

Where I'm From Brainstorming

In George Ella Lyon's poem, "Where I'm From," the speaker suggests that we come from more than just places. We are made up of artifacts of our lives – the specific objects, people, experiences, foods, sayings, and so much more. Complete the following brainstorming boxes to prepare for your own "Where I'm From" poem.

List your closest or most favorite relatives.
Write what you call them (Mimi, Gammy, etc)
and their first names.

List toys and everyday items you remember
from your childhood home.

List sayings that your parents or grandparents
or someone else who is close to you always
says

List things that you and your siblings, cousins,
or family always did growing up

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List some of your favorite songs, TV shows, and/or movies you remember liking as a child.

List some family traditions that you and your family have or some things that you've always done. OR List some things about your neighborhood – the street name, neighbor's names, etc.

List some of the happy times that you can remember in your life.

List foods or Candy that you love or that make you think of family.

Where I'm From Poem

Draft your "Where I'm From" poem by starting with the line "I'm from". Continue to repeat this line, as often as you wish. Use your brainstorming pages as inspiration as you write about what makes you who you are. You do not have to use everything on your brainstorming forms, and you can certainly use ideas that come to you as you write. The line length is totally up to you. You can have a line with ten words and then the next line can have three. There are no line length rules when it comes to writing poetry. You should also only add punctuation like commas and periods when you want your reader to pause. You do not have to follow the rules of punctuation in poetry like you do in prose. This poem does not have to rhyme, but you can use rhyme if you'd like. Continue to revise your poem until you are happy with it. Make sure you write it in the center so that it looks like a poem and not like a paragraph. Write or type your final poem on a clean sheet of paper.

A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn, wavy border, intended for writing the 'Where I'm From' poem. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower two-thirds of the page.

Where I'm From Example

I'm From

I am from powdered doughnuts and bath time with Mr. Bubbles,
From cassette tapes with rewind and fast-forward troubles.
I am from everything closes down on fall Friday nights
Fight songs from the band and football stadium lights.

I am from the ice cream truck melody and a mean dog catcher,
Pac-Man, a light bright, and my red etch-a-sketcher
I'm from \$5 movie theaters and \$10 bill to fill up with gas
Cutting town on the weekends, driving my red car fast
I'm from no worries of a cell phone, no internet, no social media
If I wanted to know something, I used an encyclopedia

I'm from big hair and Aquanet, in my bathroom spraying,
And from a Mema who told me she was always praying.
I'm from watching thunderstorms out on the front porch
and catching lightnin' bugs in jars, my very own torch.

I'm from Mama callin' at dark for us to come inside
Ghost man on third and four-wheeler rides
From Mama John's on Sundays eating salty fatback to the rine
Really where I'm from is a much better time.

-Shannon Temple

Where I'm From Example

I'm From

I am from barrettes and flip-flops,
Minnie Mouse and Daisy-
Prickly crabgrass,
Barefoot? You must be crazy.

I am from plum trees and pecan trees
All in the backyard,
Mama Lula needing me to go down there
And pick her some.

I am from popsicles on hot days
Then "stay in or out,"
Scrambling in for the fifth time,
With spam sandwiches and French fries on my Grandma's couch

I am from fishing and camping at the lake,
SPLASH! As the water touches my body.
And hide-and-go-seek with my cousins,
Dancing and cheering are also my hobbies.

I am from the Wii on Friday nights,
Eating salmon croquettes the next morning,
Four-wheelers roaring by,
As loud as the night before when it was storming.

I am from passing Stevenson Road,
Knowing we're about to pull in,
While the big dogs are outside,
And Mrs. Faye asking us how we've been.

-8th Grade Student

Where I'm From Example

I'm From

I am from family lunches with
roast, rice, macaroni and rolls,
From the sweet warm smell
of candles to play-houses in
the woods.

I am from golf carts
four wheelers ponds cows
and mean dogs chasing me around the
Neighborhood. I am from slimy snakes in the
bushes outside to putting out pine
straw on hot summer days.

I am from building forts,
jumping on the trampoline,
and playing teacher everyday

I am from lake days as hot as the sun
from four-wheeler rides through trails
from softball tournaments to volleyball too

I am from the sound of "clean your room"
from "in or out"
And from the sound of "cause I said so" too

-8th Grade Student