*As a boy I shared a game with my father. Played it every morning 'til I was 3. He would knock knock on my door, and I'd pretend to be asleep 'til he got right next to the bed, Then I would get up and jump into his arms. "Good morning, Papa." And my papa he would tell me that he loved me. We shared a game. Knock knock.*

*Until that day when the knock never came and my momma takes me on a ride past corn fields on this never ending highway 'til we reach a place of high rusty gates. A confused little boy, I entered the building carried in my mama's arms. Knock knock. We reach a room of windows and brown faces behind one of the windows sits my father. I jump out of my mama's arms and run joyously towards my papa Only to be confronted by this window. I knock knock trying to break through the glass, trying to get to my father. I knock knock as my mama pulls me away before my papa even says a word.*

*And for years he never said a word. And so twenty-five years later, I write these words for the little boy in me who still awaits his papa's knock. Papa, come home 'cause I miss you. I miss you waking me up in the morning and telling me you love me. Papa, come home, 'cause there's things I don't know, and I thought maybe you could teach me. how to shave; how to dribble a ball; how to talk to a lady; how to walk like a man. Papa, come home because I decided a while back I wanted to be just like you. But I'm forgetting who you are. And twenty-five years later a little boy cries, and so I write these words and try to heal and try to father myself and I dream up a father who says the words my father did not.*

*Dear Son, I'm sorry I never came home. For every lesson I failed to teach, hear these words: Shave in one direction in strong deliberate strokes to avoid irritation Dribble the page with the brilliance of your ballpoint pen. Walk like a god and your goddess will come to you. No longer will I be there to knock on your door, So you must learn to knock for yourself.*

*Knock knock down doors of racism and poverty that I could not. Knock knock down doors of opportunity for the lost brilliance of the black men who crowd these cells. Knock knock with diligence for the sake of your children. Knock knock for me for as long as you are free, these prison gates cannot contain my spirit. The best of me still lives in you. Knock knock with the knowledge that you are my son, but you are not my choices. Yes, we are our fathers' sons and daughters, but we are not their choices. For despite their absences we are still here. Still alive, still breathing with the power to change this world, one little boy and girl at a time.*

*Knock knock Who's there? We are.*