

LESSON PLAN TITLE: Memory 1

Writer-in-Residence: David Wade

Grade Level: 9th-12th

Model Works Used: “Memory 1” by Jessica Lanay

Literary Learning objective(s): Students will be able to utilize images, reflect on a memory, and determine characters in a poem.

Themes: Memory, Subjectivity, Imagery

MDE/SEL Standards: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

Materials Needed: Internet, Writing Materials

Opening Activity

Take a moment and reflect: What is your earliest childhood memory? Try to write it out, like a scene from a movie:

- Who are the main characters?
- What is the setting and plot?
- Are there any objects or images that engage the five senses?

Pre-Discussion

Memory can be a tricky thing, at times unreliable, at times the only truth that remains. Do you trust your own memory of significant events in your past? What about from arguments you got in with a family member or romantic partner? Have you ever been wrong about a memory and had to deal with the consequences? If so, how did you deal with the fallout?

- Journal your answers to these questions if working alone; discuss with classmates or family members if working in a group.

Model Poem Discussion

Our reading for this lesson is Jessica Lanay’s poem [“Memory 1: When You Are Too Young to Know that You are Alive Because You’ve Killed”](#). Take time to read the poem twice, aloud, annotating as you read.

(A useful strategy is to circle words you don’t know and underline moments that stick out to you for one reason or another.)

Once you’ve read the poem and annotated, answer the following questions in your journal or discussion.

- What do you think the title means? Do you ever think about eating as “killing” to keep yourself alive?
- Which *image* from the poem sticks out to you the most? What do you like about it? Which senses does it engage?
- Who are the characters in this poem? How do they feel about the speaker’s (the narrator of the poem) eating habits? What words or phrases support your answers?
- Do you think this poem is based on a real memory the poet has? Why or why not?
- When drawing on memory in writing, is it necessary to change what really happened to make the poem make sense? Or should you try to stay as close to the facts as possible?

Prewriting/Writing Prompt:

Return to your memory from the opening activity. Reading it now, is it how you remember it? Feel free to draw on this memory for the writing prompt.

Choose one memory from early childhood (age 4-10) in which you wish you, or someone else, would have acted differently. Rewrite the memory *the way it should have gone*, the best case scenario from your perspective, no matter what that looks like. Perhaps in this version, you didn’t say that hurtful thing, or instead of raining there were clear blue skies, or the loved one stayed home that night. There doesn’t need to be a happy ending, but you are in control if you want to create one.

- Focus on the setting and specific objects in the scene to engage the five senses.

Share / Reflect:

What emotions came up spending so much time with a specific memory? Is rewriting our (personal or shared) history helpful in imagining new futures or learning how to live in the present?

- Journal or discuss with classmates/family.

Supplemental Materials:

Poem: “Memory 1” by Jessica Lanay

<https://tinderboxpoetry.com/memory-1-when-you-are-too-young-to-know-that-you-are-alive-because-youve-killed>

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