



**MAINE** MUSEUM OF  
I NNOVATION  
L EARNING +  
L ABOR

# I am Poetry

Teacher's Guide and Worksheets

# “I am” Poetry

Grades 1-3 (Option #1)

Grades 4+ (Option #2)

**Time:** 1-2, 50-60 min. class period(s)

## Learning Objectives:

- **Writing:** Students will craft original poetry that reflects their identities and personal experiences.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students will reflect deeply on who they are, what shapes their identity, and how to communicate that effectively through poetry.
- **Empathy:** By listening to peers’ poems, students will practice understanding others’ perspectives and experiences.
- **Communication:** Students will share their poetry aloud, strengthening their verbal expression and active listening skills.
- **Emotional Vocabulary Building:** Students will learn to name and describe emotions more precisely, enriching both their writing and conversations.
- **Community Building:** Through open sharing and discussion, students will find common ground and appreciate diversity, helping to create a supportive classroom environment.
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**Maine Learning Results Standards:** English/Language Arts Anchor Standards: L.1-.5; SL.1-.2; R.2-.8; W.2-.3

## Materials Needed

Copies of the “I am” Poetry template below.

Option #1: Book - Be You! by Peter Reynolds

Options #2: Book- Looking Like Me by Walter Dean Meyers

## Set Up

There is minimal set up for this project. Each student should have a copy of the “I am” poetry template below and a pencil.

## Introduction

The goal of this lesson is to foster a strong sense of community in the classroom. Through the exploration and sharing of identity-based poetry, students will reflect on and express who they are. This process allows students to be seen and heard by their peers and teachers, helping to build mutual respect and understanding.

## **(Introduction cont.)**

By recognizing both the differences and commonalities among classmates, students will begin to form deeper connections. Sharing poems in a supportive setting encourages open dialogue, and with teacher guidance, these conversations will help lay the foundation for an inclusive, empathetic, and collaborative classroom environment.

*This lesson is ideal for the beginning of the school year but can be used anytime to strengthen community.*

## **Instruction, Teacher Modeling, Guided Practice**

### **Option #1 - Grades 1-3**

1. **Opening Discussion** - Begin the lesson with a class discussion. Ask students the following questions to get them thinking about their identity:

- What are you really good at?
- What do you struggle with sometimes?
- What do you worry about?
- What makes you really happy?
- What makes you special?
- What makes you sad?
- What does it mean to be you?

2. **Read-Aloud: Be You!** by Peter H. Reynolds

Read the book aloud to the class. Pause occasionally to engage students with the illustrations or ask them what they notice.

3. **Post-Reading Reflection**

After reading, revisit the key question: "What does it mean to be you?" Encourage students to think deeply about what makes them unique and special.

4. **Introduce the "I Am" Poem Activity**

- Explain that students will write a poem about themselves using an "I Am" poem format.
- Show an example poem (either a completed sample or one you create together as a class).
- Discuss how the poem helps express feelings, experiences, and identity.

## **Independent Work**

### **Student Writing Time**

- Distribute the "I Am" poem template.
- Give students time to fill in their poems with guidance and encouragement as needed.
- Offer support with spelling, vocabulary, or ideas for younger or struggling writers.

## Conclusion/Closing

### Poetry Sharing and Class Discussion

Invite students to share their poems with the class (sharing can be optional).

- After sharing, lead a reflective discussion using questions such as:
  - Did you learn something new about a classmate today?
  - Did anything surprise you?
  - How did it feel to hear others' poems?
  - Would you like to learn more about someone's story?
  - Did you learn something new about yourself?

### Additional Activities

Have students draw a self portrait to accompany the poem. Display the portraits and poems around the room.

### Instruction, Teacher Modeling, Guided Practice

#### Option #2 - Grades 4+

##### 1. Warm-Up Writing Prompt

- Distribute a piece of paper to each student.
- On the board, write: "When you look in a mirror, what do you see?"
- Give students 2 minutes of silent writing time to respond to the prompt.

##### 2. Read-Aloud: Looking Like Me by Walter Dean Myers

- Introduce and read the book to the class.
- Pause occasionally to highlight language and illustrations.

##### 3. Post-Reading Discussion

- Ask students:
  - What are the different ways Jeremy sees himself?
  - What are the ways others see Jeremy?
  - How do you think Jeremy feels each time someone gives him a "BAM!"?
- Encourage students to think about how identity is shaped by both self-perception and the views of others.

