



Teacher-to-Teacher

Video Series
for Secondary Educators

TITLE: *I'm Nobody* Bio Poem

PRIMARY SUBJECT AREAS: Reading and Responding Component

GRADE LEVEL: 8 (adaptable to higher and lower grades)

OVERVIEW: Students will read, comprehend, analyze and respond to Emily Dickinson's poem *I'm Nobody*. A classic piece of literature, *I'm Nobody*, has often been misinterpreted. Discussing the poem will allow students to connect life and personal experiences to text. Students will then create a bio-poem and a mandala as a response to literature. This activity is aligned with ELA Content Standards 1, 6 and 7.

APPROXIMATE DURATION: 3 fifty-minute class periods

LOUISIANA CONTENT STANDARDS:

<http://www/DOE/assessment/standards/ENGLISH.pdf>

Standard One: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

ELA-1-M2 analyzing literary devices

ELA-1-M3 reading, comprehending, and responding to written, spoken, and visual texts in extended passages

ELA-1-M5 using purpose for reading to achieve a variety of objectives

Standard Six: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

ELA-6-M2 recognizing and responding to a variety of classic and contemporary literature

Standard Seven: Students apply reasoning and problem solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

ELA-7-M1 Students apply reasoning and problem solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

GLEs Addressed:

Grade 8

2. Interpret story elements, including:
 - stated and implied themes
 - development of character types (e.g., flat, round, dynamic, static)
 - effectiveness of plot sequence and/or subplots
 - the relationship of conflicts and multiple conflicts (e.g., man vs. man, nature, society, self) to plot
 - difference in third-person limited and omniscient points of view
 - how a theme is developed (ELA-1-M2)
3. Interpret literary devices, including:
 - allusions
 - understatement (meiosis)
 - how word choice and images appeal to the senses and suggest mood and tone
 - the use of foreshadowing and flashback to direct plot development
 - the effects of hyperbole and symbolism (ELA-1-M2)
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4. Draw conclusions and make inferences in print and nonprint responses about ideas and information in grade-appropriate texts, including:
 - epics
 - consumer materials
 - public documents (ELA-1-M3)
7. Compare and contrast elements (e.g., plot, setting, character, theme) in multiple genres (ELA-6-M2)
9. Demonstrate understanding of information in grade-appropriate texts using a variety of strategies, including:
 - sequencing events to examine and evaluate information
 - summarizing and paraphrasing to examine and evaluate information
 - interpreting stated or implied main ideas
 - comparing and contrasting literary elements and ideas within and across texts
 - making inferences and drawing conclusions
 - predicting the outcome of a story or situation
 - identifying literary devices (ELA-7-M1)

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES:

<http://www.louisianaschools.net/DOE/LCET/curric/k12stand.pdf>

Technology Communication Tools (*Communication Foundation Skill*)

Students use telecommunications to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts and other audiences.

Technology Productivity Tools (*Resource Access and Utilization Foundation Skill*)

Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity, and promote creativity.

Technology Research Tools (*Linking and Generating Knowledge*) Foundation Skill)

Students use appropriate technology to locate, evaluate, and collect information from a variety of sources. Students use technology tools to process data and report results. Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness to specific tasks.

Social, Ethical, and Human Issues (*Citizenship Foundation Skill*)

Students understand the ethical, cultural, and societal issues related to technology. Students practice responsible use of technology systems, information, and software. Students develop positive attitudes toward technology uses that support lifelong learning, collaboration, personal pursuits, and productivity.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

Geography: Physical and Cultural Systems

History: Time, Continuity, and Change

Art

OBJECTIVES:

1. The learner will read, comprehend, and interpret poetry.
2. The learner will relate poetry to personal experience.
3. The learner will understand the speaker in a poem.
4. The learner will respond to poetry through writing, speaking, listening and doing projects.

MATERIALS:

I'm Nobody poem by Emily Dickinson; *Momma, Where Are You From?* by Marie Bradby

Bio poem handout

Mandala handout

Rubric

Paper, construction paper, pencil/pen/computer, colors/markers, scissors, glue

TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:

Hardware: computer with Internet

Software: Microsoft Word

Web Sites: www.poets.org
www.beyondbooks.com/lit71/1f.asp
www.geocities.com/edickinson2002/
www.logopoeia.com/ed/
www.online-literature.com/dickinson
www.crayola.com

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Students should know poetic forms and elements and have basic keyboarding skills.

