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# Who am I? Using Personal Narrative to Reflect on Identity [6th grade]

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# UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

## Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Who am I? Using Personal Narrative to Reflect on Identity

Grade Level: 6

Subject/Topic Area(s): English

Designed By: Mollie Cason

Time Frame: 4 weeks

School District: North East ISD

School: Jackson Middle School

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San Antonio, TX 78230

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### **Brief Summary of Unit** (Including curricular context and unit goals):

This unit is intended to be taught at the beginning of the year as both an introduction to the writing process and as an opportunity to create a safe and welcoming classroom environment.

In their performance task, students will examine the larger concept of identity and attempt to define their own identity by reflecting on past experiences in the form of a personal narrative. The unit walks them through the process of writing by creating a bank of brainstorming ideas, reading model texts as examples, and allowing time for editing and revision with peers. Students will establish a common writing vocabulary and be able to recognize the importance of choosing an appropriate text structure for a specific genre.

**Unit: Who am I? Using Personal Narrative to Reflect on Identity**

**Grade: 6**

**Stage 1: Desired Results**

**Established Goals**

(6.14) Writing/Writing Process.

Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text.

Students are expected to:

6.14(A) plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea;

6.14(B) develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare-contrast) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing;

6.14(C) revise drafts to clarify meaning, enhance style, include simple and compound sentences, and improve transitions by adding, deleting, combining, and rearranging sentences or larger units of text after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed;

6.14(D) edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling;

6.14(E) revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

(6.16) Writing. Students write about their own experiences. Students are expected to write a personal narrative that has a clearly defined focus and communicates the importance of or reasons for actions and/or consequences.

**Understandings**

*Students will understand that...*

- One purpose for writing is to record and reflect on our experiences.
- Everyone has a story to tell.
- Our past experiences influence who we are today.
- As writers, we must identify and use appropriate organizational structures for our intended purpose.
- Writing is a process. Planning, drafting, and revising are all important parts of that process.

**Essential Questions**

- What is identity?
- Why do we feel the need to share our stories?
- What is a personal narrative?
- What experiences have shaped you into the person you are today?
- What are the characteristics of good writing?

**Knowledge**

*Students will know...*

- Steps of the writing process: plan, draft, revise, and publish
- Format and characteristics of a personal narrative

**Skills**

*Students will be able to...*

- Respond to a personal narrative writing prompt
- Reflect on past experiences through writing
- Establish a controlling idea for their personal narrative
- Use the writing process to craft a polished final draft, including revising drafts for sentence variety and editing for grammar, spelling, and mechanics

**Stage 2: Assessment Evidence**

**Performance Task:**

For their performance task, students will write a personal narrative in response to the prompt: *Write a personal narrative about a past experience that you feel influenced you to be the person you are today.*

Students will be assessed using the STAAR writing rubric.

As an extension, students could either choose to either create an illustration or 3-D model representative of their identity.

**Other evidence:** Students will also be assessed, both informally and formally, through discussion participation, impromptu group presentations, quick write and exit ticket responses, writing a bio-poem, editing and revision practice, and completing a rough draft of their personal narrative.

### Stage 3: Learning Activities

(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)

Day 1:

- Identity Four Corners activity: students are given time to respond independently to statements related to the topic of identity. Then, students move to corners that correspond with their answers (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and discuss.
- Define the word “identity” as a class.

Day 2-3:

- Read and annotate the poem “Who’s Who” by Judith Viorst.
- **Quick Write response to the poem and paste into Writer’s Notebook.**
- Review parts of speech as a class. Divide students into groups and assign each group a different part of speech. **Have groups create charts for words in the poem that fall under their part of speech, and write their own complete sentences highlighting their part of speech. Present to the class.**

Day 4:

- A Wearer of Many Hats activity: students fill in a graphic organizer about their identity and paste graphic organizer in Writer’s Notebook.
- Read the essay “Names/Nombres” by Julia Alvarez.
- **Exit Ticket: students respond to the text by reflecting on their own names.**

Day 5:

- **Bio-poem: students write a poem about themselves following a structured format.**
- Students pass bio-poems to peers and silently respond with questions and comments on post-it notes.

Day 6:

- Chalk Talk activity: students hold a silent discussion either on the white board or on butcher paper answering the following questions: *What purpose does writing serve? Why do people feel the need to share their stories? How do people share their stories?*
- Debrief the activity. Discuss how we live in a world where people are always sharing their lives, especially through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. In a sense, these are miniature personal narratives. Also discuss the idea that what I share/like/post says something about me.
- Students copy down the description of “personal narrative” in their Writer’s Notebooks.
- Read a professional model of a personal narrative, “My Superpowers” by Dan Greenburg.

