

# A POEM FOR EARTH

Ages 4 to 8

## GUIDING QUESTION

How does the Earth/Nature make me *feel*? What life calls a natural place home?

## GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- To nurture appreciation with the natural world
- To exercise and develop literacy skills such as, vocabulary, sentence structure, visual thinking strategies
- To access and explore self-expression through feelings, language, and creativity

## GUIDING SOURCE

Joy Harjo's poem [Remember](#) (words included at the end of this activity)

## ACTIVITY REQUEST

This activity ideally would take place outside (in a park or backyard or garden or even a small green space). If being outside is not accessible, lean heavily on visual thinking and external stimuli. Try [National Geographic's visual tours](#) or a simple Google search of natural areas.

## INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the activity by letting the children know that we will be creating a poem today. Poems are fun/different ways to say things that often make us *feel* things.
- Read or listen to Joy Harjo's poem, *Remember*. Ask the children what were some of the images they saw/heard in the poem? What did the poem make them feel? Why do you think the author wrote the poem?
- Let the children know that they will be creating a poem today about Earth/Nature/this place! It is an opportunity to remember this place, because like in the Joy Harjo's poem, this place is home to many living things.

- Invite your child/children to observe the natural setting chosen (either the natural setting they are in or the natural setting seen in photographs). Encourage them to explore using all of their senses (smelling the trees around, touching the grass, listening to the natural sounds).

## ACTIVITY

- Ask them to describe the setting using four words. Then record the words on paper. Option to write down these words for each child (Note: Depending on the age of the child, writing may be possible. If it is, encourage the child to write their own words in list form, however, it is important to NOT force the child to write if they are not ready or do not want to do so.).
- Invite children to think about how this setting makes them *feel*. Give an example of a feeling word (i.e. Calm, Sad, Excited, Frustrated). Prompt them with questions about specific natural things in the setting (i.e. How does the tree/flower/slug make you feel?)
- Have each child write down four feeling words. Option to write them for the child.
- Once the descriptive and feeling list is created, have the child read each word or read each word for the child.
- Then ask the children about who/what lives in this natural space. Encourage them share these ideas out loud. Write down their responses. It is important to write down exactly what they say. Resist the desire to correct them or improve their writing.

## CLOSING

- Assemble the poem as follows:

TITLE:

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TWO DESCRIPTIVE WORDS:

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TWO FEELING WORDS:

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SENTENCES OR LIST OF WHO/WHAT LIVES IN THIS SPACE:

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TWO DESCRIPTIVE WORDS:

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TWO FEELING WORDS:

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- Once the poems have been assembled, have the children come up with a title. Invite them to think about what they would like this poem to be named. Prompt them with questions like “How do you want to introduce this poem to others?” or “If this natural space you described had a name, what would you call it?”
- Once the poems have been assembled invite children to read them or read them for them.
- Reflect on how the poem made you feel. Invite their reflections.

## EXTENSION

Many children need visuals to communicate and/or express themselves more fully through visuals. After prompting them with their feelings and descriptions about the natural space, have them express themselves through drawing or painting. Be sure to follow up with a reflection once the art work has been created.

**REMEMBER** by Joy Harjo

Remember the sky that you were born under,  
know each of the star's stories.

Remember the moon, know who she is.

Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the  
strongest point of time. Remember sundown  
and the giving away to night.

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled  
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of  
her life, and her mother's, and hers.

Remember your father. He is your life, also.

Remember the earth whose skin you are:  
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth  
brown earth, we are earth.

Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their  
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,  
listen to them. They are alive poems.

Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the  
origin of this universe.

Remember you are all people and all people  
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this  
universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.