

## LESSON 7: POSTCARDS FROM MY LIFE

### MATERIALS

- Student notebooks
- Student anthology books
- Teacher’s copy of “Sasha’s Poem” by Sarah Dooley
- Blank cards (about 3 per student) cut to approximately the size of postcards (or postcards made from Postcard Template document)
- Either assorted postcards that have not been written on or a variety of pictures that can be used to make postcards (such as old copies of local magazines, or other publications that represent local landmarks and history). You may also use postcards from local places or events, landmarks, or historical sites.
- To save time, have an assortment of pre-cut pictures from which students can choose. If time and resources permit, the teacher might consider taking pictures around the school and community, then printing them to use in this activity. This may prove easier to coordinate.
- Place and Poetry Partnerships Workshop Conversation Sheet from Lesson 5 (copies available in a designated location in the classroom)
- Collection of poems/ poetry books from school library and/or teacher’s collection



**BIG IDEA**

**Poets use concrete language and sensory detail to communicate abstract ideas, emotions, and truths.**

**Poetry helps readers see the extraordinary in the ordinary.**

### OBJECTIVES





- Students will identify and use various parts of speech (concrete and abstract nouns, adjectives)
- Students will generate topics and develop ideas for a variety of writing and speaking purposes
- Students will develop an idea within a brief text
- Students will learn and use the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading, and editing)
- Students will develop skills to participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a literary community



**LANGUAGE**

#### **Important Vocabulary:**

- Abstract and concrete nouns
- Sensory language
- Imagery

SEQUENCE	TEACHER NOTES
<p><b>Poetry for Appreciation...</b></p> <div data-bbox="212 317 370 499" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;">  </div> <p>Invite students to find a comfortable place for listening. Remind students to listen to and enjoy the way the poem sounds, and they might also listen for some of the imagery and details used by the poet.</p> <p>Read “Sasha’s Poem” by Sarah Dooley.</p> <p>Afterwards, have students turn to the person next to them and share one image or phrase that stuck in their minds as making an ordinary object or experience extraordinary.</p>	<div data-bbox="1105 260 1263 436" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;">  </div> <p>Remind students that during the last lesson they described an object or a place that was special to them as they worked on memory poems. Tell them that the poem you are about to read is about a special object, person, or place, and the poet makes the ordinary seem extraordinarily special. Ask students to pay particular attention as they listen to the way the poet uses language to create imagery that makes the object or a place extra special.</p>
<p><b>Postcards</b></p> <p><i>Some of the ideas for this activity were adapted from a lesson by Anthony Wilson on <a href="http://www.poetryclass.net">www.poetryclass.net</a>.</i></p> <div data-bbox="233 1157 391 1339" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;">  </div> <p>Show students a postcard, then ask them to share if they have ever received a postcard. If so, who sent it and from where?</p> <p>Point out that postcards have very little room to write.</p> <p>Ask students: <i>How is the way language is used on a postcard like the way language is used in a poem?</i> (Discuss that because there is not much room to write on a postcard, it is important to choose words carefully. In the same way, poets must choose the most clear, descriptive language, since every word counts).</p> <p>Explain to students that in this lesson they will be practicing writing with clear, descriptive language by writing postcards.</p>	<div data-bbox="1003 1058 1161 1220" style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: top;">  </div> <p>Consider bringing in some postcards from the local store that would be specific to the town the class lives in. Ask things like, what is this postcard showing? Does anyone know the place this picture depicts? Who has been here? If you were from out of town and received this postcard, would you want to visit?</p>

The first postcard that students write will be written from their own perspective to a family member.

The teacher should model describing the classroom in rich, interesting detail (e.g. what they are doing, what the classroom looks like, what they can hear, what they can see, the texture of the chair/desk/carpet, the smells of the classroom, etc.), then give students the opportunity to do the same.



**WRITING**

Encourage students to notice details they might not usually notice.

Students can decorate the flip side of their postcards with a drawing once they are finished.



**PLACE**

For a second postcard, students should either select a picture postcard that has not been written on or use a teacher-provided picture and paste it to one side of a blank card. Alternatively, students could bring a picture that represents their community or draw a picture.

The teacher should encourage students to think of a place in town that they feel best represents the place they live (i.e., the country store where people get groceries, the church where many people gather on Sunday, the town square where people gather to talk, or the diner where lots of people eat on Friday nights). The child could select a person (or the teacher could help find a person) that does not live in the area and/or may not be familiar with it and actually send the postcard to them.

For each postcard, the student should first draft the text in his or her workbook and then write the final draft onto the postcard. The postcards would make a great classroom display!

Debrief with students by discussing whether it was difficult to choose the right words without much space and how they went about deciding which were the most important or interesting details to include.



**TIP**

Remind students how to address a letter (Dear...) and ways to sign off in a friendly letter.



**READINESS**

If you have students who would benefit from additional challenge, encourage them to choose an unfamiliar perspective. Writing from a perspective other than their own is likely to be more challenging for students than writing from their own perspective to someone they actually know.

**Poet's Workshop**



**ANCHOR**

Place Poetry Partnerships can be used as an anchor activity in this lesson. Alternatively, students who finish their second postcard might choose to work on a third, or to turn one of their postcard messages into a poem.