Georgia Performance Standards Framework for ELA Unit 7-8th Grade

Grade: 8
Topic: Where I’m From—Imitative Poem
Instructional unit: Poetry/Drama
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The task:
Poetry is a popular genre among teenagers; yet as much as they enjoy reading poetry, many find it difficult to write. As teachers create an environment where students are taught to read like writers and write like readers, activities such as the imitative poem help students “mimic” the style of a particular poem or writer. Ultimately, the students make the content unique, and reluctant writers are able to pen their original ideas.

Students will analyze George Ella Lyon’s poem “Where I’m From” for content and style. The teacher should point out the type of ideas covered in each stanza; for example, the first stanza in the poem names items that are clues or symbols for the geographical area from which the author originates. The second and third stanzas of the poem have to do with the “family tree,” and the fourth stanza is an example of a strong ending for a poem.

Once the students have analyzed each stanza, they will then mimic the process by creating their own “Where I’m From” poem.

Differentiation:
1. Provide students with a brainstorming guide to allow them to focus and organize their ideas before beginning to write their poem. Brainstorming web should provide specifics as to what teacher wants included in each stanza of the poem. Lower students could be required to write a one paragraph version of “Where I’m From” poem.

2. Teacher may allow students to create a rap or song using the ideas and style of George Ella Lyon’s poem as a guide.

Focus Standard:
ELA8R1 The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.
For literary texts, the student identifies the characteristics of various genres and produces evidence of reading that:
ii. Figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, imagery).

Circumstances of the assignment/Notes to the Teachers:
The poem and two student models are attached.
Brainstorming Web

Poem: “Where I’m From”

By: _______________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Student Ideas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 1:</td>
<td>-What items or symbols represent the geographic area that you are from? (state, city, school, country, region)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza 2:</td>
<td>Family Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza 3:</td>
<td>Family Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stanza 4:</td>
<td>Strong Ending: How can you modify Lyon’s ending to reflect your own life and heritage?</td>
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Where I’m From
by George Ella Lyon

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush,
The dutch elm
Whose long limbs I remember as if they were my own.

I’m from fudge and eyeglasses,
from Imogene and Alafair.
I’m from the know-it-alls and the pass-it-ons,
from perk up and pipe down.
I’m from He restoreth my soul with a cottonball lamb
And ten verses I can say myself.

I’m from Artemis and Billie’s Branch,
Fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost to the auger
The eye my father shut to keep his sight.
Under my bed was dress box
Spilling old pictures,
A sift of lost faces
To drift beneath my dreams.

I am from these moments-
snapped before I budded-
leaf-fall from the family tree.
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Student Samples:

“I’m From the Woods”...by Nick

I’m from the woods and the creek behind my fence
From the gray wooden backyard deck.
I’m from the honeysuckles,
The pear trees by the neighbor’s garden
From the creek when I swing over it.

I’m from the yellow walls of Grandmas’ Kitchen
From the Yorkshire pup, the coolest thing in my family.
I’m from the macaroni pictures of the Ark
From “I just can’t snap my fingers and make it happen” and from David the gnome in summers long ago.

I’m from my mom’s side of the family,
From roasting turkeys for each holiday,
From when Papaw yelled at his boss and got fired
From the family pictures in the big wooden cabinet and
From the family gathering when we drag them out.

I am from these moments,
A root that no one sees, but walks all over
An important part of the tree.

“Where I’m From...” by Lauren

I’m from baths in the kitchen sink,
From Downy and Mom’s perfume
I am from flowers by the fence (yellow and springy
they tasted like crayons).
I am from the ivy crawling up the house,
The baby tree whose sturdy trunk shot from the ground
A mirror image of my planted feet.

I’m from sprinkles and plastic table donut shops
From Bert and Ernie
I’m from stupid heads and “dot dot, I got my cootie shot”
From don’t touch this and don’t touch that
I’m from Hymn No. 96 and why is this piece of bread so small?
And bible crafts made from neon pipe cleaners.

I’m from Bill and Darlene’s branch
From hot soup and freshly baked corn bread
From the Well, when I was little and the snowy games
Told to me by Green Bay Packer season ticket holders
In the storage room are boxes
Overflowing with the shiny, color-coated memories
Bundles of dreams kept alive
To ask my mother about.

I am from those moments
A leaf changing color with the weather
Time only strengthens the branch that holds me.