



I and the Village: Telling the Story of Your Hometown Through Collage and Poetry

Objective: To enable students to teach others about the place they live by creating a Mary Oliver-inspired poem and a Marc Chagall-inspired collage about their town.

Materials:

I and the Village by Marc Chagall

find it here: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/78984?locale=en>

“In Malaysia” by Mary Oliver

find it here:

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?volume=160&issue=4&page=29>

(Be sure to click on “Next Page” to see the end of the poem)

Planning sheet: “Teaching About My Home” (attached)

Final poem sheet (attached)

8 ½” x 11” white cardstock—2 or 3 sheets per student

colored tissue paper cut into squares or other shapes around 2” x 2” and/or 3” x 3”—

enough for each student to cover cardstock with small pieces of various colors (Note: you should limit the palette that you present them with so that all the available colors will work well together.)

pencils, markers

scissors

glue

Activities:

Writing about place:

Read “In Malaysia” with students. Have them identify all the things Mary Oliver finds in that place—have them underline the adjectives and circle the nouns she uses.

Brainstorm some of the things (nouns) we can find here in our own town or state. Brainstorm adjectives to describe the nouns—encourage students to reach for creative adjectives (“tremendous” instead of “big,” “cherry-colored” instead of “red”).

On their planning sheets (called “Teaching About My Home”, attached), have students identify the places, things, and activities they love about their home. Guide them in shaping these individual phrases into a free-verse poem. Discuss creative word choice—remember, they are the teachers here, telling other students about their home, so the poems should paint as vivid a picture as possible.

Let students “workshop” their poems with the class. Students read their poems aloud and other students comment with “compass responses”—guided responses that correspond to the four points of the compass as a mnemonic device.

N = Need to know; S = Suggestion; E = Excited by; W = Worried about.

Once their poems are revised, proofread, and they feel that they are finished, have them copy them neatly onto a final poem sheet (attached). Note the lines at the top for the title and author of the poem.



Creating a collage about place:

Introduce students to *I and the Village*. Help them identify the various creatures and objects in the painting. What do the students think about the colors? Can they sense emotion or mood in the painting?

Guide students in creating a Chagall-like collage about South Florida.

Have them choose pieces of colored tissue and glue them to the white cardstock for a stained-glass-like effect. This is their background. On fresh pieces of white cardstock, have them draw the creatures and objects from their planning sheet that they would like to include in their place-based collage. Have them color in the things they draw with the markers. Solid blocks of bright colors work well against the colored tissue. Now have them cut out their figures and glue them to the background. Remember to discuss Chagall's penchant for floating, topsy-turvy characters. They are not creating a realistic landscape—more of a dreamscape that includes their favorite things about South Florida.

To photograph the work in order to send it to an international partner, place a poem next to its corresponding collage on a plain surface and photograph the two together. The hard copies should be displayed the same way.

This lesson plan is particularly suited to an international collaboration because of its use of an American poet writing about a Southeast Asian country and a Russian-French-Jewish artist making art about his native community outside Vitebsk, Russia. Combining influences from different cultures is what global education is all about.



Teaching About My Home

3 places I like to go:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Things I find in these places:

Place 1: _____

Place 2: _____

Place 3: _____

Things I do in these places:

Place 1: _____

Place 2: _____

Place 3: _____
