



LESSON

# 3

## I Am Unit

Grade 8 • Ages 14-16

### TIME FRAME

Preparation: 5 minutes  
Instruction: 30 minutes

### MATERIALS

Before class, create your own "I Am..." poem to share with students during the activity

Other examples of I Am...poems from Resources

I Am....Poem Planning Guide, one for each student

RAK Journals

[Kindness Concept Posters:](#)  
Respect, Self-Care

### LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.3, 4, 5, 6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, 2  
Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.3, GLE.2, EO.a; Reading, Writing and Communicating S.1, GLE.1, EO.a; S.3, GLE.1, EO.a.i; S.3, GLE.3, EO.a-f

SEL: Self-awareness, Self-management

[Learning standards key](#)

## "I Am" Poems

Students will write a poem that explores and describes their identity.

### Lesson Background for Teachers

5th Grade Unit: What Influences Us

This lesson builds on previous lessons in this unit.

Special thanks to Rich Cardillo, Education Director, National School Climate Center for assistance with creating this activity.

### Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

**RESPECT** Treating people, places, and things with kindness.

**SELF-CARE** Taking care of yourself through kind words, actions and thoughts.

### TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Drawing their responses to the prompts as a pre-writing strategy.
- Consider using "I am From" Poem Template from resources
- Closing their eyes or sitting quietly to reflect on the prompts.

### Resources

Sample "I Am" Poems: Smith's 9th Grade Blog: <http://smithenglish9.blogspot.ca/2007/02/i-am-poem.html>

"Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/where.html>

"I Am From" Poem Template: [http://www.scholastic.com/content/collateral/resources/pdf/t/Target\\_I\\_am\\_from%20poem.pdf](http://www.scholastic.com/content/collateral/resources/pdf/t/Target_I_am_from%20poem.pdf)

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

However, each lesson starts with the **Share** step to reinforce learning from previous lessons.



## Share (3 mins)

*Tell the person next to you what you hope to be in the future. It can be a characteristic, a goal, a career or anything you can think of.*

## Inspire

### "I Am" Sample Poem (5 mins)

*We have talked about different parts of our identity. Today you are going to work on creating and then writing a poem that describes who you are.*

Share some samples of "I Am From" poems, either your own or other samples from the website listed in resources.

## Empower

### "I Am" Poem (15 mins)

Hand each student an I Am From... Poem Planning Guide.

*Let's read through this guide together.*

Ask a few volunteers to read the directions and the examples of what they are supposed to describe.

Allow time for students to complete guide, providing help as needed.

Then encourage them to write a draft of the poem, trying out different ways of describing themselves. Then have students exchange poems for peer review/edits, and have them use the writing rubric you have created for class while they edit.

**Optional:** Once the students have completed their poem, have them type up a final version. Then have them read their poems out loud in class.

You could record them reading these poems, and, if desired, students could create a blog on the school website to post either the written or recorded final poems.

### Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

#### Evaluation Questions

- What are the elements of a poem?
- What were we trying to express in our "I Am" poems?
- What are the steps for finalizing a poem?

#### Reflection Questions

- Was it helpful to have someone else read and edit your poem? Why?
- Did you find it difficult to express yourself in this form? How do you think it's easiest to explore and communicate our identities?
- What parts of your identity do you feel were not represented in this poem?



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.



### Summary

Many people use art to express themselves and their identities. Poetry is a great way to express who we are and what we are thinking about. In exploring the various parts of our identity, we gain a better understanding of ourselves. Being kind to ourselves is much easier when we understand what is important to us and who we are.



### Act (2 mins)

#### Kindness Minute

Create a school identity poster or sign. Write at the top of a paper, "We Are (insert the name of your school)", "We are...". Have everyone in the class write something positive about the school on the paper

#### Kindness in Action

As a kindness to yourself, look around your home. Look for the things that give you comfort and write a list of them below. This will help highlight the things you have around you to be grateful for.



# Poem Planning Guide

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Directions:

This exercise is a way for you to share who you are and your culture with others. Under each section write examples of whatever is being asked in parentheses. From this information, you will write a poem.

**I AM FROM...** (think of familiar sights, smells, or sounds growing up)

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**I AM FROM...** (think of familiar foods or those associated with holidays)

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**I AM FROM...** (think of familiar expressions you use with your family or those with whom you live)

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**I AM FROM...** (think of your ancestors, your relatives, your adopted family or the people you live with)

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