LESSON PROCEDURES:

1. Stimulate students' interests by having them write on index cards, five clues about their own identity. Clues might include information such as "I sit in the front row," "I have blonde hair," or "I like math," and end with the question, "Who am I?" Ask for their lists of clues, and read several randomly, allowing the class to speculate about the identity of each student. Discuss with class what it means to have a sense of self.
2. Display a transparency featuring the poem "*I'm Nobody*" by Emily Dickinson for students to copy into reading response journals or provide copies for them to glue into journals. Read the poem aloud several times or play audio cassette (Students love to memorize this poem because of its rhythm).
3. Have students respond to the poem by writing in journals what they think is the meaning of the poem and does it relate to them. Discuss aloud. (Point out that Dickinson is playing with the terms nobody and somebody).
4. Read aloud the book *Momma, Where Are You From?*, if available. Discuss how our roots give us a sense of self.
5. Distribute Bio Poem form. Explain. Have students develop a biography using the poetry format. With partners, have students complete writing process. (Rubric: Evaluation is based on appearance, effort, and content)
6. Distribute and discuss the mandala sheet. (If possible, download examples of mandalas from the internet.) Have students complete the sheet. Then have students draw mandalas as indicated; this usually works best if students have been given a circle-formatted sheet on which to draw. (Teacher should show a teacher-developed mandala and bio-poem project)
7. Have students retype/recopy poem and mandala on a display sheet, then back with construction paper (Rubric: Evaluation based appearance, effort and content).
8. Share with class. Then display.

ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:

For understanding, define and discuss terms (frog and bog) in the poem before reading. Model how the punctuation within a poem contributes to overall effort.

Playing the audio cassette several times will help ESOL learners comprehend the poem and understand the reading strategy of the poem.

REPRODUCIBLE MATERIALS:

"*I'm Nobody*" poem with discussion questions
Bio Poem form
My Hue (must be used in place of biopoem)
Creating a mandala
Bio Poem/Mandala Rubric

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES: Student's product is assessed through the use of a rubric based on appearance, effort and content. Peer revision is assessed through informal observation.

EXPLORATION AND EXTENSION:

1. Create a "being myself" collage. Search magazines, newspapers or clipart for photos expressing you in a unique way.
2. Go to the "beyond books" website to create *I'm Nobody* poem using parts of speech. Print and share with class.
3. Do a web search for information about Emily Dickinson. Create a timeline of her life.
4. Laminate student's sheets and collate into class book.

RESOURCES: Jacobs, Heidi Hayes, Richard Lederer and Sharon Sorensen. *Literature Bronze*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. 2000. Bradby, Marie. *Momma, Where Are You From?* New York: Orchard Books. 2000. [Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry](#). Columbia University Press. 1994. [Norton Anthology of Poetry](#). Norton 1983.

www.bartleby.com/verse/

www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/rp/intro.html

www.favorite.poem.org/archive/liang.html

www.dickinsonhomestead.org/

www.mandalaart.com/mandalas

www.abgoodwin.com (mandala maker)

www.berea.edu/galleryV/MandInfo.html

www.artbuilt.org

www.weeklyreader.com/read

REFLECTIONS: This lesson has always been a favorite of my students. It gives them a non-threatening view of poetry; they love discussing and reflecting upon Emily Dickinson's theme. It connects poetry to their lives; the poem remains on their minds. It allows for expression and creativity. Students enjoy reading their biopoems to the class.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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I'm Nobody
Emily Dickinson

**I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you – Nobody – too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell they'd banish us—you know!**

**How dreary—to be—Somebody!
How public—like a Frog—
To tell your name—the livelong June—
To an admiring Bog!**

1. What does Dickinson ask and tell the reader in the first stanza of "I'm Nobody"?
2. In "I'm Nobody," how do Somebodies behave like frogs?
3. Name three traits that Dickinson's Somebodies share, and explain your choices.
4. For Dickinson, what two key differences make Nobodies better than Somebodies? Explain.
5. Do you agree with Dickinson that it's better to be Nobody than Somebody? Explain.
6. In "I'm Nobody," how does the speaker stress words in a humorous way to show that Nobodies are special but Somebodies are not?

BIO POEM

I am _____
Write your full name.

I'm from _____

Add: Foods remembered from your childhood or family.

I'm from _____

Add: Items (Toys, clothes, etc.) held dear or remembered from the past

I'm from _____

Add: Characteristics of your childhood neighborhood that stick out in your mind.

I'm from _____

Add: People who were important to you in your childhood

I'm from _____

Add: Words or phrases that people said to you in your childhood.

EX:

I am Elizabeth Ann Smith.

I'm from magic cookie bars, scrumptious chocolate chip cookies, rice krispie treats, hot chocolate with marshmallows, fried chicken, green beans, mashed potatoes, and milk.

I'm from a ragged Betsy Wetsy, a well-played Monopoly game with money missing, pogo stick, roller skates with key, Bartholomew and His 500 Hats, Kick the Can, "The Patty Duke Show", plaid jumpers, and black and white saddle oxfords.

I'm from the cul-de-sac, the levee lot, the magnolia tree that smelled so sweet, and Ms. Elaine's pampered poodle.

I'm from Grammy, Parran, Mom, Dad, Aunt Lanie, and seven brothers and sisters.

I'm from "I'm gonna tell on you," "Wait until your Dad gets home," "It's my turn," "Let's go for a ride to the Dairy Queen," and "Love you, kiddo."

Creating a Mandala

A mandala is a wondrous and meaningful design made in the form of a circle. These special drawings were first created in Tibet over 2,000 years ago. Since then, they have been made by all cultures from the Aztecs to the Navajo Indians to people today. A simple definition of a mandala is that it is a circular drawing made to represent the harmony and wholeness of life or the wholeness of a person. Tibetans used mandala for calming themselves and for thinking about the meaning of their lives.

Today, people often create mandalas to represent a simple picture of who they are. To make their mandala, they begin by thinking of symbols which represent them. Ideas for symbols might be a dove to represent peace, a heart to represent love, an open hand to represent friendship, a rainbow for hope, a flute for love of music, a tree to represent a love for nature... The symbols which a person chooses are then carefully drawn in the mandalas.

A circle is the shape of a mandala because a circle is the simplest and most universal shape we find in the world around us. It is the form of the eye, the sun, a snowflake, a tree trunk... Also, since there is always a center to the circle, as you look at a circle, it exercises your mind and draws you into the center of yourself.

1. For a minute, think about the simple basic shape of a mandala, which is a circle. Close your eyes and imagine as many things as possible which have this shape. Write your ideas.
2. Now, think of some symbols which represent your interests, hobbies, future goals... Draw these symbols and explain what each one stands for. You want to select symbols which stand for you.
3. Also, think of colors which you will use in your mandala. List the colors and explain what each color will stand for.

Now put all this together and draw your mandala.

MY HUE

Hello!

My name is _____

If I were a color, _____

I'd be _____

If I were an animal,

I'd be _____

My favorite place is _____

My favorite snack is _____

I really get upset when _____

I love _____

EXAMPLE

Hello!

My name is Tim.

If I were a color,
I'd be the color of brass,
The color of trumpets and saxophones.

If I were an animal,
I'd be something fast and powerful,
Like a panther or maybe a cheetah.

My favorite place is the beach
When it's high tide
And huge waves are coming in.

My favorite snack is pretzels--
The big fat ones they keep warm
In a machine at Jolly's Drugstore.

I really got upset
When there's a baseball game on TV
And I have to mow the lawn.

I love listening to heavy metal
When my parents aren't around
to complain.

BioPoem/Mandala

Name_____

Rubric

Date _____ Period____

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The poem is written in the format presented | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. The poem is typed or very neatly written. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. The poem is free from grammatical or spelling errors. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. The poem uses vivid word choices and/or sensory language. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. The poem is about or pertains to the topic. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. The mandala follows the format presented. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. The mandala is neatly drawn and colored. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. The significance of the mandala's symbol is conveyed. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. The mandala expresses the biopoem composition. | 0 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. The biopoem/mandala shows evidence of creativity. | 0 1 2 3 4 |

Total _____
X 2.5

Grade_____