

## *Picture Yourself – Lesson Plan*

**Grade Level:** 8

**Suggested Duration:** 3 hours or 3 class periods

**Target Audience:** Students who may have not had much experience visiting university campuses

**Video:** “How I Got Here: Dorothy”

### **§110.20. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 8**

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(15) Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to:

(B) write a poem using:

(i) poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter)

(ii) figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole)

*Dorothy experienced culture shock when she first arrived at Harvard from Brownsville, Texas. Among other things, the New England college campus—with its dorms, towering trees, cold weather, and gothic building—was very different from what she was used to in her South Texas town. Visiting a college campus is one way to help students envision their postsecondary life. When that is not possible, virtual tours can be a good substitute. This lesson provides a space for students to explore college campuses virtually and imagine a life in a different place through poetry.*

**Student Objective:** Students will write poems describing the life they imagine in college.

**Lesson Preparation:** While preparing for this lesson with your students, make sure to watch the “How I Got Here: Dorothy” video first. The video will provide guidance on how to navigate the lesson with your students and highlight the key messages for them to take away. This lesson could be taught as part of a larger poetry unit and will give students an opportunity to apply poetic techniques and figurative language.

**Educator Direction: (10 min)** During the first hour or first class period, play the “How I Got Here: Dorothy” video for your class. Ask students what they would miss most from

home if they went away to college. Ask students to focus on the physical structure of their communities, including houses, their bedrooms, their local grocery store, their best friend's house, the streets, and so on. Educators may get students' creative juices flowing by asking them such questions as:

- What does your best friend's house smell like?
- What is the texture of the trees and plants in your neighborhood?
- What sounds do you hear from your bedroom at night?
- How does it feel to walk around your community at night?

Time permitting, you may even ask your students to play charades, with one student pretending to be in a certain physical place in their community, and other students guessing where s/he is. (For example, a student may pretend to push a grocery cart, examine fruit, and put it in the cart.)

**(40 min)** Once students have been primed, invite them to think about living or going to school in a different place—maybe even a different state or country. Then introduce their task.

Possible Educator Dialogue (directed to students):

*Today you are going to take a virtual trip to different universities, and then write poems describing what you imagine life to be like in those places. What will you hear, see, smell, taste, touch, and feel emotionally? What are you doing? What funny, sad, exciting, or scary things may happen there? You may write the poem from the perspective of yourself, another student, Dorothy (from the video), a professor, your mother, your little brother, or even a mouse! Basically whoever/whatever you want—this is a chance to be creative!*

Next, demonstrate how to access a virtual campus tour. Go to <http://www.ecampustours.com/> and then find the link in the middle of the page that allows you to search by state for virtual campus tours. Begin by looking up Dorothy's school. First select Massachusetts from the dropdown menu, then select Harvard College. Select the image of the Annenberg Freshman Dining Hall and drag the cursor around so students get a 360-degree view. Ask students to comment on what they see, what they imagine it smells like, what it might sound like to step through there when it's empty, and how it might feel to go there when it's full on your first day of college. Then, as a class, write a short poem together using a specific meter (e.g., iamb meter) or rhyming scheme. Encourage students to suggest figurative language to include in the class poem. (The writing of the poem could take up to 30 minutes.)

**(10 min)** Tell students that it is now their turn to write a poem. Allow students to visit the eCampusTours.com website and tour colleges they may be interested in. Note: If they are interested in seeing the most beautiful campuses (as identified by *Travel + Leisure* magazine), they may take virtual tours of Stanford University (California), Berry College (Georgia), University of Notre Dame (Indiana), Florida Southern College (Florida), University of Cincinnati (Ohio), University of San Diego (California), or Rice University (Texas).

**(60 min)** During the second hour or second class period, educators may specify their requirements, such as having at least five uses of figurative language and containing at least 250 words. Educators may refer to the sample rubric at the end of this lesson to assess student work.

Ask students to do some pre-writing, sharing, and peer editing before submitting a final draft of their poems at the end of the class. (If students run out of time, they may complete their poems for homework.)

**(60 min)** During the third hour or third class period, have students volunteer to present their poems to the class and share the virtual tour image(s) that inspired them. To help ensure students are engaged in the presenters, ask other students to vote on which poems have:

- the best executed meter or rhyming scheme
- the best similes or metaphors
- the best personification
- the best emotional response
- any other “best” that you think of (e.g., best comparison/contrast between the college campus and students’ hometown)

Close the lesson by asking students reflection questions (like the ones listed below). Request that students answer in complete sentences to ensure their thoughts are fully understood by the listeners.

- How does the college campus you “toured” compare and contrast with your hometown?
- Did this activity make you more, or less, interested in visiting a college? Why or why not?
- Why did you pick the college you opted to write about?
- How did this activity make you feel about going to college?

### Sample Rubric to Assess Students' Poems

Directions: Score students according to the rating system in the rubric below, or modify this rubric to your own requirements. Write comments in the cells to justify each score.

Criteria	1 The criterion was not met	2 The criterion was partially met	3 The criterion was adequately met	4 The criterion was substantially met	5 The criterion was completely met
Use of poetic techniques (e.g., rhyme scheme, meter)					
Use of figurative language (e.g., personification, idioms, hyperbole)					
Has at least 10 lines					
Evokes the senses and/or emotion					
Neat and organized					