

## Classroom Workshops on Poetry and Journaling –Working Draft



**Hilda Ward**, Albemarle County Artist-in-Residence, co-facilitates the Curry School's multicultural education program. Host of local TV show "Artistic Expressions" and member of Live Poets, she has 2 CDs (*Images* and *Oh! How I Praise*) and poetry in the *The Blue Ridge Anthology* and *Streetlight*.

[Visit Website](#)

Hilda Ward is an African American mother of three; grandmother of four; and a great grandmother of two. She taught in High School and college for 24 years in New York. Hilda has been writing poetry since the year John F. Kennedy was killed. Her first poem was about his assassination. Her beginning poems were in rhyme and dealt mostly with family and the feelings she experienced as a wife, mother and nurse. .

**Objective:** To share Cultures through Family Research and Poetry

**Presentation:** Can be used at all levels for classroom groups no larger than 35 students for 60 minutes or longer. Follow up activities may be planned with the classroom teacher.

### Classroom Workshop

Hilda will share experiences of her African American culture through storytelling and poetry. Students will be engaged through questions and answers about shared pictures and poems and about her personal experiences and those of her family.

Extended opportunities could include students writing an I Am From... poem. Students may write about where they are from geographically, their favorite food, music, TV show, movies, sports, subject in school. They may be asked to document things their parents say over and over again or write about what they did over the summer or how they celebrated Channakah, Christmas, Ramaddon and/or Kwanzaa.

Student participants will be given opportunities to develop oral communication skills and will become more knowledgeable of the effects of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in oral communication. The presentation will support reading poetry while becoming more independent and analytical. The student will continue to refine written composition skills.

### Standards of Learning

This presentation will enhance the Oral Language K -12 strand and cross pollinate with multiple standards, such as:

- 1.1 The student will continue to demonstrate growth in the use of oral and written language .
  - a) Listen and respond to a variety of media, including books, and other age-appropriate materials.
  - b) Tell and retell stories and events in logical order.
- 3.4 The student will use strategies to read a variety of fiction and nonfiction materials.
  - c) Apply meaning clues, language structure, and phonetic strategies.
  - d) Use context to clarify meaning of unfamiliar words.
  - e) Read fiction and nonfiction fluently and accurately.
- 5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction.
  - a) Describe the relationship between text and previously read materials.
  - b) Describe character development in fiction and poetry selections.
  - c) Describe the development of plot and explain how conflicts are resolved.
  - d) Describe the characteristics of free verse, rhymed, and patterned poetry.
- 7.1 The student will give and seek information in conversations, in group discussions, and in oral presentations.
  - a) Use oral vocabulary and style appropriate for listeners.
  - c) Ask probing questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas.
  - d) Make supportive statements to communicate agreement with or acceptance of others. ideas.
- 9.1 The student will plan, present, and critique dramatic readings of literary selections.
  - a) Choose a literary form for presentation, such as a poem, monologue, a play, or story.
  - b) Adapt presentation techniques to fit literary form.
  - d) Evaluate impact of presentation.
- 11.3 The student will read and analyze relationships among American literature, history, and culture.
  - a) Describe contributions of different cultures to the development of American literature.
  - b) Compare and contrast the development of American literature in its historical context.
  - c) Discuss American literature as it reflects traditional and contemporary themes....
  - d) Describe how use of context and language structures conveys an author.s intent and viewpoint in contemporary and historical essays, speeches, and critical reviews.

## **Sample Lesson Plan**

Artist in Residence  
Hilda Ward  
Meriwether Lewis Presentation

### **Sharing Cultures through Poetry and Family Research**

#### **Lesson One**

1. I will be sharing my family background to encourage the students to get to know their family's history.
2. I will share poetry about my family that will allow them to listen to the poems and react to what is shared and then be able to ask questions about what they heard.
3. Teacher will be encouraged to plan opportunities for students to write about their families.

#### **Activity**

I will read the poem "From Whom Did I Spring"

In this poem I am sharing my great grandmother, grandmother and mother. There are some historical issues and family history that many students may not be aware of.

While reading this poem, I will have the teacher pass along pictures of my family. I will invite students to ask me questions about my family and my life.

### **Teacher Preparation of Students**

1. I would like the teacher to query the student about their knowledge of African American culture.
2. Introduce students to the African American Family and their culture. Consider showing the video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH0zf3-uiKo>
3. Ask students what they know about their family history. Explain what is a grandparent and what is a great grandparent. Ask the students what they call their grandparents and great grandparent if they are still alive?

### **Student/Class Follow-up/Homework:**

- Go home and talk with parents about what it was like for them growing up. Where did their parents grow up?
- Encourage them to have a conversation with their grandparents or great grandparents about their family culture, if they are still alive.
- What did their parents call their grandparents or great grandparents?
- Have students ask their parents about relationships with other cultures.
- Have students write about what they learned about their family background.

### **Lesson Two**

1. I will engage students by asking them to share what they learned about their families.
2. I will share the different names of grands and great grands.
3. I will share different places in the country and the world parents, grands and great grands came from. This can be used to work on map skills if it is age appropriate.

### **Activity**

I will read an "I Am From..." poem,

I will have students begin working on their own poem of I Am From...

I will share some of the messages that were shared with me while growing up, through storytelling.

Students will be encouraged to ask me questions about what I shared in my poem. This will allow them to know more about me and what my life was like growing up. I can relate the historical time period and family experiences with former presidents, FDR and JFK.

### **Teacher Preparation of Students**

1. Teachers can explain who FDR and JFK were and what they were famous for and what happened to them. They might talk about JFK and his assassination or FDR and his handicap. This will depend on the age of the students. The teacher will decide what is appropriate.

**Student Homework:**

- Write or continue writing a poem about their family or the games they enjoyed or their favorite foods or what their parents do as a career and or things their parents say to them over and over again.
- Younger children can draw pictures of games they like to play or find some pictures online or in books they can share or draw pictures of their parents' careers or what their grandparents did as a career or still do.

These can be mailed to me so I can come up with some questions for the students. If the teacher has any suggestions of things I might deal with, I am open to any suggestions.

**Lesson Three**

Have students share what they learned about other family cultures and the African American Culture. Who are their heroes of the past and present?

I will share two poems about my Nana.

"Ode to Nana" and "In the Pantry of My Nana's Dreams"

I will be sharing what Nana did for the family and how important she was to the family.

I will be sharing foods that my family enjoyed because of Nana.

**Activity:**

Students may ask me questions about Nana.

They may also ask why she was so important in my life.

They may also ask about making bread or apple dumpling or sweet potato pie.

They may also ask about Nana and her ironing.

**Homework:**

Have students go home and find out their parents favorite foods.

Ask their parents if they had favorite foods their grand or great grands made.

Ask what the grandparents' careers were or still are.

Find out if their family had special dishes for special holidays.

How their family celebrates special holidays.

Suggest that student complete a project that allows them flexible for sharing about their family. The projects would be presented at a Family Celebration Day.

Encourage the class to plan a family celebration day, to invite their parents, grandparents and other family members into the school on a special day to share and appreciate our differences. By all means, please invite me back for this special day.