

The Five-Minute Poem

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This activity has students spend five minutes writing a brief four-stanza poem about where they are from. The poems can be shared in the large group as students introduce themselves to the class, in pairs or small groups, or could be posted to a class blog or forum. This activity can also be used as a prompt for a discussion about how where students come from impacts them in the classroom.</p> <p>There are some considerations for you to make when implementing this activity in class. For some students, elements of their neighborhood, familial, or childhood background may be associated with trauma. Students may not feel comfortable completing some or all parts of the poem template. Additionally, students may feel comfortable crafting a poem but not sharing it with the larger class.</p> <p>For these reasons, it is best to not use this activity on the first day of class. If you do plan on using this activity, give students advance notice that it will be used in a future class and let them know that participation is optional. You should also encourage students to reach out to you if they have any questions/concerns regarding the content of the activity. If enough students express that they will not be participating, consider using an alternative community building activity. See our icebreaker grab bag page for ideas.</p>
<p>Goals</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To prompt students to reflect on where they come from and how their homes (figurative or literal) impact their classroom/university experience or their experience in their new home. 2) To encourage students to recognize and respect where their peers come from.
<p>Implementation</p>	<p>The instructor should give students the guide for writing the poems (included below). The guide gives a format to follow for writing each line. It may also be beneficial for the instructor to share their poem both as an example and as a mutual show of creative and personal vulnerability.</p>
<p>Challenges</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students may feel uneasy sharing personal creative work or may be resistant to writing a poem. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Instructors should stress that the aim of the exercise is not to write a “good” poem, but to share personal impressions of where students are from.
<p>Materials</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Five-Minute Poem template
<p>Citations</p>	<p>Activity developed by Doctor Beverly Tatum.</p>

Session Sequence

Lesson Structure	Time <i>(Estimated amount of time for each component)</i>	Activity Content and Instructions
Introduction	3 mins	The instructor welcomes the class and provides an overview of the activity: students will learn about each other's backgrounds and experiences via a short poem.
Five-Minute Poem	5-10 mins	<p>Individual student activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provide each student with the Five-Minute Poem Template. 2) Encourage students to not overthink their responses and to write what comes naturally when they think about the prompts.
Sharing and Debrief	10-15 mins	<p>There are two options for how students can share their poems:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In pairs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. You may have students who are not comfortable sharing their poem with a partner. Before using this option, ensure that students have the option to pair up or not. Depending on student response, you may form larger student groups. 2) Come back together as a class and have students voluntarily share their poems <p>Follow the sharing of poems with a short debrief of the activity.</p> <p>Some possible debrief questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Why is it important to reflect on where we come from? 2) What is the significance of learning about the backgrounds of our classmates and peers? 3) Did you find any commonalities from a classmate's poem? 4) What is the value in completing activities like this in our class?