

Unique Like Snowflakes

by Eva Sierra

Grade level: Elementary

Time frame: about an hour in class, plus an hour or two of prep

Objective: Students will explore identity by thinking critically about their unique individual traits and by writing creatively about themselves.

Prior knowledge and skills: None

Required materials: Paper snowflakes, construction paper, markers, colored pencils, pen or pencil, glitter or gems (optional)

Literary model: None

Sequence of activities:

- **Preparation:** 1-2 hours
- **Introduction:** A Snowflake's Unique Journey (10 minutes)
- **Group Brainstorming:** Circle Map Activity (15 minutes)
- **Poetry Writing:** 10-15 minutes, or more if they are still writing!
- **Decorating/Drawing:** 15-20 minutes
- **Sharing Out (optional):** 5-10 minutes

Preparation (1 to 2 hours, depending on class size)

Cut out paper snowflakes for each student in the class. I was able to make two snowflakes per sheet of paper. I glued each snowflake to a piece of blue construction paper and this is what the students will be writing their poems on. I used about 7-8 different snowflake patterns to make the snowflakes.

Introduction: A Snowflake's Unique Journey (10 minutes)

Spend some time showing photos of real snowflakes to the students, pointing out the unique crystal structure of each one. Next, discuss how each snowflake will have a unique journey as it

falls from the sky. Each snowflake will be affected by different temperatures, wind speeds, and land in a different spot.

Then, shift the conversation by asking students to take a moment to think of all of the different experiences they carry, the different ways they look and present, and have them ponder why these things make them unique from one another.

Group Brainstorming: Circle Map Activity (15 minutes)

Draw a circle map and in the center write: *What Makes Us Unique?*

Remind students that like snowflakes, our background and experiences make us unique. Ask students what are some things about themselves, their experiences, and their backgrounds that make them unique and write their responses on a word map.

Some examples from students were: *being left handed, being from the rez', speaking Spanish, wearing glasses, being an only child, having lots of pets.*

Poetry Writing: (15 minutes)

Pass out snowflake sheets you prepared and ask students to turn their sheets over to the blank side for the writing portion. Pose the writing prompt "*I Am Unique Because...*" and ask students to write down as many unique experiences, characteristics, and traits as they can think of.

As students are writing, walk around the class and offer examples including those from the group bubble map.

Urge students to not be shy or embarrassed to write about themselves, and remind them it is important to celebrate ourselves and our uniqueness.

Decorating: (15 minutes)

Once students have reached a good point in their writing, ask them to flip over their pages to the side with the snowflake.

Ask students to write their name as boldly and creatively as they would like, and decorate their snowflake. Students used markers, crayons, and gems to decorate their names and snowflakes.

Sharing (optional): (5 - 10 minutes)

If time allows, facilitate sharing in groups or invite students to volunteer to share their poem and talk about their snowflake design to the class.