

# Poetry and Our Community

By: Lourdes Liner

**Education level:** Elementary

**Genre:** Poetry

**Time frame:** 1 hour

**Objective:** Invite students to reflect upon their dreams.

**Prior knowledge and skills:** None

**Required materials:** a whiteboard, pencil and paper

## Sequence of activities:

### Introduction (20 minutes):

This lesson is intended for students to reflect on ideas of community and record their views within a poem. Present them with the following prompts:

“Where do you feel safe?”

“What does community mean to you?”

“What does it feel like when you belong?”

Have students provide an example of community.

When working with younger students, write some examples to begin the discussion. Use the shared context of a classroom environment for them to dissect these themes of community. Have them provide examples of the shared values within their classroom environment. Share some of your dream travel ideas or career goals to encourage the class as they follow along with the lesson.

When working with older students, welcome comments and connections on communities they are a part of throughout Tucson. Have them provide examples of their personal experiences in diverging communities and dive into the intersections of shared values. Expand these questions to allow them to speak about their communities' impact on their values, identity, and ideals.

Students will work together to build ideas on the questions provided. As a mentor, take time to validate each student's response on belonging to create a welcoming discussion for them to collaborate on the subsequent segment. Provide any additional support or ask additional questions to help students hone in on their insights before transitioning to the next stage in the lesson.

### Collective Poem (10 minutes):

Write the statement “Community is...” on a board behind you. Invite students to complete the statement. Call upon students as they raise their hands. You can always start with examples from the discussion prior. Continue to add additional phrases until the class reaches a consensus that they have comfortably labeled what community is.

This exercise creates space for the classroom to reflect upon itself and discuss all of their shared values. While simultaneously creating a great framework for their independent ideas to develop for the next stage in the lesson.

### **Independent Writing Exercise (20 minutes):**

Let students know that they will be writing a poem is based on their insights into a community. The intention of this activity is to drive reflection and a greater intersection of values within the classroom. Be sure to travel around the classroom as they write, and check in with each student.

For younger students, allow them additional time to gather their thoughts if needed. Be sure that they are all grasping the ideas so far. Invite them to explore themes on the board or insights into some of the shared values within their cultures, homes and day to day lives.

For older students invite them to discuss community connections within a special interest of theirs, or speak on their insights into their heritage. Welcome them to question any of the agreed values written previously upon the board. Allow them to question some of the struggles that can occur within communities as well.

If students are struggling meet them with alternative options and remind them this project gives them space to share what they please.

### **Reading (5-10 minutes):**

If using the small group model, you can encourage students to read from the front of the class. Invite students to share their thoughts on the poem and encourage one another while reading their work. If using the large group model, you can invite students to read amongst one another or from their desks.

Students are often more likely to share and follow another reader if you are having issues getting them to open up and perform. You can share the poem written collectively on the board, or share a piece you may have written independently. You can also collect the written works from students and read them anonymously, then invite students to discuss the ideas from each work.