

**LESSON PLAN TITLE: My Home**

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**Writer-in-Residence:** Ber-Henda Williams

**Grade Level:** 7th-12th

**Model Works Used:** Home by Warsan Shire

**Literary Learning objective(s):** Students will be able to understand how communities and “homes” impact each other and how one person can use art to tell the story for others and for healing.

**Themes:** Home, environment, treatment of others

**MDE/SEL Standards:** Social Awareness, Self-Awareness, Conflict resolution, and Empathy

**Materials Needed:** Notebook or piece of paper, pen or pencil, copy of the poem *Home*

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**Opening Activity**

Personal Reflection:

How would you describe your home? When you think about family interactions and rituals such as holidays, birthdays, and other family gatherings what are the interactions like? Use the bubble map attached here: [Bubble Map](#). Place “Home” in the middle and write practices and rituals (rituals can be anything you do often, for example Saturday morning cleaning, worshipping at a religious space, homework, and/or outings together) in the bubbles.

**Pre-Discussion:**

1. What are some of your favorite childhood memories?
2. Do you think our homes influence who we are? Why or why not?
3. What is your favorite part about your home?

**Model Poem Discussion**

Read the poem [Home](#)

Read this poem silently and then read it out loud. Underline: Key phrases that stand out to you, Circle: words that are unfamiliar, Star: Things you have questions about.

Answer the following questions:

What is the author’s home like?

Can you love and hate something at the same time?

Do you identify with any of these images, experiences or similes?

### Prewriting:

The writer explains that her home is like “the mouth of a shark” and yet she still wants to go home. Are there ways you relate to this idea and her experiences? How can we create our own homes? Can we find homes within other spaces in our communities?

### Writing Prompt:

Based on the poem you read, can you imagine creating a home? Not just a house but a place that is safe and secure? When someone leaves a home like the author, what would a “Dream Home” be like? What would your safe space feel like? Write a 5-7 line poem about what your safe space feels and looks like.

### Share / Reflect

Answer the following questions in your journal:

- How did the poem Home make you feel?
- How did writing your own poem make you feel?
- In what ways does this exercise help you think about the experiences of others and how they shape them?
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- Where will you share your work with others? How can sharing poetry help others understand one another?

### Supplemental Materials

Music for inspiration: [Pearls](#)

Check/Highlight all that apply

- Text by a contemporary/diverse author
- Translated text
- Visual Thinking Strategies
- Close reading or other analysis
- A step of the writing process
- Planning & Reflection Strategy
- New device, concept or theme
- Social-Emotional Learning
  - Self-Management
  - Social Awareness
  - Relationship Skills
  - Responsible-Decision Making
  - Self-Awareness

**Home**

by Warsan Shire

no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city running as well  
your neighbors running faster than you  
breath bloody in their throats  
the boy you went to school with  
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory  
is holding a gun bigger than his body  
you only leave home  
when home won't let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you  
fire under feet  
hot blood in your belly  
it's not something you ever thought of doing  
until the blade burnt threats into  
your neck and even then you carried the anthem under your breath

only tearing up your passport in an airport toilet  
sobbing as each mouthful of paper  
made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.  
you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land  
no one burns their palms  
under trains  
beneath carriages

no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck  
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled  
means something more than journey.  
no one crawls under fences  
no one wants to be beaten  
pitied

no one chooses refugee camps  
or strip searches where your  
body is left aching  
or prison,  
because prison is safer  
than a city of fire  
and one prison guard

in the night  
is better than a truckload  
of men who look like your father  
no one could take it  
no one could stomach it  
no one skin would be tough enough  
the  
go home blacks  
refugees  
dirty immigrants  
asylum seekers  
sucking our country dry  
niggers with their hands out  
they smell strange  
savage

messed up their country and now they want  
to mess ours up  
how do the words  
the dirty looks  
roll off your backs  
maybe because the blow is softer  
than a limb torn off  
or the words are more tender  
than fourteen men between  
your legs  
or the insults are easier  
to swallow  
than rubble  
than bone  
than your child's body  
in pieces.

i want to go home,  
but home is the mouth of a shark  
home is the barrel of the gun  
and no one would leave home  
unless home chased you to the shore  
unless home told you  
to quicken your legs  
leave your clothes behind  
crawl through the desert  
wade through the oceans  
drown  
save  
be hunger  
beg  
forget pride  
your survival is more important  
no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear  
saying —  
leave,  
run away from me now  
i don't know what i've become  
but i know that anywhere  
is safer than here