Day 7:

- Highlight and annotate “My Superpowers” for organization structure (introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, and told in sequence of events) and genre characteristics (interesting lead, sensory details, and reflection on the importance of the event) as a class.
- **Think-Pair-Share: students write a one-sentence summary of the story, compare with a partner, and share aloud.** Decide on one sentence as a class. Explain that this is the controlling idea of the personal narrative.

Day 8:

- Read a student model of a personal narrative.
- **In partners, have students highlight and annotate for the same organization structures and genre characteristics as the day before. Students write a one-sentence summary of the controlling idea.**
- STAAR personal narrative prompt think-aloud: student follow along as teacher works through a STAAR prompt aloud, making notes and modeling initial brainstorming.

Day 9:

- **Introduce Identity Personal Narrative prompt.** Students mimic teacher’s notes and initial brainstorming from the day before.
- Life Roadmap: students draw a road across a page in their Writer’s Notebooks and brainstorm events from their life. (Brainstorm events together as a class if needed.) Students should also look back on what they have done so far in the unit for ideas.

Day 10:

- Students choose the event from their Life Roadmap that best fits the prompt/ had an impact on the person they are today.

- Teacher models using the Memory Chart to expand on a chosen memory by brainstorming details about the beginning, middle, and end of the event.

- **Memory Chart: students fill out chart and establish their controlling idea.**

Day 11:

- Lead Mini-Lesson: teacher presents ways to write an engaging beginning with examples from professional texts.
- Students begin rough draft of personal narrative.

Day 12:

- Paragraphs Mini-Lesson: teacher models breaking writing into paragraphs using the examples of 1) Change in time, 2) Change in location, 3) Change in Speaker, and 4) Change in idea.
- Students continue rough drafts of personal narrative.

Day 13:

- Conclusion Mini-Lesson: teacher models writing the “lesson learned” section of a personal narrative and gives examples of strong endings.
- **Students finish rough drafts of personal narrative.**

Day 14:

- **The Lion’s Narrative: students watch a short clip from the movie *The Lion King* and revise a brief narrative for the scene, looking specifically at transitions and sensory details.**
- Students go back to their personal narratives and highlight transitions and sensory details and/or add them in where needed.

Day 15:

- Simple and Compound Sentences Mini-Lesson: students take notes on simple and compound sentences using foldable
- Students identify and add simple and compound sentences in their own writing.

Day 16:

- Peer Editing: students pass papers in rounds looking for specific items following CUPS (capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling)
- **Peer Feedback Form: students trade personal narratives with partners and check for correct format**

Day 17-20:

- **Students type final copies of personal narrative**
- **Students work on extension- illustration/ 3D model of identity**

## Performance Task: Personal Narrative Prompt

**Look** at the picture below.



*Freedom from Want*, Norman Rockwell.

**Think** about the following statement:

Many people believe we are the products of our environments.

**Write** a personal narrative about a past experience that you feel influenced you to be the person you are today.

Be sure to –

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize and develop your explanation effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

## ONE (LIMITED)

### Organization/Progression

- Form or structure is inappropriate
- Organizational strategies or literary devices are inappropriate or not evident
- Narrative is random or illogical
- Details do not contribute to the narrative
- Focus and transitions are lacking
- Repetition or wordiness is evident
- Narrative is unclear or difficult to follow

### Development of Ideas

- Details are inappropriate, vague or insufficient
- Narrative is weak
- Realistic situation, motivations, and insights are lacking

### Use of Language/Conventions

- Word choice is vague or limited
- Sentences weaken the effectiveness of the narrative
- Serious and persistent errors create disruptions and interfere with meaning

## TWO (BASIC)

### Organization/Progression

- Form or structure is evident but not always appropriate to the purpose
- Organizational strategies and literary devices are somewhat suited to the task
- Importance or meaning of experience may not be communicated
- Repetition or wordiness disrupts the story line
- Transitions and connections may be weak

### Development of Ideas

- Development of narrative is minimal
- Details provide little or no insight or understanding of why the experience was meaningful
- Narrative reflects little or no depth of thought and may be formulaic

### Use of Language/Conventions

- Word choice is basic and limited
- Sentences are awkward and/or uncontrolled
- Partial command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage is evident

## THREE (SATISFACTORY)

### Organization/Progression

- Form or structure is, for the most part, appropriate
- Organizational strategies or literary devices generally match the task
- Focus on a specific personal experience is generally maintained
- Transitions and connections are meaningful

### Development of Ideas

- Specific details add some substance to the narrative
- Narrative reflects some thoughtfulness and insight and establishes a realistic situation, reasonable motivation, and insight

### Use of Language/Conventions

- Specific and generally effective word choice is used
- Sentences are varied and controlled
- General command of spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and usage is demonstrated

## FOUR (ACCOMPLISHED)

### Organization/Progression

- Form or structure is appropriate
- Narrative strategies or literary devices are well matched to the task
- All details contribute to effectiveness
- Progression of ideas is logical or coherent and well controlled
- Transitions are meaningful
- Sentence-to-sentence connections are strong

