

## LESSON PLAN TITLE: The Art of Marshmallows

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**Writer-in-Residence:** Kelsey Ronan

**Grade Level:** 2nd-8th

**Model Works Used:** “Toasting Marshmallows” by Kristine O’Connell George

**Literary Learning objective(s):** Students will write a poem detailing an area of expertise in their home. They’ll be encouraged to explore rhyme and form.

**Themes:** self-esteem, creativity, poetic form

**MDE/SEL Standards:** self-awareness, knowledge of language/reading closely, optimism

**Materials Needed:** paper, pencil

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### Opening Activity

Imagine you are very famous and you are giving a tour of your home to people who admire you. Take a few minutes to walk in each room and consider what you would want to show people there. If other people in your household are available, invite them on your tour. What do you like about each space? What do you do here? Are you famous for one of those things you do? What important and exciting things have happened to you here? For instance, if you came to my house, I would show you the books in my living room (I love to read) and then I would show you my favorite places to curl up with my cat and read them.

### Pre-Discussion

Of all the things you just told us about on your tour, what is something you’re very good at? What do others in your household ask you to help them with?

### Model Poem Discussion

Let’s read “Toasting Marshmallows.” You might encounter some words you don’t know, so let’s go over them:

*Confection* is another word for candy.

*Grubby* means dirty.

*Soot* means ash or powder leftover from burning something.

## **Toasting Marshmallows**

by Kristine O'Connell George

I am a careful marshmallow toaster,  
a patient marshmallow roaster,  
turning my stick oh-so-slowly,  
taking my time, checking often.

This is art---  
a time of serious reflection  
as my pillowed confection  
slowly reaches golden perfection.

My brother

grabs 'em with grubby hands  
shoves 'em on the stick  
burns 'em to a crisp  
cools 'em off  
flicks soot  
eats quick.

What do you notice about the way this poem uses rhyme? Some lines rhyme and some lines don't, which is called *free verse*. What do you think about how the poet uses rhyme like perfection/confection/reflection as well as free verse?

Notice how the poet plays with the way the words are arranged on the page when she is writing about the brother. Why do you think the poet made this change?

Some lines are long and some lines are very short. Does it change the way you read it?

## Prewriting

Think about the things you are good at in your home. The poet says of roasting marshmallows. “This is art”– what is your art? Brainstorm some ideas about your art. How do you do it? What’s involved? What do you need? How do you know when you’ve reached perfection?

## Writing Prompt

Write a poem celebrating your art. You might start like Kristine O’Connell George with the statement “I am a\_\_\_\_\_.” Explore the space of the page– put words everywhere!– and different line lengths. You might also play with using rhyme in your poem.

## Share / Reflect

How does it feel to write about something you are an expert of? How might you take your art to the next level? What goals might you set?

## 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

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flicks soot  
eats quick.

I'm still turning my stick.

He's already eaten *six*.