

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
LITERARY ARTS

ARTIST:
AMANDA WEST LEWIS

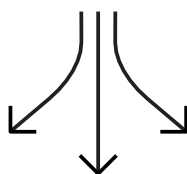


The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:



**Curriculum
Connections**



Suggested Classroom Extensions



**Assessment
Strategies**

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STUDY GUIDE: LITERARY ARTS

POETRY AND MEMORY: WRITING POEMS WITH YOUR PAST

Program Overview

Artist Name: Amanda West Lewis

Artist Bio: Amanda West Lewis is a writer, theatre artist, and calligrapher. Author of ten books, including “A Planet is a Poem” and “These Are Not the Words”, her work explores activism, history, and the arts. She founded the Ottawa Children’s Theatre, holds an MFA in Writing for Children, and teaches writing, drama, and calligraphy to youth and adults.

Program Description: Memories are made of small moments. Working with memory moments, we can discover new ideas to form a base for creating stories. In this hands-on, collaborative workshop, we’ll start with the writing prompt: “What is your earliest memory?” Together, we’ll create a series of group poems that are both specific and personal. We’ll also look at examples of how this same memory prompt inspired the verse novel “These Are Not the Words.” The workshop explores ways that our memories and dreams can spark ideas and springboard us into larger writing projects.

Artistic Discipline: Literary Arts, Visual Arts

Recommended Grade Levels: 5 – 12



Session Logistics: In person or Online

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



POETRY AND MEMORY: WRITING POEMS WITH YOUR PAST

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Apply the creative process to produce a variety of artworks, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings. (Grades 1-8)
 - Apply the creative process to create a variety of art works, individually and/or collaboratively (Grades 9-12)
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
 - Apply the critical analysis process to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings in response to a variety of art works and art experiences. (Grades 1-8)
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the critical analysis process by examining, interpreting, evaluating, and reflecting on various works. (Grades 9-12)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how art works reflect the society in which they were created, and of how they can affect personal values. (Grades 9-12)
- Cross-Curricular Connections
 - Language Arts
 - Experiment with poetic forms, structure, and language

POETRY AND MEMORY: WRITING POEMS WITH YOUR PAST

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

GRADES
5-6

Pre

- What is a happy memory you think of often?
- Why do you think some memories stay with us?
- How can a small moment turn into a big story?

During

- How can you describe the feeling of your memory using strong words?
- What did you notice about your memory when you write it down?

Post

- What did you learn about your own voice in writing today?
- How does poetry help show emotions in a memory?
- How can you use memories to start a bigger writing piece?

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- Why are some memories more powerful than others?
- What role do memory and imagination play in writing stories?

During

- What sensory images can you include to bring your memory to life?
- What emotions are you exploring as you write?

Post

- How might memories help us connect to others
- Could this memory become part of a larger story or creative project?

GRADES
9-12

Pre

- What's the difference between writing from memory and writing about memory?
- In what ways do memories shape identity in literature?

During

- How do you balance truth and imagination when writing about memory?
- What narrative voice feels most authentic for your memory (first person, poetic fragmented)?

Post

- How can memory writing be used to explore history, trauma, or belonging?
- What poetic choices (line breaks, repetition, rhythm) helped shape your story?

LITERARY ARTS OVERVIEW

Literary Arts education consists of storytelling, poetry, and creative writing and is foundational to developing literate, reflective, and critically engaged members of society. By engaging with diverse stories, students gain insight into complex perspectives and histories, fostering inclusion and emotional resilience. Writing and sharing stories also supports mental health and builds a sense of community and belonging.

The creative and critical analysis process guide students in imagining, crafting, and reflecting on literary work. These frameworks align with MASC's core values and, when paired with artist-led sessions, empower students to become thoughtful creators and engaged learners.

Literary arts naturally support cross-curricular learning. In social studies, students explore historical context through narrative; in science they use writing to explain concepts. These interdisciplinary links help students see knowledge as interconnected and relevant to real-world applications.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Memory moment:** A vivid, specific memory that stands out from your life, often full of emotion.
- **Free writing:** A question or idea that helps you start writing.
- **Collaborative writing:** Writing together as a group, combining ideas and voices.
- **Sensory details:** Descriptions that help the reader see, hear, taste, touch, or smell something.
- **Voice (in writing):** The unique personality and style that comes through in your writing.
- **Imagination:** The creative part of your mind that helps you invent ideas, images, or stories.
- **Prompt:** a question or idea that helps you start writing.
- **Verse novel:** A novel written in poems instead of paragraphs, telling a full story.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning