

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

3-5

Subject

English
Writing

Lesson Title

I Remember: Poems & Pictures of
Heritage

Activity Description: Sometimes, students may find it difficult to write about themselves and their heritage, such as where they came from, who they are, their family, their traditions, etc. In this activity, students will read poems written by diverse, award-winning poets that shines a light on the rich diversity of people in our nation, as well as the human connections and experiences they share. Using a style of poetry, known as Acrostic poetry, students will then have the opportunity to write about their own heritage.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Wifi access (recommended)
- "Remember" by Joy Harjo
 - [Read Aloud by Joy Harjo](#)
 - [Digital Text](#)
- [I Remember: Poems & Pictures of Heritage compiled by Lee Bennett Hopkins \(for purchase on Amazon\)](#)
- [Acrostic Poetry](#)
- Blank or Lined Paper
- Pencil or Pen

STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community, or by the children themselves.

Reflecting on Memory Poems:

1. [Read](#) or [listen to](#) "Remember" by Joy Harjo
2. Now, pick out and read a poem(s) from "[I Remember: Poems & Pictures of Heritage](#)".
3. After listening to or reading these poems, answer these questions:
 - a. How did you feel listening to/reading these poems?
 - b. What words or images stood out to you?
 - c. Can you relate to either of these poems? Why or why not?
 - a. What did you learn about the people, identity, and heritage from this poem?
 - b. What message or feeling are they talking about?
 - c. What do these poems have in common? How are they different?

Writing Activity (use this [activity guide that explains how to write an acrostic poem](#))

1. These poems reflect on memories of family, heritage, and cultural identity, and their experiences of growing up.
 - a. Think about memories you have of your family, heritage, culture, and/or your childhood, and write down those memories on a blank sheet of paper. Think about all of your family members, your culture, your hobbies, your favorite activities, your favorite color, your favorite food, etc.
2. Spell out your first and last name vertically down the left side of a blank sheet of paper, with one letter on top of the other.
3. Using the first letter of your name, write a sentence that relates to your name, using the memories you just wrote about.
 - a. Perhaps if you have the letter "L" in your name you could write "LEGOS are my favorite thing to play with", or if you have the letter "S" in your name you could write "School is a big part of my life".

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

3-5

Subject

English
Writing

Lesson Title

I Remember: Poems & Pictures of
Heritage

HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: During this activity, your child may want to use this style of poetry, and/or other styles of poetry, to reflect on additional memories, feelings, or events they have experienced. They may also want to reflect on the memories or life events of their family members.

[Here are some suggestions for additional poetry activities:](#)

- **Blackout Poetry:** Your child can use this style of poetry by looking back at the paragraph they wrote, or writing a new paragraph, and black out any words they don't want to use in their new poem. Then they will take the remaining words in the paragraph to create a poem.
- **Word-Scramble Poetry:** Your child can use this style of poetry by cut up their paragraph(s) into separate words and/or phrases, and then organize those words into a new poem.
- **My Life in (#) Words:** Encourage your child to write a poem using only the number of words as their age. You can even encourage them to use the number of words in your age.
- **One-Word Poetry:** Your child can take one word or emotion, and write a poem about that word. Encourage them to describe that word, and think of different events that relate to that word.

This is also a great opportunity to talk with you child about the COVID-19 crisis, and to help your child to process everything that is happening to them, their family, or other people in the world, and express how it makes them feel.

- Consider talking with your child about COVID-19, and using the above forms of poetry to help them process this event and/or their feelings.
 - [Access this guide](#) for advice on how to talk to your children about COVID-19.
 - [Read this guide for tips](#) on talking to children and youth after traumatic events - such as COVID-19.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may open other talking points around other Native poets. Your child may want to learn more about those poets, and read poetry they have written.

- [Visit this website](#), to learn more about other famous Native American poets, and to read their poetry.
- [Use this poetry anthology](#) to read poems written by Native American youth with your child.

Activity Resource Links:

- "Remember" by Joy Harjo
 - Read Aloud by Joy Harjo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gH0hp-n9qG8>
 - Digital Text: <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2315>
- "I Remember: Poems & Pictures of Heritage" compiled by Lee Bennett Hopkins: <https://www.amazon.com/I-Remember-Poems-Pictures-Heritage/dp/1620143119>
- Acrostic Poetry Activity Guide: http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/language_arts/poems/poetry1.pdf
- Additional Poetry Activities: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/every-student-can-be-poet>
- Talking to your children about COVID-19: https://www.aacap.org/App_Themes/AACAP/Docs/latest_news/2020/Coronavirus_COVID19_-_Children.pdf
- Talking to youth after traumatic events: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-talking-to-children-after-traumatic-event.pdf>
- "Native American Poetry and Culture" from the Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/144560/native-american-poetry-and-culture>
- "When the Rain Sings book link on Amazon": <https://www.amazon.com/When-Rain-Sings-Native-Americans/dp/0689822839>