

## **“Where I’m From” Writing English 11 Honors**

*"If you don't know where you're from, you'll have a hard time saying where you're going."  
- Wendell Berry*

### Template:

Use the following categories to list specific details related to you. The key is making this as specific and personal as possible. Use nicknames or words that only you or your family use. Don't worry about readers not knowing what you're talking about.

specific ordinary item:

product name:

home description- adjectives and sensory detail (3 total):

family traditions/traits:

family names (last names, first names, nicknames):

descriptions of family tendency/tradition:

something you were told as a child:

representation of religion/belief/spirituality/saying/rule to live by:

place of birth and family ancestry:

food items representing your family:

a story always told about you by family members:

monumental experiences (joys, losses, etc.):

phrases that have been repeated to you often:

nostalgic songs/lyrics:

a picture your can easily recall from your childhood:

## **“Where I’m From” Model Texts**

I am from clothespins,  
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.  
I am from the dirt under the back porch.  
(Black, glistening,  
it tasted like beets.)  
I am from the forsythia bush  
the Dutch elm  
whose long-gone limbs I remember  
as if they were my own.

I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,  
from Imogene and Alafair.  
I'm from the know-it-alls  
and the pass-it-ons,  
from Perk up! and Pipe down!  
I'm from He restoreth my soul  
with a cottonball lamb  
and ten verses I can say myself.

I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,  
fried corn and strong coffee.  
From the finger my grandfather lost  
to the auger,  
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box  
spilling old pictures,  
a sift of lost faces  
to drift beneath my dreams.  
I am from those moments--  
snapped before I budded --  
leaf-fall from the family tree.

- By George Ella Lyon (original)

## ***Where I’m From* by Fred First**

I am from the peaceful banks of a creek with no  
name; from JFG, toast and blackberry jam and  
home-made granola.

I am from "a house with double porches," a room  
filled with good ghosts and creek laughter in the  
mornings before first light.

I am from Liriodendron and Lindera, butterfly bush  
and mountain boomers

I am from Dillons and Harrisons, Betty Jean and  
Granny Bea-- frugal and long-lived, stubborn and  
tender, quick to laugh. Or cry.

I am from a world whose geography my children  
know better than I, from a quiet valley where I am  
the proprietor and world authority of its small  
wonders.

From barn loft secret passwords and children who  
can fly if they only try.

I am from oven-baked Saran Wrap and colds caught  
from jackets worn indoors.

I am from pire in the blood Baptists, from the  
cathedral made without hands, the church in the  
wildwoods, the covenant of grace.

I'm from the Heart of Dixie, son of Scarlett O'hara.  
From War Eagle, Wiffle, UAB and PT, from Walnut  
Knob's blue ridge and the soft shadows of Goose  
Creek.

From a "fast hideous" dresser and a home body  
from Woodlawn, from a grandfather I never knew  
that I can blame for my love of nature and my  
stubbornness, they tell me.

I am from fragments, the faint smell of wood  
smoke, and familiar walks among trees I know by  
name, from HeresHome and good stock. A man can  
hardly ask to be from more.

\*\*The above is adapted from George Ella Lyon's original poem, found online.

## Template:

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (specific ordinary item), from \_\_\_\_\_ (product name) and \_\_\_\_\_.

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (home description... adjectives/sensory detail).

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (family tradition) and \_\_\_\_\_ (family trait), from \_\_\_\_\_ (name of family member) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another family name) and \_\_\_\_\_ (family name).

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (description of family tendency) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another one).

From \_\_\_\_\_ (something you were told as a child) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another).

I am from (representation of religion, or lack of it). Further description.

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ (place of birth and family ancestry), \_\_\_\_\_ (two food items representing your family).

From the \_\_\_\_\_ (specific family story about a specific person and detail), the \_\_\_\_\_ (another detail, and the \_\_\_\_\_ (another detail about another family member).

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (location of family pictures, mementos, archives and several more lines indicating their worth).

## Things to Consider:

- Introduction
- Sentence variety (“I am from” vs. “I’m from” vs “From”, etc)
- Conclusion (tie it all together)
- Imagery
- Rhythm, repetition, other oral storytelling traits
- Uniqueness

## Due Dates and Process Points:

**Introduction and Writing-** Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

**Polished Draft Due-** Wednesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Final Version Due-** Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>

\*Save a draft copy of your poem to staple to your final copy later.

\*\*\*“Polished Draft” means you’ve already written, revised, written again, revised again, etc. to the point where you would be proud to turn it in. It means your work is ready to be viewed as the best that you can do before other people give you feedback about additional thoughts to consider. It does not mean that you cranked it out the night before, or it is halfway done.

\*\*\*We may work with the drafts (quickly) on other days, so always have them with you. The dates above are the official due dates.

## **“Where I am From” Rubric**

### **90-100%**

The student's poem shows:

- A deep exploration of the student's identity and heritage.
- Language rich in description and imagery.
- Precise and vivid word choice.
- Organized in a way that develops clearly from beginning to end.
- The poem has been edited, and there are almost no errors.
- Student includes a DRAFT copy with clear revisions between it and the final product.

### **80-89%**

The student's poem shows:

- An exploration of the student's identity and heritage.
- Some examples of description and imagery.
- One or two examples of precise and vivid word choice.
- Organized in a way that develops for the most part from beginning to end.
- The poem has only a few errors.
- Student includes a DRAFT copy with some revisions between it and the final product.

### **70-79%**

The student's poem shows:

- An exploration of the student's identity and heritage.
- Imagery, description and word choice are rarely present
- Not organized in a way that develops clearly from beginning to end.
- The poem has many errors.
- Student does not include a DRAFT copy, or the revisions are minimal.

### **69 and lower**

This poem does not show development, seems hastily done, and does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.