### Development of Ideas

- Specific, well chosen details add substance to the narrative
- Narrative is thoughtful and engaging
- Realistic situation is established and insights are revealed

### Use of Language/Conventions

- Highly effective word choice is displayed
- Sentences are varied and effective
- Consistent command of conventions is shown

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## Identity: Four Corners

*Directions: read the following statements and decide if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with them. Be ready to support your decisions.*

1. Most of my values and beliefs stem from what my family has taught me to be important.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

2. You can usually figure out a person's identity by looking at their appearance.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

3. My true identity is not the same as what others might perceive it to be.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

4. A person's identity stays the same throughout his/her life.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

5. You can learn a lot about someone by their friendships.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**

6. I consider my ethnicity to be a big part of my identity.

**Strongly Agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly Disagree**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

# Who's Who

by Judith Viorst

Paula is the prettiest — the whole sixth grade agrees.  
Jean's the genius — that is undeniable,  
Most popular is Amy. Most admired is Louise.  
But as for me, they say I'm most . . . reliable.

5 Lisa's the best listener — she always lends an ear.  
And all the boys say Mel's the most desirable.  
Gwen's the giggliest — but everybody thinks that's dear.  
Who thinks it's dear to be the most reliable?  
Jody and Rebecca tie for cleverest. Marie

10 Is best at sports (and also most perspirable).  
Cathy is the richest — she's been saving since she's three.  
But who'll save me from being most reliable?  
I'd rather be most mischievous. I'd rather be most deep.  
I'd rather — and I'll swear this on a Bible —

15 Be known as most peculiar. Nothing puts the world to sleep  
Like someone who is known as most reliable.

## Quick Write:

*How do you think others would describe you now? Think ahead. How would you like to be described by the end of this school year? Use notebook paper to write your thoughts.*

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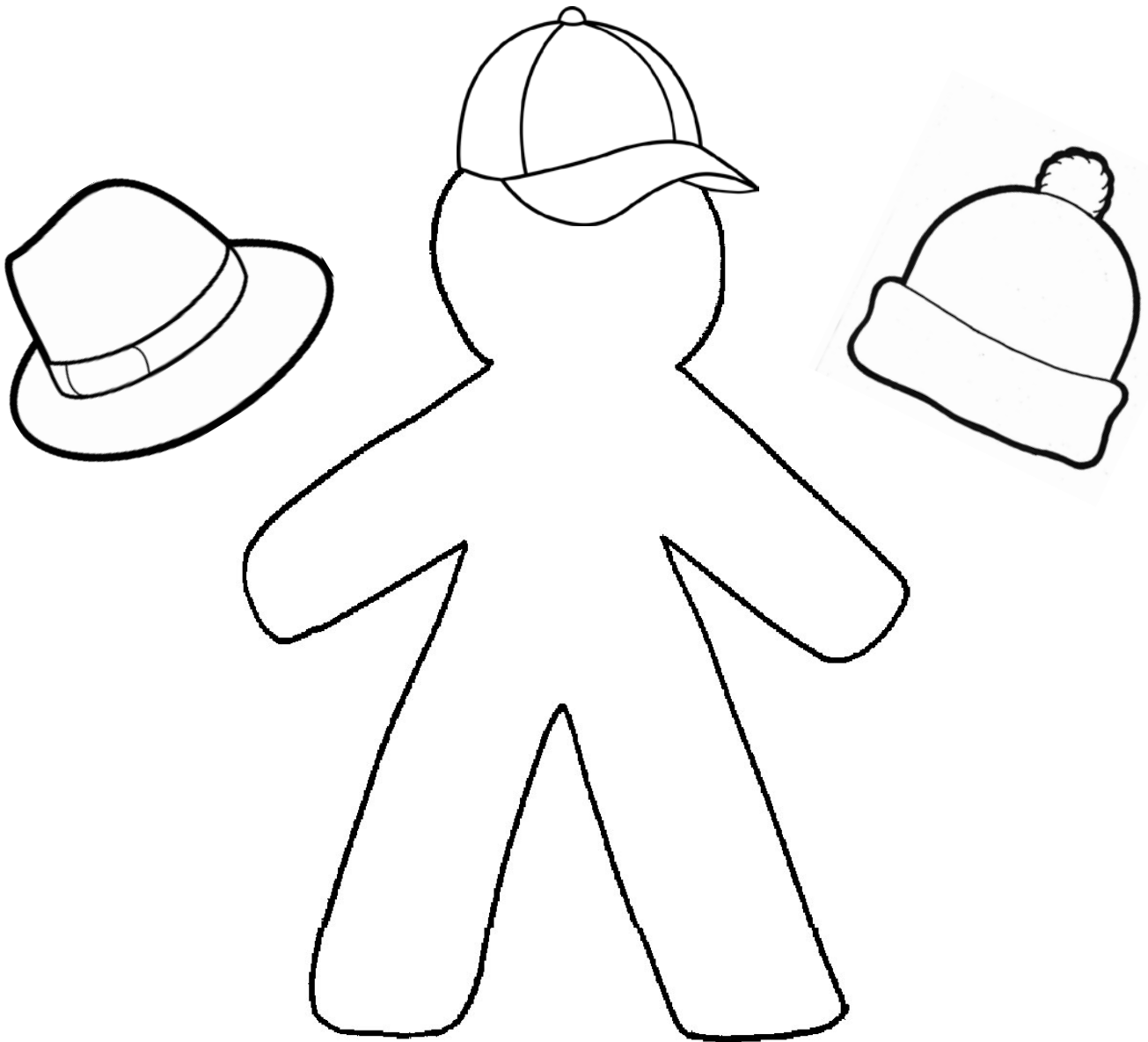
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# A Wearer of Many Hats

Directions:

1. Fill the body outline below with words that you think describe your identity. These words might be adjectives that describe your personality, or nouns that name institutions, places, or objects (school, church, San Antonio, basketball, etc.) that you associate yourself with.
2. People often say, "I am a wearer of many hats." This means that even though we are one person, we fill many roles in life. Choose the three roles you fill that you think most define you. Some examples of roles include: student, son/daughter, brother/sister, athlete, artist, friend, American, etc.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### “Names/ Nombres” Exit Ticket

What background knowledge do you have about your name? (Why your parents chose it, what it means, etc.)

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Do you have a nickname? Who gave it to you?

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If you had the ability to change your name, would you? Why or why not? What would it be?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### “Names/ Nombres” Exit Ticket

What background knowledge do you have about your name? (Why your parents chose it, what it means, etc.)

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Do you have a nickname? Who gave it to you?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Bio-Poem

Example:

Martin  
Proud, courageous, eloquent, wise  
Leader to millions  
Who loved nonviolence, god, and humanity  
Who felt outraged by hate and prejudice  
And who was inspired by acts of kindness  
Who gained greater dignity for his people  
And hoped everyone could leave in peace  
He lives in our hearts  
Luther King, Jr.

#### **Step 1: Brainstorming ideas**

1. List at least seven adjectives that you would use to describe yourself.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. List three important relationships in your life (e.g., friend, brother, daughter, or nephew).

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List five things that you love.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. List five memories you have and describe how you felt at those times.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. List five of your fears.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. List three accomplishments.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. List five wishes or hopes.

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8. Where do you live?

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**Step 2: Use your answers to the above questions to help you write your bio-poem.**

The Bio-poem Structure

(Line 1) First name

(Line 2) Three or four adjectives that describe you

(Line 3) Important relationship (e.g., daughter of . . . , friend of . . . )

(Line 4) Two or three things, people, or ideas that you love

(Line 5) Three feelings you have experienced

(Line 6) Three fears you have experienced

(Line 7) Accomplishments (e.g., who won . . . who performed . . . who learned . . . )

(Line 8) Two or three things you want to see happen or want to experience

(Line 9) Your residence

(Line 10) Last name

Write your bio-poem below.

1: \_\_\_\_\_

2: \_\_\_\_\_

3: \_\_\_\_\_

4: \_\_\_\_\_

5: \_\_\_\_\_

6: \_\_\_\_\_

7: \_\_\_\_\_

8: \_\_\_\_\_

9: \_\_\_\_\_

10: \_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_

## A Lion's Narrative

*Directions: While you watch the movie clip from The Lion King, make notes in the chart below. Remember that good piece of narrative writing 1) has a clear sequences of events, 2) detailed description of the setting, 3) describes the characters' feelings, and 4) includes dialogue.*

<b>Description of Setting (specific details)</b>	<b>Feelings of Characters (use adjectives or nouns)</b>	<b>Important Dialogue (try to copy word for word)</b>





## Personal Narrative Peer Feedback Form

Writer: \_\_\_\_\_

Peer Editor: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: answer the following questions after reading your peer's personal narrative. You may have to look back at their writing. Give comments when needed.*

1. Name one specific thing you liked about his/her personal narrative. (Good example: I loved your lead. It really captured my attention. Bad example: I liked it. Nice job!)
2. Name one specific thing the writer can improve on.
3. What is the controlling idea? Is it unclear?
4. Did the writer use an interesting lead? What technique did they use?
5. Did the writer use transitions?
6. Did the writer use sensory details? Write an example.
7. Did the writer use dialogue?
8. Did the writer use both simple and compound sentences?
9. Was the narrative written in chronological order?
10. Does the writer's conclusion feel finished? Did they tell you what they learned from the experience?