

# LESSON PLAN

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## Research, Real Life, and Coney Island

By Linda Morel and Jessica Paddock

*In this lesson plan developed by T&W writers [Linda Morel](#) and [Jessie Paddock](#) for third-grade classes at PS 90 in Coney Island, New York City, the teaching artists invite students to explore how their real-world experience of place can be inform their understanding of research.*

**Grade:** 3rd

**Genre:** Poetry



**Common Core Standards** ([Refer to the ELA Standards > Writing > Grade 3](#)):

- ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

### Lesson Objectives:

Students will:

- Expand their understanding of research by learning how it can be a tool and source of inspiration for poetry through recognizing the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes around them.
- Use sensory language as a way to describe a place, in this case, Coney Island, Brooklyn.
- Read George Ella Lyon’s “Where I’m From.”

### Guiding Questions:

- What is research?
- Can observing your surroundings and experience be considered research?
- How can we use sensory language to explore (research) and draw personal connection to setting—in this case, Coney Island?
- What are the sights, smells, sounds, and tastes of Coney Island?

### Opening Ritual (1 minute):

The following is a call and response led by TA (teaching artist):

*I have a voice (repeat)*

*My voice is powerful (repeat)*

*My voice can change the world (repeat)*

**Warm Up (2 minutes):**

- Pre-writing activity: Answer the following prompt in 1-2 sentences or a short phrase. *What is your favorite sight or thing to do in Coney Island?*

**Mentor Text (10 minutes):**

- TA distributes “[Where I’m From](#),” shows image of author, and reads author bio to the class.
- TA reads poem aloud. Students are encouraged to underline sensory details and images of place in support of close reading.
- Student volunteer(s) reads the poem aloud a second time.
- TA leads a brief discussion about the poem by asking the following questions. Remind students to offer textual evidence in response to the questions.
- What did we learn about Lyon’s home (she lived in the country, what plants grew in the yard, foods, friends, family of church people, box of photos of people past)?
- What sensory details and descriptions of place did she use to describe her home?
- How does the author feel about her home? How do you know that?

**Writing (10 minutes):**

- TA leads students in a group modeling/pre-writing exercise in preparation for individual writing. Invite students to reflect on their own sensory experience of Coney Island. Name some of the geographical elements of Coney Island such as: the ocean, boardwalk, sand, amusement parks, rollercoasters, nautical street names, Aquarium, and parachute jump.
- TA makes a list of student suggestions on SmartBoard or chart paper. Let students know that this list is their “word bank” to draw from for their poems.
- Students begin writing their own “Where I’m From” poem.

**Sharing (2 minutes):**

- Students are invited to read (a portion of) their poems aloud.

**Closing Ritual (1 minute):**

The following is a call and response led by TA:

*I’m a poet (repeat)*

*And I know it (repeat)*

*I have my whole life to show it (repeat)*

**Materials:**

- Pencils
- Paper
- [George Ella Lyon’s poem and bio](#)

**Vocabulary:** Sensory details, memory

**Multi-Modal Approaches to Learning:** Verbal-Linguistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal