

*I remember... When we lived at... In the summertime...  
... In fourth grade... Every night... I dreamed that...*

## M I N I - L E S S O N

# Who am I? What has made me who I am?

*There was a child went forth every day,  
And the first object he looked upon and received with  
wonder or pity or love or dread, that object he became,  
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain  
part of the day . . . or for many years or stretching  
cycles of years.*

*The early lilacs became part of this child,  
And grass, and white and red morning-glories, and white and  
red clover, and the song of the phoebe-bird,  
And the March-born lambs, and the sow's pink-faint litter,  
and the mare's foal, and the cow's calf, and the noisy  
brood of the barnyard or by the mire of the pond-side  
. . . and the fish suspending themselves so curiously  
below there . . . and the beautiful curious liquid . . . and  
the water-plants with their graceful flat heads . . . all  
became part of him.*

from "There Was A Child Went Forth,"  
by Walt Whitman

Everything we have seen and touched and heard and experienced has, in some way, made us who we are. Whitman considers all the many things in just one day that will touch on the life of a child. From here he goes on to think about the child's teachers and classmates, the people he passes on his way to school, his parents, the streets he walks, and finally the changing light of sunset, and a solitary bird flying across the sky.

## Who am I? Activity

You may want to share the whole poem with your class or just the excerpt above. Either way it serves as an invitation to your students to think about all the many things that have (either obviously or subtly) affected them in their own lives.

Using the activity worksheet sheet provided, have students begin to make their own lists of influences that they can write about later. Of course, there



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is room on the sheet for students to create their own categories, and they may want to share these with each other.

After creating their lists, have the students choose just one of the items to write about in their notebooks. At various times throughout the genre study, students may want to return to these lists, either to add to them or to use them for inspiration in their writing.

## Themes and Variations

A list could also be created simply by noting all the details of a single day, as does Whitman in his poem. Have students carry their notebooks with them, jotting down all that crosses their path from morning to night. What do they notice? What's important to them?

**WORKSHEET**

### Who am I? What has made me who I am?

People		Teachers	Other
Relatives	Friends	Ms. Clark	
Mom Dad Pop & Mom Ralph	Cal Nash		

Places	Special Places	Vacations	Travel Routes
Homes	The Park	The Beach	
Our home now - the only place I've ever lived.			

Nature	Weather	Water	Other
Trees and Plants	I hate thunderstorms. I love snow	I like any kind of water because I love to swim	
I have a favorite tree in the park. Everyone likes to climb it.			

Stories	Television	Movies	Family Stories
Books Harry Potter! Star Wars books	The Simpsons	Star Wars	

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**WORKSHEET**

### Who am I? What has made me who I am?

Animals	Wild Animals	Insects	Other
Pets Sasha - our dog My lizard		I hate bugs - especially spiders	

Sensations	Smells	Music	Other
Food apples ice cream chocolate	Cinnamon apple pie	I like Will Smith a lot!	

Diversions	Sports	Dreams	Daydreams
Games Zelda	Baseball Soccer Swimming	Design a video game	

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Friends

Teachers

Other

## Places

Homes

Special Places

Vacations

Travel Routes

## Nature

Trees and Plants

Weather

Water

Other

## Stories

Books

Television

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