## (Instructions Cont.)

### 4. Follow-Up Writing Prompt

- Ask students to revisit the question: “When you look in a mirror, what do you see?”
- This time, encourage them to go beyond physical appearance—include personality, interests, culture, etc.
- Then, add the question: “What do others see when they look at you?”
- Allow 2 more minutes of quiet writing time for reflection.

### 5. Introduce the “I Am Me” Poem Template

- Share the “I Am Me” poem template (credit: Welcoming Schools, Human Rights Campaign Foundation).
- Explain that the poem allows students to express different parts of their identity and how they are seen and understood by others.

## Independent Work

### Student Writing Time

- Have students complete the “I Am Me” poems using the template.
- Offer support and encouragement as needed, and allow time for students to revise or decorate their work if appropriate.

## Conclusion/Closing

### Poetry Sharing and Class Discussion

- Invite students to share their poems with the class (sharing is optional but encouraged).
- After the presentations, lead a class discussion using questions such as:
  - Did you learn something new about a classmate today?
  - Did anything surprise you?
  - How did hearing about others’ experiences make you feel?
  - Would you like to learn more about someone’s story?
  - Did you learn something new about yourself?

## Additional Activities

Have students draw a self portrait to accompany the poem. Display the portraits and poems around the room.

\*This activity also pairs well with our “Inside Me/Outside Me” lesson



# I AM



I am \_\_\_\_\_

I wonder \_\_\_\_\_

I hear \_\_\_\_\_

I see \_\_\_\_\_

I want \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I pretend \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

I touch \_\_\_\_\_

I worry \_\_\_\_\_

I cry \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I understand \_\_\_\_\_

I say \_\_\_\_\_

I dream \_\_\_\_\_

I try \_\_\_\_\_

I hope \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_




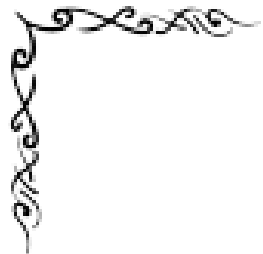
Written by: \_\_\_\_\_





# I AM

Template



I am 2 special characteristics you have  
I wonder something you are curious about  
I hear an imaginary sound  
I see an imaginary sight  
I want an actual desire  
I am repeat line 1

I pretend something you actual pretend to do  
I feel a feeling about something imaginary  
I touch an imaginary touch  
I worry something that bothers you  
I cry something that make you sad  
I am repeat line 1

I understand something that is true  
I say something you believe in  
I dream something you dream about  
I try something you really make an effort at  
I hope something you actually hope for  
I am repeat line 1



Written by: \_\_\_\_\_



# I AM

Sample

I am smart and funny.  
I wonder what is at the end of the rainbow.  
I hear owls at night outside my room.  
I see more books than I could ever read.  
I want to travel the world.  
I am smart and funny.

I pretend I can understand what my dog says.  
I feel like magic could be real.  
I touch my cats soft fur.  
I worry about my children being happy and safe.  
I cry at the end of every sad movie.  
I am smart and funny.

I understand tomorrow is a new day.  
I say everyone is the same on the inside.  
I dream about singing in an opera.  
I try really hard to understand math.  
I hope I will leave the world a better place.  
I am smart and funny.



Written by: \_\_\_\_\_





# I AM ME

Template

I am **Full name that you want to be called**

I am a **Ways that people might see you**

I am from **What do you like doing? What are you good at?**

I am a **Name relationships to people important to you**

I am from **People who are important to you, family, people who take care of you, close friends**

I am from **Family traditions or customs**

I am from **Favorite foods or special foods you like from home**

I am from **Important things that have happened in your life**

I am from **Names of books or types of books you like**

I am from **Names of movies, TV shows or video games you like**

I am from **Name of the place you live**

I am **Full name that you want to be called**





# I AM ME

Sample

I am Mrs. Smith

I am a mom and a teacher.

I am from reading, swimming and riding my bike.

I am a mother, wife, aunt, cousin and friend.

I am from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles,  
friends.

I am from parades on the 4th of July, football on  
Sundays and silly songs around a campfire.

I am from pasta, chicken, cookies and cake

I am from graduating, getting married, having  
children, moving away

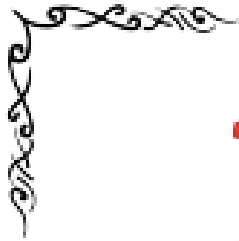
I am from fantasy and historical fiction books.

I am from Star Wars and Harry Potter.

I am from Maine

I am Mrs. Smith





# I AM ME

I am \_\_\_\_\_

I am a \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am a \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am from \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_

